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East Cambridgeshire
District Council

COUNCIL – 17 OCTOBER 2024 – DECISION LIST

Item No.	Report Ref.	Item	Issue	Decision	Action by
1.	-	Public Question Time	To answer questions from members of the public.	There were no public questions.	-
2.	-	Apologies for Absence	To receive apologies for absence from Members.	Apologies were received from Cllrs Brown, Inskip and Lay.	-
3.	-	Declarations of Interests	To receive declarations of interests from Members in respect of any items on the Agenda in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct.	<p>Under agenda item 7a, Cllr Charlotte Cane declared an interest in the motion on Winter Fuel Allowance as she had voted on this matter in the House of Commons. The Monitoring Officer advised that she should not participate in the debate. Councillor Charlotte Cane did not participate in the debate and did not vote.</p> <p>Under agenda item 9, 2a Waste and Street Cleansing Service Proposals, Cllr Lorna Dupré declared an interest as a member of the County Council's Environment and Green Investment Committee. It was agreed that she could participate in the debate and vote.</p>	-
4.	-	Minutes – 25 July 2024	To receive the Minutes of the last Council meeting.	<p>It was agreed:</p> <p>That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 25 July 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chair.</p>	Democratic Services and Elections Manager
5.	-	Chair's Announcements	Announcement of items of interest.	<p>The Chair made the following announcements:</p> <p>He had signed the armed forces covenant.</p>	-

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				He had attended a church service commemorating the 75 th anniversary of a plane crash near the village of Isleham.	
6.	-	To Receive Petitions	To receive public petitions.	No public petitions had been received.	-
7.	-	Notice of Motions Under Procedure Rule 10	<p>The following Motions were received and considered:</p> <p>i. <u>Changes to the Winter Fuel Allowance and Protecting Pensioners from Fuel Poverty</u> Text of Motion at the end of Decision List Proposer: Cllr Anna Bailey Seconder: Cllr Julia Huffer</p> <p>ii. <u>Sea Toilets</u> Text of motion at the end of Decision List Proposer: Cllr Kathrin Holtzmann Seconder: Cllr Lorna Dupré</p>	<p>Motion unanimously agreed.</p> <p>Motion unanimously agreed.</p>	<p>Director (Legal Services)</p> <p>Director (Legal Services)</p>
8.	-	To answer Questions from Members	To receive questions from Members of Council.	Four questions from Members were received and responses given as detailed at the end of the Decision List.	-
9.	Z76	Recommendations from Committees and other Member Bodies	Licensing Committee – 11 September 2024	<p>1.a) <u>Gambling Policy Consultation</u> It was unanimously resolved:</p> <p>That the Council's Gambling Act 2005 – Statement of Principles (Three-Year Review) be agreed.</p>	Director Operations

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			Operational Services – 23 September 2024	<p>2.a) <u>Waste & Street Cleansing Service Proposals</u> It was unanimously agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The Council implements the measures as detailed in Section 4.3 - 4.5 of the officer's report and collects food waste in a separate container, on a weekly basis by 31 March 2026. ii. The Council implements the collection of residual waste in a 180lt wheeled bin on a fortnightly basis as detailed in Sections 4.3 - 4.5 of the officer's report by 31 March 2026. iii. The Council retains a free fortnightly garden waste collection service that is suspended for 6 weeks during winter and Christmas catch up period by 31 March 2026. iv. The Council removes the annual subscription charge for a second garden waste bin from 1 April 2026. v. The Council removes the one-off charge for an additional recycling bin from 1 April 2026. vi. The Director of Operations is instructed to progress with the procurement of vehicles, caddies and bins required to implement i. and ii. above by 31st March 2026. vii. The supporting mobilisation and communication plans as detailed in Appendices 3 and 4 of the officer's report are APPROVED. viii. The Council retain the current street cleansing service specification, with minor changes to ways 	

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				<p>of working set out in Sections 4.19 - 4.21 of the officer's report.</p> <p>ix. The Council review the Street Cleansing specification in one year's time with regards to how it has enabled performance delivery against the Key Performance Indicators with ECSS (East Cambs Street Scene) to determine any new specification for implementation from 1 April 2026.</p> <p>2.b) <u>Waste & Street Cleansing Delivery Model</u></p> <p>It was agreed resolved that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The decision to proceed with using East Cambs Street Scene Ltd (ECSS) as set out in Sections 4.7-4.8 of the Officer's report be APPROVED. ii. The Director Operations be authorised to develop the service specification and, in consultation with Director Legal, prepare a new contracting arrangement to commence from 1 April 2026. 	
10.	Z77	New East Cambridgeshire Local Plan: Commencement of Preparation	To determine whether or not to commence a full update of its Local Plan.	<p>It was unanimously resolved that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The commencement of a new East Cambridgeshire Local Plan be agreed and the attached Local Development Scheme (LDS) (Appendix 1), which sets out the timetable for the production of the Local Plan be agreed with immediate effect. 	Strategic Planning Manager

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				<p>ii. A Local Plan Member Working Group, established in the form as set out in Appendix 2 be agreed.</p> <p>iii. The Membership of the Working Group, in line with arrangements set out in paragraph 4.26 of this agenda report be agreed.</p>	
11.	Z78	The making of the Soham and Barway Neighbourhood Plan	To make the Soham and Barway Neighbourhood Plan part of the development plan for East Cambridgeshire.	<p>It was unanimously agreed that:</p> <p>a) The Soham Town Council be congratulated on their preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan, and a successful referendum.</p> <p>b) The Soham and Barway Neighbourhood Plan be made part of the Development Plan for East Cambridgeshire with immediate effect.</p>	Strategic Planning Manager
12.	Z77	The Making of the Cheveley Neighbourhood Plan	To make the Cheveley Neighbourhood Plan part of the development plan for East Cambridgeshire.	<p>It was unanimously agreed that:</p> <p>a) The Cheveley Parish Council be congratulated on their preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan, and a successful referendum</p> <p>b) The Cheveley Neighbourhood Plan are made part of the Development Plan for East Cambridgeshire with immediate effect.</p>	Strategic Planning Manager

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13.	Z78	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Update Reports	<p>To receive the reports from the Constituent Council representatives on the Combined Authority:</p> <p>Business Board (8 July 2024)</p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny Committee (11 July 2024)</p> <p>Audit and Governance Committee (18 July 2024, 26 September 2024)</p> <p>Transport and Infrastructure Committee (22 July 2024, 18 September 2024)</p> <p>Combined Authority Board (24 July 2024, 4 September 2024)</p> <p>Skills and Employment Committee (29 July 2024)</p> <p>Environment and Sustainable Communities Committee (31 July 2024)</p> <p>Investment Committee (29 August 2024)</p>	<p>It was agreed:</p> <p>That the reports on the activities of the Combined Authority from the Council's representatives be noted.</p>	Democratic Services and Elections Manager

1. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

7. MOTIONS

1. Changes to the Winter Fuel Allowance and Protecting Pensioners from Fuel Poverty

This Council notes:

- The Labour Government's cruel decision to take away Winter Fuel Payments from all pensioners except those in receipt of means-tested benefits like Pension Credit.
- The estimated impact of this decision, which Age UK says will mean 2 million pensioners who badly need the money to stay warm this winter, including 16,658 pensioners in East Cambridgeshire, will not receive it.
- The significant role that Winter Fuel Payments play in helping older residents of East Cambridgeshire and across the UK afford heating during the coldest months, thereby preventing 'heat or eat' dilemmas and safeguarding health.
- The criticism from Age UK, the Countryside Alliance and other charities, highlighting the social injustice and potential health risks posed by this sudden policy change.
- The additional strain this decision will place on vulnerable pensioners, many of whom do not claim Pension Credit despite being eligible, further exacerbating their financial hardship.

This Council believes:

- That the Winter Fuel Payment has been a lifeline for many older people across the UK and that restricting its availability solely to those on Pension Credit risks leaving many pensioners in financial hardship.
- Many thousands across East Cambridgeshire sit just above the cut-off for Pension Credit and will now lose their allowance.
- The decision to means-test Winter Fuel Payments, especially with such short notice and without adequate compensatory measures, is deeply unfair and will disproportionately affect the health and well-being of our poorest older residents.
- The Government's approach fails to consider the administrative barriers and stigma that prevent eligible pensioners from claiming Pension Credit, leaving many without the support they desperately need.

This Council resolves to:

- Increase the Council's local awareness campaign which has been underway for several weeks now, to alert those eligible for Pension Credit to apply by the deadline of 21st December 2024, to try to ensure Winter Fuel Payments still get to those most in need.

- Continue to encourage local efforts to promote Pension Credit uptake through Council services, Anglia Revenues Partnership, and other partnerships with local charities and community organisations to ensure that all eligible pensioners in East Cambridgeshire are supported in claiming their entitlement.
- Request that the Council Leader write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging a review of the decision to means-test the Winter Fuel Payment and asking the Government to take urgent steps to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim Pension Credit, are protected from fuel poverty.
- Write to all Members offering them the opportunity to sign the 'Save the Winter Fuel Payment for Struggling Pensioners' petition being run by Age UK.

Proposer: Cllr Anna Bailey

Seconder: Cllr Julia Huffer

2. Sea Toilets

This Council notes the importance to our area of the Great Ouse and its tributaries, for navigation, leisure, and the conveyance of water.

This Council further notes that control of the Great Ouse rests with the Environment Agency which currently permits the use of sea toilets which discharge human waste and other materials directly into the river.

The discharge of sea toilets is permitted by regulation on all inland waterways unless specifically banned.

This Council believes that this practice should be prohibited on the Great Ouse and its tributaries, and therefore resolves to request the Environment Agency to take the necessary steps to achieve a ban.

Proposer: Cllr Kathrin Holtzmann

Seconder: Cllr Lorna Dupré

8. TO ANSWER QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

1. QUESTION FROM CLLR LUCIUS VELLACOTT TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, CLLR ANNA BAILEY

'The youth unemployment rate is rising, from 13.0% in 2023 to 14.2% this year. The youth economic inactivity rate is also rising, now at 41.2%, 26% of whom are not in full-time education, which is the highest since records began. In East Cambridgeshire, the overall unemployment rate is 3.5% with an 18.2% economic inactivity rate.

I consider that the Council has a duty to help young people into work if they are unemployed or economically inactive, and not in full-time education, caring or otherwise unable to work. Young people who are able to work learn important life skills such as financial management, perseverance, people skills and more. It also provides a sense of purpose and motivation which is essential when transitioning into adult life. But young people are struggling. They have told us, via our Youth Engagement Strategy, about difficulties arising from the pandemic, one of the effects of which is that it is more difficult to get a job or to obtain work-related skills.

What is the Council doing to engage with relevant partners, and what action is it taking itself, to promote local apprenticeships, employment, work experience and skills training for young people across the District?

Response from the Leader, Cllr Bailey:

Cllr Anna Bailey explained that the Council's youth education and work webpage included links to a wide range of organisations that detailed opportunities for young people. These included the national apprenticeship week and an annual skills fair at Ely Cathedral on 5 November, which was sponsored by the Council. The authority also supported the Chamber of Commerce networking event and was considering restarting the district skills partnership, with the DWP and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority. A recent youth fusion event provided career advice to attendees and gave details on opportunities to volunteer. The Council was also liaising with the Combined Authority to address the lack of further education providers in the District. Cambridgeshire County Council planned to conduct a youth survey in the area. It should also be noted that the annual SME Business Awards, hosted by the Ely Standard, included awards for both the business that provided the best apprenticeships and the young business person of the year.

2. QUESTION FROM CLLR JOHN TRAPP TO CLLR BILL HUNT

What legal advice did you seek, and what legal advice did you receive, to inform your decision whether to chair the meeting of the Planning Committee on 13 August 2024 that determined the Soham Gateway and Soham Medical Centre planning applications?"

Response from Cllr Hunt:

Councillor Bill Hunt suggested that this question should have been asked to him directly instead of at full Council. He explained that since being elected as a County Councillor in a by-election in 2023 had had no involvement in the matter under

discussion. He had informed the Planning Committee on 13 August 2024 that he had taken legal advice from the Council's Monitoring Officer, who confirmed that providing he declared an interest as a County Council and confirmed that he came to the debate with an open mind, no further action was necessary.

3. Question from Cllr Caroline Shepherd to Cllr Alan Sharp:

What legal advice did you seek, and what legal advice did you receive, to inform your decision whether to participate in the meeting of the Planning Committee on 13 August which determined the Soham Gateway and Soham Medical Centre planning applications?

Response from Cllr Sharp:

Cllr Alan Sharp explained that he had sought advice from the Monitoring Officer on whether he could participate in the debate at the Planning Committee on 13 August 2024. He had not taken part in any discussions of the matter in question as a County Councillor and came to the meeting with an open mind, so the Monitoring Officer advised that he could participate at the meeting. He reported that he had declared an interest as advised and had voted against the planning application at the meeting.

4. Question from Cllr Charlotte Cane MP to Cllr Alan Sharp:

At the meeting of the Finance & Assets Committee on 26 September 2024, it was acknowledged that some of the information that was in the exempt papers relating to the proposed crematorium at Mepal could and should have been placed in the public domain. Will the Chair of the Finance & Assets Committee, in conjunction with the Liberal Democrat lead member on that committee, now work to identify and publish that information?

Response from Cllr Sharp:

"The Council is committed to openness and transparency and as such we did provide a detailed update on the project within the public session. The commitment I made at Finance & Assets Committee was to ask the Director of Operations to review what information could be shared within public session for future reporting.

"It is vital that the information we provide in the public domain does not compromise the council's ability to secure a competitive quote back from the market for the build of the Bereavement Centre, and I will take advice from officers and the professionals we have brought on board to lead the project, about what information should remain confidential to ensure that we secure value for money for residents of East Cambs.

"I understand the public interest in the project and am keen to provide the public with as much information as possible as the project progresses. But the project team need to ensure that the release of any project detail, including elements not related to the commercials of the scheme, do not compromise the project during the tendering process, during the build or the future management or running of the Bereavement Centre. Much of the risk, financial or operational aspects are interrelated and disaggregating the information to ensure it remains meaningful to the public may not be straightforward and could potentially be misleading.

"Therefore, as agreed the Director of Operations has already committed to take professional advice from the external design team about what information could be used in public without compromising the Council's financial position."

5. Question from Cllr Christine Colbert to Cllr Lorna Dupré

"What legal advice did you seek, and what legal advice did you receive, to inform your decision whether to participate in the meeting of the Planning Committee on 13 August which determined the Soham Gateway and Soham Medical Centre planning applications"

Response from Cllr Dupré:

Cllr Lorna Dupré reported she had asked Cambridgeshire County Council's Monitoring Officer whether it was appropriate for her to participate in the discussion at the Planning Committee as she was a County Councillor and a member of the Strategy, Performance and Resources Committee and the Assets and Procurement Committee.

The County Council's Monitoring Officer had advised that as Assets and Procurement Committee holds the shareholder function for This Land Ltd and the Strategy, Performance and Resources Committee had a vested interest in the company as part of the medium term financial plan, she should not participate in the debate. Cllr Dupré concluded that she had not participated in the debate on this matter.