

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 18 JULY 2019 - 4.00 PM



PRESENT: Councillor Mrs K Mayor (Chairman), Councillor A Miscandlon (Vice-Chairman), Councillor I Benney, Councillor Mrs S Bligh, Councillor C Boden, Councillor G Booth, Councillor A Bristow, Councillor J Clark, Councillor S Clark, Councillor D Connor, Councillor M Cornwell, Councillor S Count, Councillor Mrs M Davis, Councillor D Divine, Councillor Mrs J French, Councillor K French, Councillor A Hay, Councillor Miss S Hoy, Councillor M Humphrey, Councillor Mrs D Laws, Councillor A Lynn, Councillor D Mason, Councillor C Marks, Councillor A Maul, Councillor N Meekins, Councillor M Purser, Councillor W Rackley, Councillor C Seaton, Councillor R Skoulding, Councillor W Sutton, Councillor M Tanfield, Councillor S Tierney, Councillor D Topgood, Councillor S Wallwork, Councillor Wicks, Councillor Wilkes and Councillor F Yeulett

APOLOGIES: Councillor P Murphy and Councillor D Patrick

Councillor Mrs Mayor opened the meeting with the following statement:

“Before commencing with the formal agenda for this afternoon’s meeting I would like to take this opportunity to pay a tribute to Ernie Thompson, former Chief Executive of Fenland District Council, who sadly passed away on 1st July.

Ernie devoted 41 years to local government service – 19 of them at Fenland District Council. Ernie began his career at Liverpool City Council in 1952. His first role locally was at Wisbech Borough Council, where he was working as Deputy Town Clerk when it merged with Chatteris Urban District, March Urban District, Whittlesey Urban District, North Witchford Rural District and Wisbech Rural District to form Fenland District Council in 1974.

Following the merger he was appointed District Secretary of Fenland District Council and became the authority’s second Chief Executive in 1983 succeeding Eric Lewis. Ernie retired after ten years in the top job in February 1993.

He was a true inspiration to many people not least because of his passion and commitment to local government and commanded great respect from all who worked with him. His family is in the thoughts of all who knew him at the council at this very sad time.

I would now like to call on Councillor Mike Cornwell to make a personal tribute”.

Councillor Cornwell thanked Councillor Mrs Mayor and made his personal tribute, during which he stated that Ernie was a traditional, old school local government officer who provided the people of Wisbech and then the people of Fenland with excellent public services whilst operating in an open, honest, straightforward and very genuine manner.

All members stood to observe a minute’s silence in honour of Ernie Thompson.

Councillor Mrs Mayor welcomed Councillor Wilkes to his first full council meeting.

C18/19 PREVIOUS MINUTES

Councillor Mrs Mayor drew members’ attention to the new set of minutes that had been tabled.

She said that the only change from the minutes sent with the agenda pack is that they include the amendments to the motions in addition to the original motions.

Councillor Booth requested the following amendments to the minutes:

- C10/19 should read 'Members considered *the* Committee Structure'
- C14/19 (point 8) Councillor Mrs Mayor had said the previous point Councillor Sutton raised regarding political literature was not part of the discussion. However, Councillor Sutton had actually argued that it was related to the very core of the motion being discussed.
- C15/19 (Item 1 on page 17) failed to capture that Councillor Booth said it is our role as a point of collection authority that we had a role to play in trying to influence schools and other organisations.
- C16/9 (Item 9) incorrectly states that Councillor Booth had pursued the review (of the play area) 18 months ago, and should have said that was when he became aware of the issue.

Councillor Humphrey requested a further amendment:

- C16/9 (Item 3) Councillor Humphrey had requested a review of all play equipment in the area, and not just council-owned play equipment.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs Mayor, seconded by Councillor Boden, the new set of minutes of 23 May 2019 were agreed and signed subject to the amendments above.

C19/19 CIVIC ENGAGEMENT UPDATES.

Councillor Mrs Mayor drew members' attention to the civic activities undertaken by herself and the Vice Chairman in the weeks preceding full council.

C20/19 TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL AND/OR THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE.

Councillor Mrs Mayor informed members that she will be holding the Chairman's Civic Reception on Friday 6th September at Eastrea Community Hall. Invitations will be sent out to all members in due course.

Councillor Mrs Mayor reminded members that she will be hosting the Annual Charity Coffee morning on Thursday 26th September. All proceeds from the event will be donated to the Chairman's charity, Macmillan Cancer Relief. All members are very welcome to attend and donations for raffle prizes to raise money for this worthwhile cause will be gratefully received.

Paul Medd, Chief Executive, made the following announcement:

"I am delighted to announce that Fenland District Council has received national recognition in the prestigious 'MJ' awards under two categories.

First we were a finalist within the 'Delivering Better Outcomes' category, within which 69 submissions from other councils were received. Our submission focussed on the fantastic partnership work of the Diverse Communities Forum. It explained how over 30 partners across many sectors are effectively working together to deliver a variety of projects to improve the quality of life for local people. To support this they have successfully bid for over £1.4 million in Government funding. This work is being hailed as best practice and is being shared across the country.

In addition, Lottie West from our Policy and Communications team was highly commended within

the 'Rising Star' category. This recognises the talent and potential of young people in local government. Lottie is a real asset to the organisation and her dedication deserves to be recognised. With a background in the private sector, she joined the Council in 2014 as a graduate trainee. Since then she has developed a tremendous knowledge base and has quickly progressed within the Council. She is reliable, quick-thinking, highly motivated and is passionate about making local services the best they can be. Alongside her varied day-to-day role, Lottie also plays a key part in corporate projects that have improved service delivery and transformed working practices. She is ideally placed to support the continued development of a Council for the future”.

Councillor Mrs Mayor then presented Lottie West with her commendation.

C21/19 **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 received submitted under Procedure Rule 8.6 and asked if there were any questions under Procedure Rule 8.4 from Councillor Tanfield as Leader of the Opposition.

Councillor Tanfield asked the Leader if he could explain the background to the delay and problems with the funding in delivery of the Kings Delph Railway Crossing. Councillor Boden explained the County Council had responsibility some three or four years ago to build a bridge across the crossing. There was a public consultation about the various routes and one particular route was selected. The County Council, rather than seeking to get a contract from a contractor to design and build the bridge, decided to have a separate contract where one contractor would be chosen to design and quote for the bridge. They then had the option either to accept that quote or go ahead with that design and the contractor to build it, or take the design elsewhere for quotes from other contractors to get the bridge built. Unfortunately it has taken considerable time for the contractor to complete the design for sign off by the County Council and a press release has been sent out today explaining much of this background. The County Council has decided to decline to use the contractor to build the bridge. They intend to seek alternative contractors to bid based on the design now delivered. In the meantime the legal position changed and legal responsibility for the scheme has been passed to the Combined Authority. They, however, have contracted the County Council to deliver what they have already started. The original projected cost has increased and the promise of further monies has been obtained from the Combined Authority to ensure continuance of the project. Councillor Boden expressed his disappointment at the delays by the contractor and the process of getting to this point. These delays will not be without cost to the contractor. However, we are now in a position where the County Council can recommend a way forward and, in conjunction with the Combined Authority, there will be some active movement taking place on the project in the very near future. Councillor Boden also pointed out that he has been in touch with our MP together with the leaders of both the County Council and Combined Authority and all are absolutely and unequivocally committed to the delivery of this project, and they all want to see the project delivered as quickly as is reasonably possible given the cost consideration. Councillor Boden added that he is happy to provide even more detail if required. Councillor Tanfield thanked Councillor Boden.

Councillor Tanfield mentioned the newspaper report that Mayor James Palmer brought out about Kings Dyke and his concern over the County Council and their delivery. She asked if the time is right to contact the Mayor of the Combined Authority, together, with Cambridgeshire City Council, and other Cambridgeshire-district councils to revisit the future administration of local government provisions within the County. Councillor Boden stated that considerable discussion has been taking place across the county regarding the system of local government currently. Many believe that four tiers of local government within the county is at least one too many and a commission has been established under the leadership of the Mayor of the Combined Authority to move this agenda forward. Councillor Boden stated his opinion, when asked by Councillor Tanfield, that it

should not merely be a question of which of the four tiers should be abolished. He said there are arguments for needing to localise local government as much as possible but similarly there are large areas of concern where decisions should not be devolved to areas which are too small to be able to support those decisions properly.

Councillor Tanfield said that the Leader of the Council used to have a Leader's Fund of an amount up to £500 to help local community groups. She asked if this is still available and are there forms to complete. Councillor Boden thanked Councillor Tanfield for the helpful question. He responded that there is a residual fund of about £12,000 available from a reserve, although it is not his intention to replenish that in the future. Application forms are available, but the criteria used to determine successful applications are strict.

C22/19 **TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM AND ASK QUESTIONS OF CABINET MEMBERS WITH PORTFOLIO HOLDER RESPONSIBILITIES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE RULES 8.1 AND 8.2.**

Members asked questions of Portfolio Holders in accordance with Procedure Rules 8.1 and 8.2 as follows:

- Councillor Yeulett said that the recent Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting was curtailed due to the non-attendance of the Portfolio Holders. Council Tax is Councillor Mrs French's portfolio holder responsibility. We have not heard why she did not attend this meeting. Councillor Boden has made an apology for his failure to attend due to a Combined Authority meeting. The dates of full Council meetings were changed at the behest of other authorities at the last meeting. Do we have to alter all the dates of our committee meetings to suit the diaries of county councillors and over-committed members of this administration? Councillor Boden stated he felt the last comment to be inaccurate in that he was undertaking a responsibility as Leader of this Council and the meeting was nothing to do with County Council. Nevertheless, Councillor Yeulett accurately pointed out that it is essential to have proper coordination of dates between the different tiers of authority. Councillor Boden gave assurance to full Council in May, and again today, that next year the procedure will be done in a far more timely fashion to ensure there is less chance of there being meeting clashes between the different authorities. In respect of the Overview and Scrutiny Meeting, Councillor Boden has accepted responsibility and issued an apology to all members of the committee and officers present, together with a personal apology to the Chairman for the inconvenience. He stated it was his failure to communicate properly with others which caused the error and the necessity to curtail the meeting. He has learned from that, and a new system has been put in place, with the support of officers, to ensure the same sort of problem will not happen again in the future. Councillor Yeulett thanked Councillor Boden.
- Councillor Yeulett said there is a footpath between Creek Road and Station Road leading towards New Park which is well used by the public. There is a streetlight, FDC1, located part way down the path which follows the boundary off St John's Cemetery. The lamp has been removed so there is now no light. He asked that the Portfolio Holder investigate and have the light reinstated. Councillor Mrs French thanked Councillor Yeulett and confirmed she will investigate and report back.
- Councillor Booth asked Councillor Clark for an update on the progression of having KPI's put in place at the Freedom Leisure facilities. Councillor Clark thanked Councillor Booth for the question, saying she will look into this and get back to him.
- Councillor Booth asked for members to be given more information about the local household waste recycling centres so councillors could promote their use. He had not been aware there were so many local bring sites across the district and promotion may help increase recycling rates. Councillor Tierney advised that more information could certainly be made available and

he recommended Councillor Booth email the Portfolio Holder concerned who would be happy to follow this up.

- Councillor Booth would like to see information regarding environmental patrols and enforcement in the villages as the Portfolio Holder report only mentions the market towns. 25% of the population live in rural areas and we need to ensure the report is fit for purpose by containing information about what we do in the villages.
- Councillor Booth was interested to read on page 41 of the report states a pipeline development of 1054 affordable homes. When Clarion came to the Overview & Scrutiny meeting earlier this year, they had a pipeline figure of about 450 homes. He wondered what the discrepancy was. Councillor Hoy said she will obtain further information on exactly what those figures are and will get back to Councillor Booth, adding that there are other affordable home providers other than Clarion. Councillor Boden added that there is a difference between social housing and affordable housing. Not all affordable housing is social housing and given the delivery targets that we need to meet in Fenland, it may well be that a percentage of affordable housing which will need to be provided by social housing will reduce in future years.
- Councillor Mrs Bligh stated she was very pleased to hear about the 'Essentials by Sue' scheme, having been the first member to bring the subject of 'period poverty' to full Council in September 2018. Although a great start, it is not quite what was envisaged as she was hoping to find funding externally, working with firms such as Proctor and Gamble, to have packs supplied to schools to help the girls who suffer in silence. She was disappointed that she had not been kept informed of the work in this area and asked if Councillor Wallwork would work with her in this area to pursue an answer closer to Councillor Bligh's vision. Councillor Wallwork responded that she would be delighted to work with Councillor Bligh in this area to support young people and make the work sustainable. Councillor Bligh thanked Councillor Wallwork.
- Councillor Bligh asked the Leader, in the absence of Councillor Murphy, now that Wisbech St Mary has become the 17th Street Pride group of FDC, which is something she is very proud of. However, she is not proud of the amount of dog fouling which the litter pickers come across. She asked if the Leader would support her in implementing a stencil containing the FDC logo, to be issued to each Street Pride group to use as they see fit. Similar stencils are being used by East Lindsey District Council. Councillor Boden thanked Councillor Bligh for her suggestion; he has sympathy for the efforts of all groups in this regard and unfortunately dog fouling is not unique to Wisbech St Mary but anything that can be done would be welcome and he would support the idea subject to what Councillor Murphy may say regarding the idea given his vast knowledge in this area.
- Councillor Meekins raised the subject of the environment to Councillor Tierney. He said that when the Boathouse opened, some of the key features were its green credentials such as grey water harvesting and use of a roof-mounted turbine to generate electricity. He asked Councillor Tierney to confirm if the grey water is still being collected and used. Also, Councillor Meekins stated he cannot remember the last time he saw the turbine in operation. He asked if it is still in working order, if yes why is it not being used, and if not, should it not be repaired or removed. Councillor Tierney stated it would be useful for Cabinet members to be given questions in advance as meaningful answers could then be given on the day. He stated that he would come back to Councillor Meekins with the answer to this. Councillor Meekins thanked Councillor Tierney.
- Councillor Sutton advised Councillor Mrs Laws, that last month 11 appeal decisions were made, five were upheld. He asked if this was a blip or trend. Councillor Mrs Laws advised she thought this to be a blip, of which she is concerned, but it is something she is looking into.
- Councillor Sutton stated that a very successful Golden Age Fair had been held last week. He

paid tribute to Councillor Wallwork, saying that she had fitted in very well to her new role and he appreciates her efforts. He asked Councillor Wallwork if she could assure him going forward that should any savings need to be made; this is one area that would escape. Councillor Wallwork responded that this is not something that has been discussed therefore is not a rising issue that she would have to fight. She said it was inspirational to see the founders and their passion; some of the officers, and the information they gave, are absolutely outstanding and this is exactly why she wanted this role. Councillor Sutton thanked Councillor Wallwork. Councillor Boden felt that as that was a budget question, it would be appropriate for him to also respond. He had briefly attended the Golden Age Fair at Wisbech St Mary but was very impressed by what he saw, the commitment and the number of different agencies to make contact with people of more advanced years and their families. It is a difficult group to engage with, and these fairs achieve so much for very little cost through the outreach work of volunteers and FDC officers. He does not know what the budget position will be next year but it is not on the horizon to reduce the amount of spend on Golden Age Fairs for subsequent years. Councillor Sutton thanked Councillor Boden for his reassuring statement, saying that there is no other scheme that provides the benefits to residents that this does.

- Councillor Booth asked Councillor Wallwork if she could share the details of the Street Drinking action plan being developed. There is much publicity about this issue in Wisbech and he would urge action within definitive timescales. Councillor Wallwork confirmed that a robust plan is in development and although it cannot be shared at this moment, it will be shared once all the details have been agreed.
- Councillor Booth asked if anyone attended the recent event at Parliament where the A47 Alliance went to lobby for investment and has anything come out of that yet? Councillor Seaton confirmed he attended the meeting along with local businesses, our MP and Mayor of the Combined Authority. There was a very positive discussion with the Roads Minister and much goodwill, but it needs putting into action. Councillor Seaton advised he is very committed to the Alliance, saying we need to be part of it as weighting has so far been heavily in favour of Norfolk and we are trying to change that.
- Councillor Booth addressed the Leader regarding the Kings Dyke issue. When the project was put forward, Fenland District Council paid £800,000 to the A14 upgrade project on the basis that we would get the crossing. At that time he raised reservations and asked for commitment and guarantees; as this keeps stalling do we still have the commitment that the project will be delivered? Councillor Boden confirmed that we did make a significant contribution to the A14 and there was the promise of a significant amount of capital funding from the County Council to the Kings Dyke project. That is still the current position, the capital funding is still in place and available and the Leader of the County Council has continued to express his support for the need for a Kings Dyke bridge.
- Councillor Booth addressed Councillor Tierney regarding some of the metrics in the portfolio holders report and the effort it takes for officers to gather. Citing page 81 of the report as an example, which states the percentage of satisfied customers who use our conference facilities; responses were received from just 5 people expressing 100% of satisfaction. He asked if we could look to remove these metrics where there is a very low response so concentration can be given to grittier issues. Councillor Tierney responded that this was a fair point, and he would welcome any assistance moving forward to ensure that all information is fit for purpose and has value. He intends to look at consultations and questionnaires across the board to ensure this. Councillor Boden said he agreed that the portfolio holder reports need to be less formulaic, briefer and more to the point. This is something he intends to discuss with officers and see if some changes can be made perhaps in time for the next full Council meeting.
- Apologising for the lack of notice, Councillor Sutton addressed the Leader concerning the emergency works on Wisbech High Street. He asked if the costs for this work are underwritten

by the Combined Authority or Fenland District Council. Councillor Boden thanked Councillor Sutton, unfortunately given the short notice he was cautious of giving an answer that may have to be retracted or corrected later. However, these are urgent emergency works as a result of structural problems with what remains of the buildings on that site, undertaken to ensure public safety. Regarding recovery of costs, he will ensure a statement is made definitively to all members. Councillor Sutton thanked Councillor Boden for the explanation.

C23/19 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19.**

Councillor Miscandlon presented the Overview & Scrutiny Committee Annual Report for 2018/19 which provides a focus on the work undertaken by the committee during the past twelve months as well as providing a forward look to 2019/20. He stated that all members of the panel remain committed to ensuring it adds value whilst holding the Executive to account. He pointed out that the panel, both past and present, took an active and enthusiastic role in the overview and scrutiny process.

Councillor Miscandlon drew members' attention to a few key successes:

- Engagement with a number of external partner agencies to highlight and challenge performance in issues directly affecting residents of Fenland. This work has included scrutinising the Crime Disorder and Reduction Partnership (SFP) in addition to the Police, Clarion Housing and Health and Wellbeing partnership colleagues.
- A review of the Economic Development function including working with key local business stakeholders, neighbouring authorities and elected representatives from other organisations. The review has resulted in a number of comprehensive recommendations which have all subsequently been endorsed by Cabinet.

Councillor Miscandlon thanked all members and officers who have contributed to the success of the panel both past and present. He would recommend that Council acknowledge the broad scope of the work undertaken by the committee.

Councillor Yeulett welcomed the report, particularly the review of the Economic Development Service. He found it very comprehensive and asked if members could be kept informed going forward.

Councillor Booth commented that it needs to be recognised that it was under the Chairmanship of Councillor Boden that many of these items were first looked at.

Proposed by Councillor Booth and seconded by Councillor Skoulding, and AGREED to adopt the report.

C24/19 **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19.**

Councillor John Clark presented the Corporate Governance Committee Annual Report 2018/19. The committee is tasked with two key functions:

- Providing independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the control environment, and
- Independently scrutinising the authority's financial and non-financial performance and overseeing the financial reporting process.

Councillor Clark thanked all members of the committee for their comments and input into the

report, and also the help given to the committee by officers.

Councillor Booth stated his support for the report, advising the committee will be undertaking a lot more work going forward, given recent briefings on commercial investments, and the transformation programme.

Councillor Boden said that looking through the report, he saw value from the internal audit function we have, which is partly shared with Kings Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council. He found that function to be exercised in a scrupulous, independent and thorough manner, and he would like this put on record.

Proposed by Councillor Topgood, seconded by Councillor Booth and AGREED to adopt the report.

C25/19 MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MIKE CORNWELL REGARDING CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT.

Councillor Cornwell presented his motion regarding civil parking enforcement and stated that:

“Whilst canvassing in the recent elections I was approached by a number of residents concerned and annoyed about such issues as motorists ignoring parking restrictions, blocking footpaths by inconsiderate parking, parking dangerously near school entrances, blocking private entrances and parking very close to road junctions. Everyone understands that our police service has other more important priorities to attend to and this is why all our Norfolk neighbouring authorities and some in other neighbouring councils have introduced Civil Parking Enforcement, indeed it is often enforced successfully in conjunction with other street based services.

The effect of what I referred to in my election manifesto as “wild west parking in Fenland” affects almost every Fenland resident through individual safety, public safety, business continuity and sustainability, the environment and quality of life.

Madam Chairman, I strongly believe that Fenland must deliver services that its public wants and which improve their quality of life and I therefore propose that this Council shows its support for the exploration of the powers contained in Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 and associated Acts and Regulations regarding Civil Parking Enforcement throughout the district.”

Councillor Sutton seconded the motion and Councillor Mrs Mayor opened up the motion for debate.

Councillor Mrs French proposed an amendment to the motion (which had been tabled for members prior to the meeting) and stated:

“Many Fenland residents are justifiably concerned and annoyed about such issues as motorists ignoring parking restrictions, blocking footpaths by inconsiderate parking, parking dangerously near school entrances, blocking private entrances and parking very close to road junctions.

Fenland District Council must deliver services that its public wants and which improve their quality of life. This Council therefore welcomes the fact that several Cabinet members met with council officers last month to begin the process in Fenland of exploring the powers contained in Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 and associated Acts and Regulations regarding Civil Parking Enforcement throughout the District, and that officers on July 4th produced a draft briefing note relating to coordination of both off-street and on-street parking provision in Fenland, which includes the potential adoption in Fenland of Civil Parking Enforcement. This Council also notes with

approval that the draft briefing note explicitly excludes the introduction by Fenland District Council of paid car parking in the district's car parks".

Councillor Topgood seconded the amendment to the original motion and Councillor Mrs Mayor opened up the motion for debate.

- Councillor Tierney stated his support for the amendment, saying it is one of the issues that all members know is absolutely vital to the people of Fenland as they raise it all the time. It has been way too long where councillors have done nothing and now is the time to do something about it. Also, he was pleased to see the specific exclusion of pay parking added to the amended motion.
- Councillor Booth added that the amended motion was not much different to the original motion other than the main point of pay parking. He said that we need to be careful of making too many decisions before a review of council services under the council management programme. Members need to appreciate that the government grant we get, calculates that we should be getting an income from pay parking. We are only one of a few authorities who provide free parking to our credit but we must keep our options open for the future. He is happy to support the amendment as the main issue is civil parking enforcement but we need to make sure we look at this in the villages and not just the towns, particularly where it affects schools.
- Councillor Benney advised that the Conservative Group would not bring in pay parking in the next four years of their term unless it was a central government decision.
- Councillor Yeulett said poor parking is endemic in the district and will fully support the motion.
- Councillor Meekins added his support for the amendment. He went out with the police last week around Wisbech and the standard of parking was poor. Currently PCSOs can issue enforcement tickets and, although they do so much more, we need people who, as well as issuing tickets, provide a presence, act as a deterrent against poor parking and also help with traffic flow.
- Councillor Tanfield added she has been an advocate for sorting out parking since she was a Cabinet member. If the system works properly, fewer tickets will be issued leading to less money coming in; however someone still needs to pay the parking enforcers. She is surprised therefore that we are not looking at pay parking at all; we have no idea what the people in Fenland want or do not want because we have not asked the question. She stated that she had no problem supporting the amendment apart from the fact that to take away any option is to take away any financial value. We cannot make rules and then not have the substantial financial backing behind those rules.
- Councillor Hoy stated that all members agree that nobody likes inconsiderate parking; however there is disagreement over the pay parking issue and she is pleased that the Conservative Group will not be bringing in pay parking charges over the next four years. She thanked Councillor Tanfield for making her group's position clear on that issue.
- Councillor Count stated that the subject of pay parking has been in the media many times over the years and he is pleased that it has been ruled out at this stage. He added that he knows what his residents want because he is in regular contact with them and they tell him they are concerned about parking and they will say no to pay parking.
- Councillor Maul added that he favours the amendment; there is an issue with parking across the whole of Fenland. In response to Councillor Hoy's statement, he would like to affirm that he is against pay parking.

Councillor Mrs Mayor invited Councillor Cornwell to give his right to reply.

Councillor Cornwell said that there was very little difference between the motion and the amendment. However the subject has now been brought into the open for members to discuss their views and the motion has achieved that. His version clearly says that the Council should show support for the "exploration of the powers" and that is precisely what is going on. The argument only comes down to pay parking; his motion makes no reference to it but the amendment does.

A recorded vote was taken on the amendment to the motion, which was unanimously agreed.

Councillor Mrs Mayor opened the substantive motion for further debate.

- Councillor Count said that Councillor Cornwell in his summing up said the only difference between his motion and the amended motion was that we were against paid parking. He asked if Councillor Cornwell would now like to put forward a second amendment where he puts paid parking on the table.
- Councillor Tierney referred to Councillor Tanfield's earlier statement where she said she was surprised we were putting something onto the amendment and did not think we should rule anything out. He is happy that pay parking has been ruled out because the public want to know what we think, and it is clear what we think. If we are sure something is wrong, which in the case of pay parking we are, we should say so and the public will thank us for it. The Conservative Group are absolutely sure we will not be introducing pay charging in the next four years.
- Councillor Booth pointed out that the Councillor Cornwell did suggest civic parking enforcement was often enforced with other street based services and this was removed from the amended motion but he would like that this still be considered as part of the proposals going forward. It is probably cheaper to deliver a service if combined with other activities.
- Councillor Mrs French pointed out that we are one of 21 councils throughout the country who do not enforce parking. We are keen to look at the whole issue of parking, including pavement parking and blue badge abuse.
- Councillor Sutton wanted to state that he has never supported pay parking but perhaps it is something that should be looked at and not ruled out. Our car parks are full but the shops are empty, therefore something is wrong. Are people coming from further afield to use our free car parks in Whittlesey but going shopping in Peterborough for example?
- Councillor Hay pointed out that she understands we can introduce parking restrictions and time limits without introducing charges, and presumably that will form something that we are looking at as a council.
- Councillor Boden agreed with Councillor Sutton, our car parks are being utilised by individuals who are not the shoppers who need the spaces to get access to the shops. We do need to differentiate in the car parks, those which should be for short term parking for shops and other local services, and those for workers who could perhaps park a little further away.
- Councillor Cornwell stated that March, as the busiest town in Fenland, already has time-limited parking and that is in the car parks that are operated by supermarkets, which are controlled and it does not cause a problem. Therefore he assumes it is one of the options that will be taken into account, although he stated again that pay parking was not part of his original motion.

Councillor Mrs Mayor asked for a vote to be taken on the substantive motion.

The motion was passed unanimously.

C26/19 MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR BODEN REGARDING COUNCIL TAX.

Councillor Boden presented his motion regarding council tax and stated that:

“At its Full Council meeting on 21st February 2019, Fenland District Council approved its budget for 2019/20 showing a 0% Council Tax increase for 2019/20, but with increases shown of 1.98% p.a. through to 2023/24 as reflected in the current Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

In five out of the last eight years FDC has approved budgets with no Council Tax increase. This is a record of which the Council can be proud, given the financial constraints which FDC, as well as all other councils, has had to work within.

It is the ambition of this administration to maintain 0% increases in Council Tax throughout the MTFS period for the benefit of residents. However, it is recognised that the Council continues to face significant financial challenges and uncertainties that may not allow this ambition to be met.

Members of the Council need to act responsibly each year when setting the precept to balance the ambition of achieving a 0% Council Tax rise with the legal need to balance the budget. Nevertheless, raising Council Tax in any of the next four years will be our last resort, as we believe that we have a duty to minimise the financial effects of Council Tax on all of Fenland's households.

This Council resolves to:

1. Re-position the MTFS to show 0% Council Tax increases through to 2023/24

2. Note the revised future projected deficits from 2020/21 onwards as per the attached.

Councillor Boden further added that the purpose of this motion is to make it quite clear to residents and all members what the intent and ambition is of this administration. During the period of austerity more than 50% of the funding this council received from central government has disappeared; it would be unthinkable to envisage the results if the same amount of funding had been withdrawn from the budgets of the emergency services and armed forces. The Council has done very well facing the funding challenges during this period of austerity and shown great resilience by being able to maintain frontline services. This is due to the hard work of members of this council, its staff and officers. Further savings need to be made over the next four years so there is a significant challenge ahead. Despite this we have this ambition to not necessarily increase our share of council tax. It is a pledge, not a promise, but a statement of ambition to do our best to ensure that over the next four years, we do not impose any greater burden on hard working families in this district by increasing the level of council tax. Councillor Boden added that he would hope all members would agree with this motion and that we all look at our ways of working to try to ensure that our services are provided as cost effectively as possible to reduce or, if possible, eliminate the need to increase council tax.

Councillor Mrs French and Councillor Mrs Mayor opened up the motion for debate.

- Councillor Booth thanked Councillor Boden for clarifying the point that this is a best intention. However, he expressed surprise that it was put forward as a motion because as Leader he was sure he could have made a statement to that effect. He welcomes what Councillor Boden said about intent but wondered if we should be more ambitious bearing in mind the council tax that our residents pay compared to our neighbours, we know is considerably higher. He added that he is surprised also that we have not taken this opportunity to look at council expenditure. If we tell officers we are not going to increase the cost of running the council further, as you would do in the commercial field, it would see a lot of the actual savings be delivered through managing of our budget more carefully.
- Councillor Sutton felt that this motion was not ambitious enough. He agreed that our residents pay more council tax and cited Black Bear Lane as an example. Residents in the Norfolk end of the lane pay far less than the residents who live at the end that comes within the jurisdiction of Fenland. It can be argued that on average we are lowest because of the amount of different properties we have, but residents do not care about averages, they only care about what they pay. This council cannot justify our residents paying almost double the amount of council tax of their neighbours in the same street who pay their council tax to the neighbouring authority.
- Councillor Tierney stated he has argued the case for lower council tax for years and is pleased that others are saying the same. We may not achieve it, and we may have to increase it because we do not know what will happen in the future, but the key difference is that rises do

not now need to be presumed.

- Councillor Count said this is an aspiration and there is nothing wrong with being ambitious and trying to achieve something, rather than to give up before you start. He raised the additional point made by Councillor Booth as to why Councillor Boden did not just issue a statement. When this council passes a budget, and a medium term strategy alongside it, the only way that it is appropriate to change a full council decision is to bring it back to full council. It is such a huge issue that it does warrant a full debate by council and therefore he fully supports this motion.

Councillor Mrs Mayor invited Councillor Boden to give his right to reply.

Councillor Boden agreed that Councillor Count was correct in that it is necessary to bring before this council the proposal that the medium term financial strategy be re-based so that in future it works on the assumption of a 0% council tax increase rather than the 1.98% annual council tax increase, which had been presumed at previous meetings of full council. It has also come forward as a motion in order to give all members the opportunity to speak. However, he took issue with Councillor Booth in saying that our residents pay more council tax, he stated the government statistics are very clear on this in that the amount which is paid is less in Fenland than any other district council in Cambridgeshire.

Councillor Mrs Mayor asked for a vote to be taken on the motion.

The motion was passed.

(Councillor Sutton and Councillor Yeulett abstained from voting).

C27/19 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REVIEW 2018/19.

Councillor Boden presented the Treasury Management Annual Review 2018/19.

Councillor Boden added that treasury management is a significant part of insuring that we maintain the security of our assets and also that we manage to get a significant financial return out of them.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Hoy it was AGREED that the report be noted.

C28/19 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES, PANELS AND OUTSIDE BODIES.

Members considered the Membership of Committees, Panels and Outside Bodies Report presented by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Cornwell stated that on page 169 of the agenda pack in the column 'Political Apportionment' for Corporate Governance Committee, line 4 is not needed. Councillor Mrs Mayor confirmed the suggestion was noted.

Councillor Hay pointed out that her name was missing from the list of nominated representatives for Nightlayer IDB. Councillor Boden confirmed that this would be updated and confirmed the report will be updated adjusted.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Wilkes it was AGREED:

- **To reduce the number of Members on Planning Committee from 15 to 12 in order to achieve a more management and appropriate number of Members on that Committee.**

- **To add substitute members to the following committees:**
 - **Overview and Scrutiny Committee (6 substitute members),**
 - **Licensing Committee (6 substitute members),**
 - **Corporate Governance Committees (5 substitute members),**
 - **Staff Committee (4 substitute members) and**
 - **Appointments panel (3 substitute members).**
- **To adopt the schedule of political allocations set out in the appendices.**
- **For Council to delegate to the Monitoring Officer to make the appropriate changes to the constitution in support of the report.**

C29/19 COMBINED AUTHORITY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS.

Members considered the Combined Authority Executive Committee Appointments report presented by Councillor Boden.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Mrs French and AGREED:

- **To the appointments and nominations to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Executive Committees for the municipal year 2019/20.**
- **That the proposed representative for the Transport Committee is Cllr Chris Seaton with Cllr Chris Boden as the substitute representative.**
- **That the proposed representative for the Housing and Communities Committee is Cllr Mrs Dee Laws with Cllr Sam Hoy as the substitute representative.**
- **That the Chief Executive be authorised to make any amendments to the appointments to the Combined Authority Executive Committees including the Transport Committee and Housing and Communities Committee in consultation with the relevant Political Group Leaders, if the political balance is amended by the Authority between now and the next Council meeting and at any time throughout the municipal year.**

C30/19 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON.

Members considered the Appointment of Independent Person report presented by Councillor Topgood.

Proposed by Councillor Topgood, seconded by Councillor Mrs Laws and AGREED to appoint Stuart Webster as the Council's Independent Person as recommended by the Conduct Committee.