



East Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a Meeting of the Operational Services Committee

Held at The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely, CB7 4EE at 4:30 pm on
Monday 14 September 2026

Present

Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith
Cllr Anna Bailey (substitute)
Cllr Christine Colbert
Cllr Lee Denney
Cllr Martin Goodearl
Cllr Julia Huffer (Chair)
Cllr Mark Inskip
Cllr John Trapp
Cllr Ross Trent
Cllr Lucius Vellacott (Vice Chair)
Cllr Christine Whelan

Officers

Patrick Adams – Senior Democratic Services Officer
Nigel Ankers – ECSS Senior Finance Manager
Isabel Edgar – Director Operations
Tracey Flack – Principal Accountant
Lucy Flintham – Community Infrastructure Manager
Richard Garnett – Senior Environmental Health Officer (Commercial)
Emma Grima – Chief Executive and ECSS Managing Director
Marisa Rogers-Jones – Crematorium and Bereavement Services Manager

In Attendance

ECDC Comms

18. Public Question Time

No public questions were submitted.

19. Apologies and Substitutions

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr David Brown. Cllr Anna Bailey attended as a substitute for Cllr Brown.

20. Declarations of Interests

There were no Declarations of Interests.

21. Minutes

It was resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22 June 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the following amendments:

- In the final sentence of the fourth paragraph of minute 12, Whelan be corrected to Colbert.
- The final sentence of the fifth paragraph of minute 12 be amended to read "... which she had circulated, and she offered to circulate again."

Cllr Christine Colbert asked for a response to her query on why outside body representatives were asked if there was an insurance provision in their reports to the Committee.

22. Chair's Announcements

The Chair had no announcements.

23. Budget Monitoring Report

Tracey Flack, Principal Accountant, introduced this report, AB65 previously circulated, which provided the Members with details of the financial position for services under the Operational Services Committee.

Cllr John Trapp stated that licensing fees were supposed to be cost neutral and he expressed concern regarding the £100,000 underspend. The Principal Accountant explained that recharges would be made at the end of the year and this would address this underspend.

In reply to Cllr John Trapp, the Principal Accountant agreed to find out more details of the £289,000 increase in capital expenditure and report back to the Committee.

In reply to Cllr Christine Colbert, the Director Operations explained that the Council had won the contract for Fenlands care and repair service this explained why repair work was being carried out in another district.

It was noted that the variance in the homelessness budget was mainly due to grant income being received later in the financial year and the position was expected to improve as the grant income was received.

It was resolved to:

- (i) Note that the Committee was currently projecting a year-end underspend of £114,000 on its revenue budget of £8,368,382.
- (ii) Note that the Committee has a projected capital programme outturn of £9,535,966. This included slippage from 2025/26 and additional budget for Wheelie Bins and Food Waste Caddies.

24. ECCS Financial Statements 2025/26 & Annual Governance Statement 2025/26

Nigel Ankers, ECSS Finance Manager, presented this report, AB64 previously circulated, which updated the Committee on the East Cambs Street Scene Financial Statements for 2025/26 and Emma Grima, ECSS Managing Director, presented the Annual Governance Statement for 2025/26.

The ECSS Managing Director confirmed that she was a Board Member and not Manager, as stated in Appendix 2.

In reply to Cllr Mark Inskip, The ECSS Managing Director explained that the ECSS had prioritised its work for the Council above that of winning other contracts. This position could change in the future, but the Council would remain the primary focus.

It was resolved to:

- (i) Note the East Cambs Street Scene Financial Statements 2025/26 as set out in Appendix 1.
- (ii) Note the East Cambs Street Scene Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 as set out in Appendix 2.

25. Approval of the 2026/27 Food and Health and Safety Service Plan

Richard Garnett, Senior Environmental Health Officer (Commercial), presented this report, AB63 previously circulated, which invited the Committee to update the Council's service plan for both food and safety to satisfy requirements of the Food Standards Agency and the Health and Safety Executive. It was noted that the date in the heading and the report should be 2026/27.

In reply to Cllr Mark Inskip, the Senior Environmental Health Officer (Commercial) explained that following the workload after covid it had been agreed to do a Food and Health and Safety Service Plan every three years. The Committee agreed that in the future the Service Plan should be formally reviewed every two years.

In reply to Cllr Christine Whelan, the Senior Environmental Health Officer (Commercial) stated that he was confident that the food safety inspections would be carried out according to the schedule. The inspections were reviewed at the monthly team meetings, and no inspections were outstanding from the previous year.

In reply to Cllr Lucius Vellacott, the Senior Environmental Health Officer (Commercial) explained that most of the places inspected were category “c” or “d”, as there were not many large manufacturers, which tended to be category “a”, or large care homes, which tended to be category “b”, in the district. However, if a property failed an inspection, it would be categorised as an “a”.

The Senior Environmental Health Officer (Commercial) explained that whilst the total figure for all premises looked stable, new businesses were replacing old businesses, as approximately half of new businesses fail in their first two years. Cllr John Trapp stated that he was pleased that according to the inspection figures the number of pubs had only declined by three over the past year. It was noted that the figures in the two rows marked Importers/Exporters EU and Importers/Exporters (3rd Countries) at table 2.5 in appendix 1 could now be included in a single row.

Cllr Julia Huffer proposed and Cllr Lucius Vellacott seconded the recommendation in the report. A vote was taken and it was unanimously agreed

To resolve to

Approve the Council’s Food and Health and Safety Service Plan at Appendix 1.

26. Application for ICCM Charter for the Bereaved Accreditation – Lake View Bereavement Centre

Marisa Rogers-Jones, Crematorium and Bereavement Services Manager, presented a report, AB62 previously circulated, which invited the Committee to give approval for the Lake View Bereavement Centre to commence the process of achieving the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) Charter for the Bereaved Accreditation.

In reply to Cllr Mark Inskip, the Crematorium and Bereavement Services Manager estimated that it would take the Council between 8 to 12 months to achieve accreditation. There would then be an annual review to sustain the accreditation.

In reply to Cllr Lucius Vellacott, the Crematorium and Bereavement Services Manager announced that the Centre had received enough bookings to make this month’s budget figure. Feedback from families and funeral directors were outstandingly positive. She added that achieving accreditation would provide a guarantee of a high level of service for future clients and be a source of pride for staff.

Cllr Anna Bailey encouraged all councillors to visit the Centre if they had not already done so. It was a beautiful setting, with welcoming staff. She thanked those who had worked so hard to make the Centre operational. Cllr Lucius Vellacott added that the site had been transformed from an area blighted by fly-tipping to a picturesque setting for an excellent Centre that provided a much appreciated service from dedicated staff.

Cllr Lucius Vellacott proposed and Cllr Anna Bailey seconded the recommendation in the report. A vote was taken and it was unanimously agreed

To resolve to:

- (i) Approve the Lake View Bereavement Centre working towards ICCM Charter for the Bereaved Accreditation – detailed within Appendix 1.
- (ii) Delegate authority to the Bereavement Services Manager, in consultation with the Director of Operations, to undertake the work required to achieve accreditation.
- (iii) Approve the Lake View Bereavement Centre Proposed Action Plan – detailed within Appendix 2.

27. Housing Association Performance

Lucy Flintham, Community Infrastructure Manager, presented a report, AB66 previously circulated, which invited the Committee to agree the process for monitoring affordable housing provider performance following the Motion passed by Council on 16 July 2026. She explained that the Appendix number in the first recommendation in the report should be corrected to 2.

In reply to Cllr Mark Inskip, the Community Infrastructure Manager explained most of the information being requested by the Council was already held by the affordable housing providers and the three providers who had been contacted so far were happy to provide it. The challenge was to filter this information to only include properties in the district.

In reply to Cllr Christine Colbert, the Community Infrastructure Manager explained that the Council had included a stock profile of the housing association properties in the draft reporting framework and she agreed to see what information was returned and also if any information was held internally and forward this to members of the Committee.

In reply to Cllr John Trapp, the Community Infrastructure Manager explained that the 100 home threshold for performance reporting meant that nine housing associations who were responsible for 91% of dwellings in the district would be covered.

In reply to Cllr John Trapp's concerns that the questions were too detailed, as the Council would not be able to enforce and recommendations, the Community Infrastructure Manager reported that the service providers were already collecting this data. It was hoped that the data could be used to ascertain any gaps in the existing service.

Cllr John Trapp suggested that it would be useful to have the actual number of anti-social behaviour cases as the average could be skewed by outliers. Cllr Christine Colbert asked if instances of anti-social behaviour perpetrated against housing association tenants could also be recorded. The Community Infrastructure Manager agreed to confirm whether housing associations were only recording instances of anti-social behaviour by their tenants. Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith reported that anti-social behaviour was an area of concern, but it meant different things to different people.

It was noted that the Affordable Housing Member Champion would be an unpaid position.

Cllr Anna Bailey proposed and Cllr Ambrose Smith seconded the recommendations in the report with Cllr Lee Denney as the Affordable Housing Member Champion.

Cllr Anna Bailey expressed her support for the report's recommendations, which would provide much needed information. She expected that the Council would adapt the process where required.

Cllr Mark Inskip proposed and Cllr Christine Colbert seconded an amendment to the recommendations, to include the following paragraph:

"Request the Affordable Housing Member Champion to work with officers to establish practical arrangements to strengthen the voice of social housing tenants across the district, including consideration of periodic tenant surveys, tenant forums or reference panels and targeted engagement with older and vulnerable residents, disabled residents, rural communities and those less likely to use digital channels or formal complaints processes."

It was noted that an additional paragraph requesting representatives of the housing associations to attend meetings of the Committee had been ruled out of order, as this suggestion had been rejected by the Council meeting on 16 July and so could not be discussed again during the next six months as laid out in procedure rule 20.

Cllr Mark Inskip stated that it was important to learn of the experiences of housing association tenants and the amendment suggested ways in which the Affordable Housing Member Champion could achieve this by involving them directly in the consultation process. He was concerned that not agreeing the amendment would lead to delays in the consultation process.

Cllr Julia Huffer opposed the amendment, as the original recommendations already allowed both the Member Champion to decide where more input was necessary and the officers to liaise with tenants and their representatives. The Committee needed to agree to allow the role of the Member Champion to evolve. Cllr Anna Bailey stated that this matter had already been discussed and rejected at July's Council and the only change was to add the words "Affordable Housing Member Champion" to the amendment. This was a new initiative, and it needed the Member Champion and officers to work with the housing associations and update the Committee in the New Year. The Council was not the regulator and was not in a position to enforce changes. The purpose of the original recommendations was to improve transparency through

the reporting of accurate data and then, if necessary, take actions based on this information. The proposed amendment was premature and unnecessary.

Cllr Christine Colbert expressed her support for the amendment, as it ensured that the Member Champion liaised with the tenants at the earliest opportunity.

Cllr Lucius Vellacott opposed the amendment as it restricted the role of the Member Champion and so was unnecessary. He expressed disappointment at the fact that the amendment had only been circulated to councillors a few minutes before the meeting.

Cllr Lee Denney explained that under the original recommendations the Affordable Housing Member Champion would be expected to examine the data and then work with the housing associations on any resulting issues. The housing associations already carried out tenant surveys. The Council needed to take a holistic approach, and so he opposed the amendment as being too nuanced and unnecessary.

Cllr Christine Whelan stated that the Council had appointed several member champions in the past, but they had rarely reported back to committees, and she was concerned that the Affordable Housing Member Champion would be similarly ineffective. Cllr Julia Huffer replied that the Council no longer had many member champions and their role had been to act as a focus point for any queries on a particular issue and not to report directly to Committees, as representatives on Outside Bodies did.

A vote was taken and with 5 votes in favour, 6 against and no abstentions, the amendment was lost.

Cllr Anna Bailey proposed and Cllr Ambrose Smith seconded recommendations (i) and (ii). A vote was taken and it was unanimously agreed

To resolve to:

- (i) Approve the draft performance reporting template at Appendix 2.
- (ii) Agree a stock threshold of over 100 properties.

Cllr Julia Huffer proposed and Cllr Lucius Vellacott seconded Cllr Lee Denney as the Affordable Housing Member Champion. Cllr Mark Inskip recommended and Cllr Christine Whelan seconded Cllr Christine Colbert as the Affordable Housing Member Champion. A vote was taken and Cllr Lee Denney received 6 votes, whilst Cllr Christine Colbert received 5 votes. The Committee therefore

Resolved to

- (iii) Appoint Cllr Lee Denney as Affordable Housing Member Champion to undertake the role as set out in the report.

28. Draft Minutes of Anglia Revenues Partnership for 9 June 2026

The Committee received the minutes from the Anglia Revenues Benefit Joint Committee meeting on 9 June 2026. It was agreed that Cllr John Trapp's request for more information regarding the "£4.8m fraud and error by year end" reported in the minute 18/26 should be directed to Cllr Keith Horgan, who was the Chair of the Partnership.

It was resolved:

To note the Minutes of the Anglia Revenues & Benefits Joint Committee meeting on 9 June 2026.

29. Forward Agenda Plan

The Committee considered its Forward Agenda Plan.

It was resolved to:

Note the Forward Agenda Plan, with the inclusion of an update on Housing Association Performance in the New Year.

30. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Cllr Martin Goodearl proposed and Cllr Anna Bailey seconded that the meeting should go into private session. A vote was taken and it was unanimously resolved:

That the press and public be excluded during the consideration of the remaining items because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information of Category 3 of Part 1 Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

31. East Cambs Street Scene Management Accounts Three Months to 30 June 2026 – EXEMPT

The ECSS Finance Manager presented a report, AB67 previously circulated, which updated the Committee on the ECSS Management Accounts for the three months to 30 June 2026.

It was resolved that:

The ECSS Management Accounts for the three months to 30 June 2026 be noted.

32. Exempt Minutes of the Committee held on 22 June 2026 - EXEMPT

It was resolved:

That the exempt minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22 June 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The meeting concluded at 5.45 pm

Chair

Date.....