

# COUNCIL



**14 SEPTEMBER 2017 - 4.00PM**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Mrs 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 Mrs M Davis, Councillor Mrs J French, Councillor S Garratt, Councillor D Hodgson, Councillor Miss S Hoy, Councillor M J Humphrey, Councillor S J E King, Councillor Mrs D Laws, Councillor D Mason, Councillor Mrs K F Mayor, Councillor A Miscandlon, Councillor P Murphy, Councillor Mrs F S Newell, Councillor D C Oliver, Councillor C C Owen, Councillor A Pugh, Councillor C J Seaton, Councillor R Skoulding, Councillor W Sutton, Councillor M Tanfield, Councillor G Tibbs and Councillor S Tierney.

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor D Green, Councillor Mrs A Hay, Councillor F H Yeulett

## **C22/17      PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of 13 July 2017 were confirmed and signed.

## **C23/17      CIVIC ENGAGEMENTS UPDATE**

Councillor Mrs Mayor drew member's attention to the civic activities undertaken by herself and the Vice-Chairman since the last meeting.

## **C24/17      TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL AND/OR THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE.**

Councillor Mrs Mayor thanked all those who recently attended Mayor Jamieson's visit from the Sunshine Coast, Australia, which took place to celebrate 20 years since the original friendship agreement was signed and to sign a new agreement formalising our relationship into the future.

Councillor Mrs Mayor also offered thanks to all those who also recently attended the re-launch of the book entitled 'March Hero', during which we welcomed friends from Australia to commemorate the re-launch of a book dedicated to a young war hero who sacrificed his life to protect the people of March. 'March Hero' was originally published in 2007, the book tells the story of Australian Pilot Officer Jim Hocking who died on July 28, 1944, after the Stirling bomber he was piloting caught on fire on a training flight. Aged just 21, Hocking ordered his crew to bail out as he flew the plane away from March town centre; crashing into surrounding fields to avert disaster. The event was extremely well attended including a visit from Jim Hocking's brother, Alan as well as other direct relatives and friends.

Councillor Mrs Mayor informed members that she will be hosting a coffee morning on Thursday 28 September as part of Macmillan Cancer Support's World's Biggest Coffee Morning event. She stated that all members are welcome to attend on the day but if you are unable to attend you can support the charity through the provision of raffle prizes or purchasing raffle tickets from Member Services.

Paul Medd stated that he is delighted to announce that the Council has been reaccredited for Customer Services Excellence or 'CSE' following an annual inspection in June of this year.

CSE is a national standard that recognises public bodies that provide customer-focused, high quality, excellent services. Fenland is one of the few Councils that have consistently achieved this rigorous standard for all of its services, both customer facing and internal, not just individual ones. When visiting, the CSE assessor was highly complementary of the Council's emphasis on delivering excellent customer focused services.

The assessment report included these points:

- The Council is proud of its people focus and uses this to embrace a 'one team' approach to making a difference to customers;
- Staff are totally customer focused and display a 'right-first-time' attitude in a friendly manner;
- Empowerment of staff allows them to deliver high quality services;
- Partnering arrangements remain strong with a wide range of partners working with the Council resulting in clear benefits for customers and communities.

He invited Councillor Seaton to accept the CSE Certificate from the Chairman on behalf of the Council.

**C25/17**      **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 Mayor stated that no questions had been submitted under Procedure Rule 8.6 and asked if Councillor Booth or Councillor Mrs Bucknor, as leaders of the main opposition groups, had any questions under Procedure Rule 8.4.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor referring to the front page of the Fenland Citizen Newspaper and the article relating to Japanese knotweed stated that this weed has cost other UK Councils millions of pounds to deal with as it causes serious damage to buildings. The fenland area has this weed and it is a serious problem, other Councils have taken the view that this weed is top of the list of checks before any planning application is granted. She urged the Council to take the same responsibility and presented a report to Councillor Clark so that the professional issues that have been raised in the report are considered and that this is reported back to this Council the approach that will be taken as ignoring it is an expensive option; This matter needs to be tackled by the Planning Department, Parks and Open Spaces, our contractors and local developers as well as County Highways. This is a Government notifiable weed and has cost Swansea an estimated £9.5m in treatment alone, it is relatively easy to solve now but not if it is ignored. Councillor Clark thanked Councillor Mrs Bucknor and accepted the report handed to him, he stated that he is aware of the damage that Japanese Knotweed can do, he agreed that FDC will check and treat their land, it is not the responsibility of the Council to treat land that does not belong to them, but could possibly notify land and property owners of these problems. He stated that he is not aware that it is a planning condition for us to take this weed into consideration but agreed to check. He agreed that following further investigation and consideration a response would be made to Council.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that she was pleased to hear that the new Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough believes that we should deal with the Guyhirn Roundabout issues more quickly. She asked if Councillor Clark and Councillor Count could raise the issues about the Guyhirn Roundabout with the Mayor and added that we are now looking at 2020 before completion but need an update. Councillor Clark stated that it was announced today that the Combined Authority has committed half a million pounds to carry out a study to dual the A47 from Thorney to West Walton and that will be on-going alongside the Guyhirn Roundabout. He informed members that the Mayor is in talks with Ministers in London and is assured that they are listening to this proposal.

Councillor Booth stated that at the May Council Meeting he raised the issue of maintenance of property following reports in the press. He asked for an update on the progress of the audit of the District Council's land and what work has been carried out to bring the land into safe condition.

Councillor Clark stated that there is a survey being carried out of all the Council's property and we have taken action on some. He agreed to make some further enquiries and report back to Councillor Booth.

Councillor Booth referring to the new contract with Kingdom for environmental enforcement, asked what due diligence has been undertaken to ensure that Kingdom are working to the contract drawn up with FDC as they have been the focus of a TV programme investigation and a number of local councils have stopped using their services, how can we be assured they are giving the service that our residents deserve. Councillor Clark stated that he saw the TV programme that Councillor Booth is referring to, this led to us not signing the contract while we looked into those claims. Officers working on behalf of this Council are not paid any bonus whatsoever and they wear body cameras which are switched on before they approach a suspect. The feedback is that our contract is working well, but we are always monitoring it. This council has had many attempts at trying to combat littering and dog fouling and this would appear to be working.

**C26/17 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 Mayor stated that to allow full discussion of 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 asked if Councillor Murphy could ensure that all the war memorials are cleaned in time for remembrance parades. Councillor Murphy confirmed that this is carried out every year in time for the parades.

Councillor Mrs Bligh stated that we have all heard and read the concerns of the residents in Wisbech regarding homelessness and street drinking and she is pleased to hear that we have secured funding to better support homelessness. The residents of her ward have voiced their concerns and to fully represent them she supports every power that FDC has to improve the situation in the town centre. She asked Councillor Sutton if he agrees that homelessness in Wisbech is a major contributing factor of the problems that will be outlined the petition presented here today. Councillor Sutton stated that he is sure that the two issues are linked, but how one affects the other we are yet to find out and confirmed that an all member seminar is going to be arranged to give members more information and to better understand the problems in that area.

Councillor Sam Clark stated that she appreciates that members have the opportunity to attend planning training sessions arranged internally, but asked if there is an opportunity for FDC Planning Committee members to attend outside planning courses to enhance their knowledge. Councillor Sutton stated that there is an opportunity to attend internal and external training sessions, he added that where possible, we always support any training to enhance member knowledge;

Councillor Sam Clark stated that she was given the opportunity to attend external planning training last week as Vice-Chairman and found this very beneficial, she stated that we looked at the performance data for the 11 other Councils of the Councillors who attended and FDC's performance data was very good. She stated that reflecting on this, praise should be given to our planning team for their hard work to achieve this feedback. Councillor Sutton stated that he also attended training along with Councillor Connor earlier in the year and FDC's figures were third on table for majors, third on the table for minors and overall placed second out of 21 Councils. He stated that this is a tribute to the hard work of the Planning Team.

Councillor Tierney stated that he had been at a meeting with the 4 town councillors for Waterlees in Wisbech as these councillors are keen to start fund raising for a new skate park for the area. He

stated that very recently the equipment that was there has been removed, and appreciates it was moved for safety reasons as it failed an inspection, but asked if the Council can help them to deliver a new skate park for the area. Councillor Murphy stated that the skate park was inspected following vandalism and when it was inspected the wood was rotten and therefore the equipment had to be removed for safety. He stated that the Council has no funds available for new skate parks and informed them that there are organisations where some funding may be available from and opportunities for match funding, but that they would need to raise some funds to start with. He stated that there might be funding available through the town council and from 106 agreements in the area. He confirmed that when they have raised some funds FDC would help with obtaining match funding, procurement and installation of the new equipment. Councillor Tierney thanked Councillor Murphy and stated that he is pleased to hear that the Council will be able to help once the group have started to raise some money.

Councillor Booth stated that at a recent Overview and Scrutiny Panel Meeting we were presented with the Health and Wellbeing Plan for Fenland, this contained some information about street drinking in Wisbech but it was not clear how many police patrols had been undertaken and how many times they had utilised their powers for confiscation of alcohol. There was also mention in the report of monthly recovery walks and asked if this was sufficient. A concern was raised that generally at that meeting that Fenland is not progressing as quickly as it needs to in relation to many of the matters that affect health and wellbeing. He asked if there was any more information available in relation to this. Councillor Oliver stated the recovery walks were a pilot project in the Wisbech area to support street drinkers and find out the reasons behind their drinking and try to assist them. This took place with existing resources but we have since, jointly with Peterborough City Council through the migrant impact fund, secured funding for 2 officers for the next few years so the recovery walks will become more frequent. He confirmed that the alcohol partnership have carried out 21 patrols since April and agreed to find out the police figures and feedback.

Councillor Miss Hoy stated that as a Council we group drug and alcohol issues into the Community Safety Partnership, and although she recognises that crime can be caused by drug and alcohol issues, health and wellbeing is a big part of that and we need to be encouraging people to be living healthy lives. She stated that she is a member of the Health and Wellbeing Board at Cambridgeshire County Council along with Councillor Cornwell and asked when she brings this up at the meeting can she count on his support. Councillor Cornwell agreed and stated that he would be happy to support Councillor Miss Hoy. He added that the strategic needs assessment delivery plan for this area is allocated and delivered by the Community Safety Partnership, however we do receive reports on that delivery plan to the Fenland Health Partnership.

Councillor Count stated that FDC has a good scheme where we make available our leisure centres for referrals from Drs if they believe patients have an issue that can be assisted by attending the leisure centre and having a closely monitored health exercise programme. The report breaks down the reasons for referrals, and this shows that just 1% of patients are referred for mental health issues. He stated that in a lot of cases a fitness regime can assist with those problems and asked what the communication was with the practices to make use of this facility, are we getting the information out in the correct way and are we engaging with the Committees and the CCG. Councillor Cornwell stated that we publicise the exercise referral scheme, public health publicise it and the CCG have all the information too, but we need GP's to refer people, the service that is on offer is brilliant and there are a lot of success stories, but it is a struggle to get GP's to refer. Councillor Tanfield agreed that she was also surprised by the main reasons for referral for the exercise referral scheme as she would have expected obesity or mental health to be at the top. We know how important mental health is, the leisure centre staff work very hard to get as many of the referrals to come to the leisure centres because the scheme really can help people. She added that any support that we can get from County Council to help with liaison would be good and asked if the reporters present could report on the matter too to raise awareness. Councillor Count agreed that the media supporting this scheme would be good for awareness and if we could get some individual case studies to highlight the successes that would help too, he confirmed that he would

be happy to help from a County Council perspective where he can.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that she would like to correct some statements that had been made earlier in the meeting. The Waterlees skate park was not vandalised it was repaired using ordinary ply wood not marine ply wood and so it disintegrated. With regards to the funding for a new skate park she stated that she would be happy to pass on the funds that have already been raised to a properly constituted committee when one has been set up.

Councillor Count referred to page 64 of the report with regards to the improvements in the Contact Centre satisfaction surveys. He stated that it is good to hear that our satisfaction rates are improving, but it is the analysis of the complaints that helps us to steer the organisation and that is not included in the report, he asked if that information was available and if they were general complaints and how we can access that information. Councillor Seaton stated that as members are aware the opening hours for the one stop shops were reduced in accordance with the CSR. In 2007/08 there were 134,000 calls and that has been decreasing each year until 2016/17 when there was an increase, and although there does not appear to be a reason for that and there has been significant growth of online communication. With regards to the satisfaction survey it is good to know what we are doing well but is far more important to know what we are bad at so that we can address those problems. Looking at the dissatisfaction comments, 9 related to Council Tax delays, 9 said they did not understand a letter that had been sent to them, 4 needed help to complete forms, 3 said that benefits were delayed, 3 commented that waste had not been collected, 3 were not happy with other services, 2 were unsure why they had been sent reminders for unpaid Council Tax and 2 said the website was not clear. He confirmed that we are putting in a process to try to get better comments from people and agreed to update later in the year. Councillor Count stated that it is reassuring to know that the complaints comments are being addressed and that we are looking at the process to ensure that we get better comments moving forward.

Councillor Booth stated that he asked previously for an update on the changes to the Neighbourhood Planning Legislation, but has yet to receive this. Councillor Sutton apologised for not addressing that request he agreed to respond in the next few weeks. Councillor Booth thanked Councillor Sutton and stated that Parson Drove is in the process of setting up a Neighbourhood Plan and it is getting great support from officers but he is interested to know what the changes are. Councillor Mrs Laws stated that Whittlesey is also in the process of setting up a Neighbourhood Plan and it is progressing very well.

Councillor Booth asked what is the additional weight of the waste going to landfill now that food waste is going into the general waste, he added that he has had questions from residents who are keen to understand what the extra landfill tax is. Councillor Murphy stated that the County Council are ultimately responsible for landfill costs and their response is that it is unlikely that the overall disposal costs will increase and that should actually reduce as the amount of waste collected in the brown bins has dropped since last year. Although some of the garden waste previously collected has been taken to the household waste sites they have so far reported that they are running within existing resources without issue and they are pleased with the quality of the garden waste presented. So far this year the County Council have had to treat around 500 tonnes less through their waste disposal contract, therefore although it is at an early stage the initial indications are that their costs will be reduced overall this year because the total waste being collected has dropped considerably. He stated that we plan to provide members with an update of the first 6 months of the new garden waste arrangements in October.

Councillor Booth referred to page 34 of the report with regards to the contract with Kingdom and their use in the towns, but it does not say when there will be enforcement patrols in the villages and he asked for an update on this. Councillor Murphy confirmed that Kingdom will patrol in all areas in the district however currently the 4 towns are where there are the most issues and that is why they have started patrols in these areas. He confirmed that Kingdom have a 12 month

contract and that members will receive a 6 month update with a view to possible services moving forward.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that she was pleased to read about the Nene Waterfront Project in the report but noticed that a bid is planned to be submitted by the end of this month for some additional funding and asked for an update with regards to this matter. Councillor Butcher confirmed that the bid for funding would be submitted by the end of the month and although officers have not had a lot of time to prepare he has been assured that the bid will be ready. He agreed to update members with the outcome of the bid and the planned work involved in the project.

Councillor Tierney stated that he had been approached by a resident who was concerned that people who are walking dogs in park areas are sometimes approached by strangers to pet the dogs, sometimes with dangerous consequences. This resident designed some posters which could be used to highlight the dangers. Councillor Murphy asked Councillor Tierney to forward the posters for consideration.

Councillor Murphy stated that for clarification with regards to the skate park, Councillor Mrs Bucknor was sent a letter which said 'please be aware that following a report from the public of vandalism at Bath Road we have performed a safety inspection of the equipment'.

Councillor Booth referred to recent correspondence about street lighting that was sent to parish councils, the correspondence says that future energy costs will be the responsibility of the parish councils which is contrary to what was agreed by this council when this was considered as part of CSR. The agreement was that the existing arrangement would continue, and he asked for confirmation that this decision will be brought back to this council for consideration given the implication that this is going to have on the rural parishes and the fact that it would have to be added to the precepts whereas in the towns most of the street lights are dealt with by the district council and therefore are covered by the council tax. Councillor King stated that our proposal is to change the existing arrangements so the parish councils will pay for the repair, maintenance and electricity per column per annum and currently that is forecast to be between £47 and £67. He added that he was not able to give a clear undertaking that the decision would come back to full Council or to Cabinet as it might be a delegated decision but agreed that he would take advice from the legal team on this matter. The street lights are owned by the parishes they are parish assets so the argument could be made that the council tax payers in the towns have been subsidising the parishes to maintain their assets, the town lights are owned by FDC and we are not asking the parishes to pay for their maintenance, repair or electricity.

Councillor Booth stated that this goes back to 1972 when the street lighting stock was transferred, there was an anomaly that lighting within the towns was not transferred to the town councils but went to the district council whereas the villages went to the parishes. There are no records of this but now the parishes will be penalised, and yes they are the owners of the street lights but we still have issues around how they have been maintained in the past. Councillor King stated that he shares the views about the poor quality of maintenance and repairs that were delivered to us, and we did all we could to correct that. In terms of the historic situation the lights were owned by the Rural District Councils and that's why they were transferred to the Parishes. He confirmed that we have searched for documentary evidence of this arrangement but there is none, however the legal advice is that because the lights are on the parish councils assets register and have been for many years they belong to the Parish Councils.

**C27/17**      **PETITION - DRINKING BAN IN WISBECH**

Councillor Mrs Mayor welcomed Mr Cook to the meeting and invited him to present his petition for a Drinking Ban in Wisbech to Council.

Mr Cook made the following statement:

'Good afternoon and thank you all for allowing me the time to present this petition on behalf of what is now 2,293 supporters. These are people who live or work or who have family in the Wisbech area and people who care about our community. It has been said that I have no right to be here because I live in Emneth, that is Emneth, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, should anyone wish to send me a letter. Wisbech is my nearest town and is where I was educated and where my partner runs a business and it is where my nieces and nephews will grow up and that is more than enough justification for me. Sadly for Wisbech it was not enough to get a comment from Mr Steve Barclay MP which is a shame. There have also been a number of comments made as to the agenda of this petition; there have been claims that it is the work of political activists, disruptors and xenophobes and some claims that it is even just an attack on specific councillors, none of that is true. I have said it many times now I say it again for the record in this room, this petition is not political it does not belong to anyone and it was not created by any particular group, I have been clear all the way through with supporters that it is not an excuse to attack councillors or anyone on a personal level nor is it acceptable to act in a way that discriminates towards any group or any individual.

This petition is purely about friends; friends, families and neighbours, they are telling us that they are worried, they are telling us that they are scared, for those of you that have not read through the petition, here is just one comment,' I am signing this because I do not want my children scared to go out and play in the park', that is not acceptable in 2017 in Wisbech and I think you'll all agree. I have spoken to many residents and I have been astounded by the stories I have been hearing from people of all ages including fully grown men who tell me that they don't walk around the town in the evening anymore because these kind of issues put them on edge and they don't feel safe. These same things are also shared by a number of elderly and vulnerable people in the community and I spoke to one lady who won't go shopping during the day on her own, she waits for her son to come once a week, I don't know how to help her but I want to do everything in my power to make sure she feels safe to do such a mundane task that we probably take for granted.

Fenland District Councillors have the power to affect the change that people are crying out for, some may say that 2,293 in a town of around 30,000 is not much of a representation, but I understand that for you the consultation was around the 250 mark, so I think this gives you extra voices and extra support to take any actions that are required. The petition is calling for a town wide ban and I appreciate that seems extreme, but when you go skiing you don't start at the bottom and ski uphill, you start at the top and work your way down. I have had a conversation with Sergeant Cawston from Wisbech Police and he has said that he does not support a Town wide ban, however he does support a ban that covers more areas than are currently being consulted on, and he feels that if we push the ban out people will disperse into other areas but they will disperse into smaller groups and that will therefore reduce the amount of antisocial behaviour. There is also such a scheme in places in Huntingdon which covers the area inside the ring road which some of you are probably aware of and that has been touted as being a success.

Some of you may not have read the petition in full, and I will not go over it in full detail and bore you all, but there are some points in there around licensing and around support which I also think are important. One of the comments made by Wisbech Police were that there were too many licences being given out and I understand that is a difficult area not just here ,but for all Councils in a lot of areas. There is also support which has been mentioned a few times here today, about how we support and how help people and how we tackle the root problems and that you are also looking to address that.

The issue is not going to disappear when I leave the room and nor am I, until the people who have signed the petition feel like their voices have been heard adequately. We are all very keen to hear how the Council are going to respond to this given the fact that there has been a few weeks since it was officially submitted, I am sure there has been sufficient time to gather your thoughts. What

we will not be accepting is for me to be thanked for my time and a statement repeating what's been said already and then for me to be sent on my way. I am happy to answer any questions'.

Councillor Oliver addressed the petition with the following statement:

'We recognise the community concern relating to the alcohol issues and street drinking in Wisbech; it is with this understanding that the Council work with stakeholders to establish a Wisbech Alcohol Partnership to tackle these concerns. The partnership includes membership from Fenland District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire Police, Inclusion, NHS, Luminous Housing, and the Richmond Fellowship; it is supported by Wisbech Town Council who contribute funding to CCTV cameras in the town. The partnership has been working for the past 18 months to take a number of proactive steps in the town, there is no quick fix to these issues but we are making steady progress in a number of areas. We have just completed consultation for the proposal to create Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO's) to ban alcohol consumption in specific areas suffering from alcohol misuse; the areas put forward are the same locations that the local community have raised within the petition. This includes introducing no drinking areas for St. Peters Gardens, Tillery Field and the Crescent, Wisbech; however, we have changed our approach following the consultation to also have controlled drinking within Wisbech Town Centre. So if drinking issues arise we and our partners have powers to tackle it, this will include other problems like urination and defecation.

I also want to highlight the other work that has happened or will be happening which responds to the petition. Firstly, street drinking patrols and enforcement, patrols are based on local intelligence generated through reported incidents and intelligence from CCTV. Cambridgeshire Police are currently taking steps to have officers present whose focus is to patrol and engage with street drinkers. Secondly, recovery walks introduced earlier this year are carried out by health professionals, patrols take place once a month and are carried out in the main hotspot areas. Thirdly, securing funding to recruit an outreach officer to engage with street drinkers, this post will be recruited for and be in place by the end of 2017. Fourthly, we have been 1 of only 33 areas to be successfully participate in the local alcohol action area programme, the work will focus on reducing the sales and improving the health outcomes linked to alcohol misuse. Fifthly, using the Community Impact Zone (CIZ) in the town to make it harder to get the licence to sell alcohol, the CIZ has been in operation for a number of years, this also allows for the number of premises in operation to be carefully managed and where we have the right to do so, the licence is refused. Finally, the action I have summarised is not in isolation to other important work that Council partners work together on, such as tackling homelessness and rough sleeping and the condition and management of private rented homes.

We have spoken with the Police and County Council on receipt of the petition, and the Police have directed their patrol locations in line with the recent response on social media and have also asked for evidence and information to be fed back to the Alcohol Partnership Group, they also continue to fully support the wider work of the Alcohol Partnership. The County Council are continuing to support the recovery walks and the new street drinking outreach work.

In summary I hope I have assured you that through our partnership approach and the associated alcohol action plan we are best positioned to tackle these issues that our local community have raised concerns over.

Therefore I propose that we note the petition and acknowledge the concerns raised.

In response we propose a motion to build on the work that has been undertaken by the alcohol partnership for Wisbech in the following ways:

- The implementation of a tougher enforcement regime utilising Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO's) and fixed penalty notices. This approach was approved by Cabinet this afternoon.



- Delivery of a central government funded programme of engagement with street drinkers on understanding the root causes to their actions and take action to address these causes.
- Delivery of the Local Alcohol Action Area programme for Wisbech which will help reduce sales of alcohol to drunk persons and reduce wider alcohol harm such as antisocial behaviour.
- That the approach is delivered as part of the Wisbech 2020 action plan with a review 12 months from the implementation date of the new PSPO's to monitor impact and agree next steps.
- We recognise that this is an issue of important community concern and we are not going to be able to cover all of the issues today, therefore based on the importance of this, the Leader and I have requested that at the next All Member Seminar on 12 October we will receive much greater information on this issue and the proactive steps we are taking as a Council and a partnership.

Councillor Seaton seconded the motion and the item was opened for debate. Councillor Mrs Mayor reminded members that there is a maximum of 15 minutes for any statement or debate in relation to this agenda item.

Councillor Count stated that he feels it is now appropriate that the document circulated to members with the wording of the motion is circulated to the members of the public at the meeting. He stated that he supports the approach, it is a good step forward, he added that the only way we will know if this is working is if we measure it accurately, so as part of this we need some measurements to ensure that we are having an effect.

Councillor Tanfield stated that that she lives in Wisbech and supports the petition, but added that we need to face this with a two-pronged attack, as sometimes banning something is just a case of moving it on, and we are working hard to change the way people live so that they do not feel the necessity to drink all of the time, and we think about people's wellbeing. What we need to concentrate on is to make sure that we have the opportunity for people if they need help to get it as that is the way it is really going to change.

Councillor Mrs Cox in supporting the petition stated that she lives adjacent to Wisbech Park and that she hopes that is included in the hotspot areas.

Councillor Booth stated that he supports the motion, and like Mr Cook he does not live in Wisbech Town itself, but uses the services as do many of the residents of the outlying villages. The sentiments that have been expressed today are true and have been raised by residents to him personally. He stated that he has discussed this with his fellow District Councillor, Councillor Mrs Bligh and that they agree that there is a perception that things have been put in place previously but have not worked. It has been raised previously at Overview and Scrutiny that there are a number of measures in place around banning drinking etc. but not how effective they have been in resolving the issues. He stated that it appears that this petition has galvanised a lot of activity and we should thank the residents for signing it and bringing it to the attention of the Councillors, as without the petition it would not be on the agenda for discussion today.

Councillor Booth proposed an amendment to the motion; to change the bullet point which refers to a review 12 months from implementation, he suggested that it should be reviewed every 3 months. He also suggested that we make reference to the work being undertaken as part of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy in this motion as this is another way to tackle some of the issues raised. Councillor Mrs Bucknor seconded the amendment to the motion and the amendment was opened for debate.

Councillor Count stated that it is not clear where the review will take place, if the review will be carried out at Full Council then 12 months is an appropriate amount of time, however he would fully expect that this would be monitored and reviewed more closely by the Portfolio Holder and

Officers on an on-going basis leading up to the formal review.

Councillor Mrs French agreed, she stated that 3 months does not give enough time to get any good information back to review, but that she would also expect the Cabinet Member to be monitoring the situation more closely on an on-going basis.

Councillor Humphrey stated that Mr Cook made a very good presentation of the petition. He added that as the Chairman of the Licensing Committee he would like to make a point about licenses that are issued as often when someone applies for a licence, unless there is an objection, licensing has no other course than to grant it. Often if a licence application comes before the panel, it is not easy to refuse without adequate grounds as the decision is always open to appeal. The use of the CIZ recently allowed us to refuse a licence that went to the Magistrates Court where the decision was overturned. These are some of the challenges that we face as a licensing authority. He confirmed that he supports the main points behind the petition.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that the reason for the amendment to the motion is so that we all feel that something is being done because this issue was raised previously and residents are getting frustrated as everyone knows things have got worse. The amendment means that the Portfolio Holder can review the statistics and include them in a report to Full Council, people cannot see the work that has been done and do not feel enough is happening. She added that Councillor Oliver referred to an outreach worker being in place by the end of the year and appreciates therefore that it will be difficult to report in the next 3 months but feels that around March 2018 a report could be made available for review.

Councillor Miss Hoy stated that she was pleased that Mr Cook said that his petition was not political, and she was grateful that he had clarified that. However, she added that she finds it upsetting that other Councillors are saying that nothing is being done about these issues as Councillor Oliver has listed the things that we and partners have been doing. The PSPO was proposed before the petition came forward and she is glad this is being implemented and that a few more areas have been added following responses as part of the public consultation. She stated that she does not support the amendment as 3 months is not enough time to bring everything together and to review.

Councillor Oliver stated that the PSPO's will be monitored on a regular basis and part of that process is that if we feel there are issues we can implement PSPO's in other areas quite quickly. He confirmed that Cabinet approved an alcohol controlled zone which covers the DPPO area of Wisbech and that will become active at the same time as the PSPO on 20 October 2017. He agreed to include an update into the Portfolio Holder monthly briefings to ensure that people are aware of what is happening which can be questioned at Full Council.

Councillor Booth stated that following the commitments to regularly monitor the situation and on the understanding that regular updates will be made available he would rescind the amendment to the motion.

A vote was held on the original motion proposed by Councillor Oliver and seconded by Councillor Seaton, the motion was adopted.

Councillor Mrs Mayor thanked Mr Cook for bringing this important matter to our attention and for your contribution today.

5.20pm

Chairman