

COUNCIL



17 NOVEMBER 2016 - 4:00PM

PRESENT: Councillor S Bligh, Councillor C Boden, Councillor G G R Booth, Councillor M G Bucknor, Councillor Mrs V M Bucknor, Councillor M Buckton, Councillor T R Butcher, Councillor J F Clark, Councillor S Clark, Councillor D W Connor, Councillor M Cornwell, Councillor S Count, Councillor S R Court, Councillor Mrs C R Cox, Councillor M Davis, Councillor Mrs J French, Councillor S Garratt, Councillor D Green, Councillor A Hay, Councillor D Hodgson, Councillor Miss S Hoy, Councillor M J Humphrey, Councillor S J E King, Councillor D Laws, Councillor D Mason, Councillor Mrs K F Mayor, Councillor A Miscandlon, Councillor P Murphy, Councillor D C Oliver, Councillor A Pugh, Councillor R Skoulding, Councillor W Sutton, Councillor M Tanfield, Councillor G Tibbs, Councillor S Tierney, Councillor F H Yeulett.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Mrs Newell and Councillor Seaton

Councillor Mrs Cox paid tribute to two previous serving Councillors, Ann Carlisle and Peter Tunley who both sadly passed away earlier in October.

Ann Carlisle served as a District Councillor from 1995 to 2007, representing Peckover Ward of Wisbech. She held numerous positions within the Council over the years including being Chairman of the Council for three years from 2001 to 2004. Ann was passionate about Wisbech and the local community she served.

Peter Tunley served Fenland Council both as an officer and as a Member for more than 20 years. He devoted 13 years of his working life from 1987 to 2000. His last role from 1995 to 2000 was as Director of Contract Services, during which time he played a key role in the development of Wisbech Port. Peter became an elected Member of the Council from 2007 to 2015, he too was passionate about local issues and proactively represented March North Ward.

Members and Officers joined the Chairman in standing and observing a minutes silence in remembrance.

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Buckton to the meeting following a period of illness.

C32/16 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 15 September 2016 were agreed and signed subject to the following:

- Councillor Booth referring to page 10, asked for the word 'Neighbourhood' to be added to clarify his question with regards to informing Town and Parish Councils about changes in Neighbourhood Planning Legislation;
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor referring to page 9, stated that Councillor Cornwell passed her question about whether an update meeting for the Wisbech Alcohol Project could be held at the Oasis Centre onto Councillor Oliver who agreed to get back to her, but to date has not. Councillor Oliver apologised for the delay he confirmed that he has been in touch with the project but has not had the chance to respond to Councillor Mrs Bucknor directly, he agreed to discuss further following the meeting.

C33/16 **CIVIC ENGAGEMENTS UPDATE - FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

Councillor Mrs Cox referred members to the civic activities undertaken by herself and the Vice Chairman in the weeks preceding Full Council.

C34/16 **TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL AND/OR THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE.**

Councillor Mrs Cox thanked everyone who supported her coffee morning in aid this year of Local Branches of the Royal British Legion. She stated that the event was a roaring success due to the generosity of councillors, staff and community members with £260.00 raised.

Councillor Mrs Cox reminded members that the Chairman's Christmas Carol Service is on Sunday 11 December at 3.00pm at the Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul, Wisbech. She stated that all members are welcome to attend.

Paul Medd - Chief Executive stated that he is delighted to announce that Fenland District Council has been shortlisted in the 'Efficiency' category of the LGC awards adding that just seven other councils have made it to the final, including large Unitary and London Borough Authorities, so to be recognised is a real achievement. He stated that our efficiency entry describes the positive work we are undertaking to deliver a sustainable, balanced budget. Since 2010, we have delivered over £8m of savings whilst protecting important frontline services. Our Comprehensive Spending Review is continuing to support the delivery of the required additional savings that we must make over the next three years. We continue to work successfully with partners to make our resources go further.

Paul Medd stated that the Council's efficiency strategy is proving to be highly effective and has resulted in the delivery of service transformation and significant savings. We will be making our final presentation to the LGC judges in January. The winning Council will be announced later in March.

C35/16 **TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS FROM, AND PROVIDE ANSWERS TO, COUNCILLORS IN RELATION TO MATTERS WHICH, IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIRMAN, ACCORD WITH THE PROVISIONS OF PROCEDURE RULES 8.4 AND 8.6.**

Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that in April 2016 she wrote to Officers asking for details regarding the audit undertaken of FACT, she particularly wanted to be satisfied of robust, substantive, analytical procedures including examining FACT's internal controls and division of their private and charitable work. She stated that she did not receive a satisfactory response, and despite assurances seven months later she has still received no response. She stated that she is having to rely on her local newspaper rather than this Council and is concerned that this is the only information she is getting about FACT. Councillor Clark stated that FACT are currently being investigated by the police, therefore he is not prepared to make any comment at this time.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated for clarification that she has not asked for any comments from the police but has asked what updates the Council Auditor undertook and does not understand why she is unable to get a response about that. Councillor Clark stated that County have called investigators in and FACT is still under investigation by the County Council and the police and there is no comment to make until they finish their enquiries.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that although she appreciates what Councillor Clark is saying she would like to make the point that according to the newspaper the police were only called into the County Council a fortnight ago and she has been asking for this information for seven months. Councillor Clark reiterated that FACT are under investigation and therefore he has no comment to make. Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that she feels the information she is asking for should be in

the public domain.

Councillor Count stated that Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that the police were called into the County Council but for clarity the police were called in by the County Council.

C36/16 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM AND ASK QUESTIONS OF CABINET MEMBERS WITH PORTFOLIO HOLDER RESPONSIBILITIES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE RULES 8.1 AND 8.2.

Councillor Mrs Cox stated that to allow full discussion on this item, she is proposing to suspend Standing Orders to enable members to make comments as well as ask questions. This was AGREED.

Councillor Mrs French stated that there are many road works being carried out and she has received reports of bins that have been missed during refuse collection rounds, she asked Councillor Murphy to speak to the team to ask them to take care that they are not missing bins although she appreciates that it is not easy whilst there are road works on-going. Councillor Murphy stated that the road works are making collections difficult and some are taking a long time to complete, he confirmed that the teams are trying their best.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that given the fact that members are aware of a huge increase street drinking and the issues related to this as detailed in the Council Report what else does this Council plan to do and asked if Wisbech Councillors can be involved in any discussions so that they can make a contribution to any plans moving forward. Councillor Cornwell stated that this is a project that falls into the responsibility of 3 portfolio holders, he explained that there is an event taking place on 30 November 2016, for which there has been a press release about recently explaining what is going to happen on that day. He confirmed that this project is operated through the Community Safety Partnership. Councillor Oliver confirmed that this is a project that aims to help people that have issues with alcohol; he stated that we are in the process of applying for additional funding from the Government to expand the project and to try to tackle the issues in other ways. This is a big issue and we are doing everything we can as a local authority to identify and help those people involved.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that she would like the Wisbech District Councillors involved in the project as they are concerned too and feel that they can help and contribute to reduce the issues in the area. She added that this needs some serious action; it is a complex issue that is dealing with mental health issues too. Councillor Oliver stated that the next phase of looking at funding will involve consultation with Wisbech Town Council and other organisations, because as Councillor Mrs Bucknor has said it is a complex issue not only looking at alcohol, but also, mental health problems, domestic abuse, homelessness and traffics incidents.

Councillor Booth referring to page 48 of the report asked Councillor Butcher with regards to LEP engagement funding for Fenland Rail, how much funding was obtained and was it just for feasibility studies. Councillor Butcher confirmed that the funding was for feasibility studies and that he would let Councillor Booth know the details with regards to the funding figures as he does not have that information today.

Councillor Booth referring to page 62 of the report asked Councillor King with regards to the Travel Choices what funding has been provided and what will be delivered as a result of that funding. Councillor King confirmed that we do not have any funding at this stage but have applied for it. We are hoping to roll something similar to the Wisbech Travel Choices out to the rest of Fenland. Councillor Booth asked for clarification that this was the programme with leaflets produced to help people to get from A to B. Councillor King stated that the leaflets are part of the programme, but there is also the provision in Wisbech of an information centre, developing a programme of training for Transport Champions and working with other groups such as Doctor Surgeries to look at

helping people to get to appointments; because of the success of the Wisbech programme we are hoping that we will get the funding to roll it out.

Councillor Booth asked Councillor Sutton if he could answer a question on behalf of Councillor Seaton as he is not at the meeting. Referring to page 69 and how to get feedback on proposals for the Wisbech Garden Town, he asked if there is any data available for numbers of people spoken to or numbers completing the survey, he added that it would be interesting to see how many people we engaged on this because he does not feel that there is a high level of awareness. Councillor Sutton explained that he did not have that information and agreed to get back to Councillor Booth.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor referring to page 20 of the report with regards to free school meals asked Councillor Tanfield why there is no data to go with the report, she stated that she understands that previously a problem with the software, but understands that this was resolved. She asked if members could get a quarterly statement from the County Council to see how successful this new software is. She stated that if everyone who is entitled was claiming their free school meals this could make a huge difference to Fenland schools generating a huge income for them. Councillor Tanfield agreed that this information has been a long time coming, she agreed to investigate and feedback to Councillor Mrs Bucknor.

Councillor Booth asked if relevant facts and figures could be included in the reports in future as there is not as much detail in this report as there has been in previous reports.

C37/16 CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH DEVOLUTION

Members considered the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Devolution Report presented by Councillor Clark who made the following statement:

It is around a year since the journey on devolution started, with Government suggesting an Eastern powerhouse comprising of Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. After several meetings it became clear that it was just too big an area, too many asks and demands and lack of unity and commitment.

So Cambridgeshire and Peterborough started to come together on our devolution journey, negotiating with Government could be described as difficult, however we have arrived here today with a devolution offer, described by Sajid Javid as one of the most ambitious deals nationally.

There has been some speculations that a Mayor is negotiable, the short answer is no. Sajid Javid has said 'I am not going to devolve significant powers and more tax payer's money without a corresponding increase in local accountability, it's a real red line for me when it comes to negotiating devolution'.

I genuinely believe that this is the best devolution deal we will get, so today is make your mind up day.

We have to consider what is on offer and how it could benefit Fenland, it could be argued that Fenland has never received its full quota from Cambridgeshire and I believe this agreement goes a long way to put that right, giving us one of the nine votes on the combined authority.

To outline what is on offer:

1. £20m per year for the next 30 years, not recycled money but new money for Cambridgeshire to support economic growth, development of local infrastructure and jobs, and in the meetings we have had, other combined authority members fully support the Wisbech Garden Town, the Wisbech Rail Link and improvements to the A47. There is also the opportunity to borrow money against our £20m per year.

2. £100m for non-housing revenue account, once again, preliminary discussions have taken place where Fenland will get their fair share of this £100m.
3. An additional £70m for affordable housing in Cambridge which will be used in its entirety to build new Council homes.
4. Government support for developing a Peterborough University with degree awarding powers.
5. Working with Government to secure a Peterborough Enterprise Zone.
6. A local integrated job service working alongside the Department of Work and Pensions.
7. Co-design with Government a national work and health programme focused on those with a health conditions or disabilities as well as the long term unemployed.
8. Devolved skills and apprenticeship budget to give more opportunities to our young people including £120m funding.
9. Further potential rail improvements.
10. The potential to accelerate transport infrastructure improvements, such as the A14/A142 junction and upgrades to the A10 and A47 and the Ely North junction. Also it would support development at Wyton and St Neots and Wisbech Garden Town and the Wisbech to Cambridge rail connection.
11. Further integration of local health and social care resources to provide better outcomes for residents.
12. This is also only the start of the journey as we are already working on deal two including:
 1. Focus on deprived areas;
 2. Health and Social Care;
 3. Infrastructure;
 4. Community Safety.

This is all set out in the report.

Fenland has the benefit of our Chief Executive being the interim Chief Executive for the combined authority and a March Councillor being the interim Chairman.

My old boss used to say 'with any deal, be in it for the meat and leave the gravy for others' and in my opinion I do not think that this deal will get any better and we will never see another offer with this amount of funding attached, £1.2m.

Alongside this, we also have the ear of Government, on a recent visit by Lord Bourne and over a working lunch he was very interested in our newly proposed Garden Town, saying it had been brought up in informal meetings with Sajid Javid and others and that it is seen as a leading project and could be ground-breaking in design and a leading example to the rest of the Country. It was also commented on that our Council has a good reputation for spending money efficiently. We also have the support of our MP.

The recommendations are set out in the report, I would ask you to support this Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Devolution deal.

The item was proposed by Councillor Sutton, seconded by Councillor Tanfield and opened for debate.

Councillor Bucknor stated that he has not been given a clear mandate by his residents to make a decision about the governance as potentially life changing as this new tier of Government may become. The way that this deal has been introduced does not enhance democracy it is a tier further away from it. To have a Mayor is mandatory and non-negotiable, it is another charge on our resources and is almost blackmail, and in his opinion for this process to be democratically executed the electorate should be properly informed and involved. Therefore a referendum would be appropriate. The final decision should not be delegated to councils but be presented to the public for their decision. He added that he would not be supporting this proposal.

Councillor Tierney stated that he agrees with a great deal of what Councillor Bucknor said as he has had some reservations about this plan too, there has not been enough guaranteed in writing and he would like to have seen the whole thing handled differently. He added that if we vote for this we must be vigilant to make sure that the promises that are made to us are kept, that the new money really is new money and does not disappear from elsewhere, that the people working with the new tier of Government do not get paid huge amounts of special responsibility allowances and that there is proper democratic scrutiny of the work. He stated that there are a lot of things to be concerned about but the offer is too big to say no to and he does not want to be the Councillor that turns down this massive investment, it is a leap in the dark but he will be supporting this proposal.

Councillor Yeulett stated that this is a golden opportunity for Cambridgeshire and for Fenland. It will bring new resources to a local level and will hopefully address some of our major challenges such as infrastructure, deprivation, workforce training and business. He added that like many others he had reservations about the Mayor and was concerned that it would be Peterborough and Cambridge central, but he feels sure that our representatives for the combined authority will fight for Fenland. This is only the start and there will be more resources available moving forward to help with health and deprivation and social care. He stated that the Government are giving us this opportunity and that he is supporting the proposal.

Councillor Boden stated that he has also had concerns with regards to the proposals, but the proposal in front of us offers this area a large amount of additional money and although he does not think that we will get all of the promised money as there are many reasons why the plans may change, but we have a certainty of £200m of additional money which will definitely come through. This money will be targeted towards the areas of greatest deprivation, those areas which most desperately need this money such as areas in March and especially Wisbech which feature high on the list of multiple deprivation. He stated that he is surprised by Councillor Bucknor's comments as this will particularly effect those in the Waterlees Ward, this is exactly what is needed to try to ensure that we reduce the shameful levels of inequality within Cambridgeshire as a whole. We are sure to get something out of this and even if it is only £100m we cannot turn this opportunity down.

Councillor Boden proposed that at the appropriate time he would ask for a recorded vote as it is important to see which Councillors want to see additional funds coming into our area. Councillor Connor seconded the proposal for a recorded vote.

Councillor Mason stated that there have been concerns expressed with regards to the appointment of a Mayor, but when you put it into perspective it has been reported that for £1 spent on the Mayor's Office £45 will be spent on the rest of the scheme. He confirmed that he was in support of the proposal.

Councillor King stated that he had wondered why are the Government doing this and what is in it for them and the answer is increased tax, when the devolution scheme is reviewed they will be looking to see if the tax code has increased in this area and what that means for this area is more prosperity. He added that already Manchester have already achieved 50% of that increased tax code, so devolutions works, it does increase prosperity. We have two choices, to carry on as we are or to do something different and we would be crazy not to say we need to do something different as everything we have done so far really has not worked so we need to try something new. He stated that we owe a huge debt of gratitude to our officers and to Councillors Clark and Count who have negotiated this deal, as we have a better deal now than we started with. He confirmed that he will be supporting the proposal.

Councillor Sutton stated that he too would like to pay tribute to the Leader of the County and our own Leader as there have been many many hours spent on this project. He extended thanks to the Chief Executive and his immediate team who have also contributed many hours and their work has been greatly appreciated. He stated that it has been commented that we have not got a democratic mandate, but he disagrees, if you take the combined figures of the MORI poll and the local poll it is

in favour of an elected Mayor. He added that he does not want to be the Councillor not to be able to offer these opportunities to the local people and will be supporting the proposal.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that she appreciates that Councillors and officers have spent hundreds of hours on this project but that it does not mean it is good just because so much time has been spent on it. She stated that originally they wanted Cambridgeshire and another County, but because Cambridge City said no it has progressed to where we are today. Councillor Clark confirmed that this was not the case and clarified that it was the County Council and not the City Council. Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that the Wisbech Garden Town has been mentioned five times and lots of Wisbech has been mentioned, but it is a wish list. She added that she does not feel as though there is a real choice for her to make as all other District Councils have already voted, or will vote, we are over a barrel, we have to agree to this or we will not have the funding that is desperately needed. She asked that our representatives do battle for Fenland as we have seriously lost out in the past.

Councillor Booth stated that we will be getting the elected Mayor imposed on us by Government and it is quite clear that the public, regardless of the survey, where he feels the questions were skewed, would not support this proposal. Recently the Reading Council area held a referendum on an elected Mayor and 90% voted against it, this gives you an indication that when the public are given a choice they do not necessarily go for that model. The last thing that the public want is another politician elected to office. He stated that he has concerns with regards to the funding in the future as you cannot guarantee what is going to happen in the future. He is also concerned about how much money will be wasted as it is more efficient when decisions are made locally and although he agrees with that principal this deal has so many conditions attached to it that the Government could be pulling strings from the background. We need to ensure that we are getting the best benefit for the money and not spending money on studies and reports, the right scrutiny facilities needs to be in place to make sure that money is not being wasted. He added that although he has many reservations, if we do say no we will lose out, and there is the potential for more benefits from devolution 2. He stated that he is not happy about the way this whole process has been forced on us and only last week changes were being made to the order with regards to transport funding. He asked if that funding is part of the £20m or on top of it, he asked for clarification about this from the Leader. He stated that the order says that some of the powers are with the Minister of the State he questioned if we will really have devolution as this is another example of the Government pulling strings from the back. He stated that there is a mechanism to come out of this in the future and asked for assurance from the Leader that there is a possibility of looking into a Unitary Authority in the future because we have a duty to reduce the layers of Government.

Councillor Mrs French stated that there is not much on the table for March but she is confident that our representatives will make sure that March get a fair share, she added that she will be supporting this and supports the Mayor as if they are no good they will lose their position.

Councillor Miscandlon stated that he supports this proposal; it is a leap of faith, faith in our Chief Executive and officers and faith in our Leader.

Councillor Hodgson stated that he will be supporting the proposal.

Councillor Count stated that, as everyone knows, he has been very closely associated with this journey. He stated that when he asks himself if this is a good deal for Fenland he can confidently say yes. He added that he does not feel that it is a giant leap of faith as he has been involved in the journey they whole way. He is here to do something good for the residents and feels that we are all here for that reason. He stated that in all the time that he has been a Councillor he has never seen a decision of this magnitude put in front of Councillors to take. This decision is a game changer, if we have it right this will make a difference to the lives of the people who live in this area and that is why he is in support of the proposal. He stated that we are looking at £600m for

infrastructure and he knows how hard it can be just to try to get £1m to move a project forward. Looking at the skills funding there are such variances between what each area needs, this cannot be decided nationally and will be so much better being decided by local people. £170m of funding for housing will unlock 2,500 affordable homes throughout the area, and this will make a difference to the people in our community. He stated that anyone that does not support this proposal has misread what is on offer, adding that he fully supports this proposal and is so glad to hear so many people here support this too.

Councillor Clark stated that he was at a LEP meeting recently and was talking to the Deputy Leader of Lincolnshire, they had turned down their devolution proposals as they could not agree to a Mayor, the Government has said that they need to accept an elected Mayor and there are no negotiations on that. If we are not in it we are not going to gain anything, the County Council and Peterborough are giving up some of their control but we are giving up nothing, our job will not change at all. With regards to the £20m it is new money each year, but some of that money will be used to run the project, so yes some of the money will be used in administration. There are already changes happening, we are reviewing services looking at more shared service opportunities, so this is not just a change for today, it is the start of doing things differently, devolution may cost money to run but we will be doing things differently and saving money too. We can all worry about what will happen in a few years' time but if it is seen to be working well, we are producing revenue to the Government, we are getting people back into employment, not such a burden to the national health system or the working pension they will keep welcoming this. The Government will reward success and if we produce the goods they will keep devolving power. It is a big decision to make but that is why we have been elected on behalf of our constituents, we cannot say we want to go back to ask the people who have elected us, that is why they elected us, to make those decisions on their behalf. He added that he recommends this to members and hopes that they will support it.

Councillor Booth asked for clarification that the option for a unitary authority would remain on the table for the future. Councillor Clark stated that changes are going to keep happening all the time. There are other people talking about unitary authorities, it is not currently at the forefront, but it comes forward in the future, it will be a decision that comes before members to agree to.

Members AGREED to recommend the following to Cabinet:

- (i) to consent to the Secretary of State making an Order to establish the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (Appendix 1A of the report to Council);
- (ii) to consent to the Council being a constituent member of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority with effect from the commencement date determined by the final Order;
- (iii) to authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to consent to the final draft Order and associated documents, specifically:
 - to agree minor drafting amendments to the Combined Authority Order to be laid before Parliament;
 - to consent to the Council being included within the draft Parliamentary Order thereby reflecting this Council's decision.
- (iv) to authorise the Combined Authority to have a power to issue a levy to the constituent Councils in respect of any financial year. (This will be subject to the inclusion of a unanimity clause in the Combined Authority constitution on this specific matter);
- (v) to recommend to the Combined Authority that the costs of establishing the Combined Authority, holding the elections in May 2017 and running the Combined Authority (including Mayoral Office) for 2016/17 and 2017/18 are funded from the gain share grant provided by Government (as outlined in para 12.8 of the report to Council);
- (vi) to appoint Councillor John Clark to act as Council's appointee to the Shadow Combined Authority and once established, to the Combined Authority;

- (vii) to appoint Councillor Will Sutton to act as the substitute to the above (ref 2 (vi));
- (viii) to note the outcome of the public consultation on the establishment of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority as outlined in paragraph 5.1 and 5.2 and Appendices 2A - 2D of the report to Council;
- (ix) note the timetable for the implementation of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough devolution Order as summarised in paragraph 8;
- (x) note the Government's response to the outline business case for Housing capital investment funds secured as part of the devolution deal as set out in Appendix 3;
- (xi) to note that updates on the Combined Authority will be provided to Council through the Portfolio Holder update reports presented to each Council meeting and if necessary, a constitutional update will be presented to a future Council meeting; and
- (xii) to approve that Paul Medd, Chief Executive, acts as Interim Chief Executive for the Shadow Combined Authority, on a part time basis until May 2017.

Recorded Vote: As in accordance with Part 4 of the Constitution - Rules of Procedure, Para 15.4, at least 6 members present requested a recorded vote.

Voted in Favour: Councillor Mrs Bligh, Boden, Booth, Buckton, Butcher, John Clark, Sam Clark, Connor, Cornwell, Count, Court, Mrs Davis, Mrs French, Garratt, Green, Mrs Hay, Hodgson, Miss Hoy, Humphrey, King, Mrs Laws, Mason, Mrs Mayor, Miscandlon, Murphy, Oliver, Pugh, Skoulding, Sutton, Tanfield, Tibbs, Tierney and Yeulett.

Voted Against: None.

Abstained from voting: Councillor Bucknor and Mrs Bucknor.

5.12pm

Chairman