

COUNCIL



THURSDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER 2018 - 4.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs K Mayor (Chairman), Councillor Mrs M Davis (Vice-Chairman), Councillor Benney, Councillor Mrs S Bligh, Councillor G Booth, Councillor M Bucknor, Councillor Mrs V Bucknor, Councillor M Buckton, Councillor R Butcher, Councillor J Clark, Councillor S Clark, Councillor M Cornwell, Councillor S Count, Councillor S Court, Councillor Mrs C Cox, Councillor Mrs J French, Councillor Mrs A Hay, Councillor Miss S Hoy, Councillor S King, Councillor Mrs D Laws, Councillor A Miscandlon, Councillor P Murphy, Councillor Mrs F Newell, Councillor D Oliver, Councillor K Owen, Councillor A Pugh, Councillor C Seaton, Councillor R Skoulding, Councillor W Sutton, Councillor M Tanfield, Councillor G Tibbs and Councillor S Tierney

APOLOGIES: Councillor C Boden, Councillor D Connor, Councillor S Garratt, Councillor D Hodgson, Councillor M Humphrey, Councillor D Mason and Councillor F Yeulett

C29/18 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 19 July 2018 were confirmed and signed, subject to amendment to minute C28/18 to include that Councillor Sutton stated that he would support the update as long as it did not result in money being squandered.

C30/18 CIVIC ENGAGEMENTS UPDATE

Councillor Mrs Mayor drew Members attention to the civic activities undertaken by herself and the Vice Chairman in the weeks preceding Full Council.

C31/18 TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL AND/OR THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE.

The Chairman reminded Members that her Civic Reception would be taking place on Friday 14 September at Neale Wade Academy and all Members were welcome. The Chairman also advised Members that she will be hosting the annual Macmillan Charity Coffee Morning on Thursday 27 September 2018. All Members are welcome to attend and donations for raffle prizes to raise money for this worthwhile cause would also be appreciated.

C32/18 PETITION - CLINICAL WASTE COLLECTION CHARGES

The Chairman welcomed Mrs Sue Marshall to the meeting and invited her to present her petition concerning Clinical Waste Collection charges to Council.

Mrs Marshall made the following statement:

‘Good Afternoon Councillors, I am presenting the clinical waste petition on behalf of people who believe that the charge for the collection of clinical waste including sharps boxes is both unfair and discriminates against those residents who need the service. For an explanation of the ‘discriminatory’ description please look at the link contained in the petition. It came as a shock that this charge was to be brought in at very short notice with no consultation with either the public or Councillors.

The public campaign against the charge, this petition, has encouraged you to postpone this introduction to allow a sensible solution to be found. We urge you to permanently drop this charge. Diabetes affects 8000 Fenland residents and many others who use sharps boxes either continually or occasionally. There are also many residents who use the clinical waste service on an adhoc basis often after hospital stays or those being treated by district nurses and carers. Some of you will either be effected directly by the threat of this charge or know of people who will be. Those struggling with illness or disability through no fault of their own already have a heavy burden and we ask you not to impose an additional financial one.

A great risk to public health would be for residents to put sharps and clinical waste into their household rubbish and as you are a waste authority we ask that you do the right thing and minimise that risk by permanently dropping this charge. I have been told that in some instances sharps boxes are being replaced by much smaller ones and this will make the disposal of sharps boxes more frequent, increasing the potential costs to residents. Fenland District Council appears to be the only one in Cambridgeshire to charge for the collection of this waste. You, the Councillors will be seen to be acting unfairly, discriminating and lacking compassion to the sick and disabled, so we ask that you permanently withdraw the threat of this charge'.

Councillor Murphy addressed the petition with the following statement:

'Thank you for your contribution Mrs Marshall. Public opinion on this matter is clearly demonstrated through the petition presented today for our consideration.

It is frustrating that this policy change by the NHS is being contemplated at short notice and delivered without thought to the transferred costs and workload, especially since what we appear to have is a system that works perfectly well for the customer. These changes do not just affect Fenland; this is being implemented across East Anglia and will result in a range of issues for customers.

Given that the decision is the NHS's, I do hope that you will also be petitioning them. Whilst this may save the NHS thousands of pounds across the area, it will potentially cost the local authorities many hundreds of thousands of pounds at a time when it is difficult for local authorities to provide extra money for services and will no doubt result in other services suffering across the area if customers are not required to contribute towards these costs directly.

As you are aware, the collection of clinical waste is expensive because it involves specialist equipment and trained staff. Should the NHS make their proposed changes next year then the demands on the services across the region could be considerable, along with the cost.

Fenland is currently working with partner Cambridgeshire authorities to avoid this situation and aims to provide customers with community collection points, but this will require cooperation from the NHS and pharmacies. As a result, the Cambridgeshire authorities have requested that the NHS delay their changes until April 2019 to provide time for these options to be properly considered by Fenland councillors.

Through regular updates I have kept my member colleagues informed of the initial discussions and will be bringing a paper to cabinet to discuss the options later in the year. Your petition will form part of that consideration.

Thank you again for your time and efforts in bring forward this item'.

Councillor Murphy further stated that the charge of £5 was introduced in 2015, which has never been passed onto the residents who use the service, but if the NHS is insistent on their proposals, the Authority will incur costs of £130,000 resulting in the costs of other services having to be reviewed. The Council would ideally like to keep the service running at a nil charge to customers.

Councillor Murphy advised that the Council only have 9 dialysis customers on its records currently and 100 residents who it collects sharps boxes from, so the cost is currently negligible and that is why it has been able to run as a free collection, but the NHS is trying to pass this charge onto Local Authorities. He stated that the Suffolk Waste Partnership have written to a number of MP's and the Chief Executive of the NHS to raise their concerns over the proposals, and the Recycling Cambridgeshire and Peterborough meeting (RECAP), which he chairs, have raised concerns over this matter with Stephen Barclay MP, and also Stuart Smith from the Primary Care Team of the Eastern Area.

Councillor Murphy mentioned that within the Midlands, the proposals for charging have been delayed and have not yet been implemented and it is hoped that the Eastern Region can also follow suit. He stated that following the RECAP meeting, he has requested that his concerns are raised at the highest possible level within the NHS and also to the Clinical Commissioners. Councillor Murphy stated that with regard to sharps boxes, different sizes can be obtained, and it was worth noting that some boxes that are collected do only contain 1 or 2 needles.

Councillor Murphy proposed that the petition be noted and the concerns raised be acknowledged. He further proposed that this issue be raised again at Cabinet later in the year.

Councillor Oliver seconded the proposal and the item was opened for debate.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that she has listened to what Councillor Murphy has said and the reason why the petition started was because Cabinet had circulated an email in July, informing Members that the Council would start charging £8 per collection for clinical waste and sharps boxes from 1 September 2018, which was made without any debate or discussion.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that she has contacted several pharmacies and GP surgeries in Wisbech and none of them have been made aware of the proposals, along with the residents that would be affected, even though the email stated that it would be implemented by the Council on 1 September 2018. She asked for confirmation as to when it was agreed that the charge would be raised to £8 and would include sharps boxes that were also collected from pharmacies and surgeries.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated the only meeting where this matter was raised was at the Overview and Scrutiny meeting in January 2015, where Councillor Mrs French was the Chairman at the time, and it was agreed that customers who had clinical waste would be charged £5, but officers would consider the charge on an ad-hoc basis. In the email to members in July of this year it had stated that customers will be able to contact the Council and a driver will collect the sharps box for a fee of £8 per collection. Councillor Mrs Bucknor questioned whether this will be a private contractor, bearing in mind that there are 8,000 customers.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated in another calculation by the Council, it is assuming that only 4,000 people will use the service and, therefore, where will the other 4,000 customers dispose of their needles and clinical waste?. She feels that the proposal has not been considered fully; the current service is efficient and has a simple system for arranging a collection.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor questioned why the Cabinet thought that this issue was not necessary for open discussion amongst Councillors as this proposal is a health and safety issue and discriminates people who have a medical condition. If this petition is not supported, vulnerable persons will be targeted through no fault of their own.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that she understands that negotiations are still ongoing with the NHS, however, discussions have been ongoing since April and the Council have still decided to charge from 1 September 2018. She does not agree that it should go back to Cabinet feeling

instead it should go to Overview and Scrutiny Committee, if there is going to be any discussion or a debate, to enable involvement of all Councillors.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that while she appreciates that Councillor Murphy has put a proposal forward, she would like to propose that there should not be any charges for residents for the collection and disposal of sharps boxes and clinical waste. Councillor Booth seconded the proposal and the item was opened for debate.

Councillor Booth stated that he has listened to both Councillor Murphy and Councillor Mrs Bucknor and he would like to add that the Council has a corporate objective of protecting the most vulnerable persons in our society and this issue goes against that objective. He questioned why this Council is the only one who has announced that it is going to charge?

Councillor Booth stated that he appreciates that it is the NHS who are passing the charge onto Local Government and whilst he commends the action already taken by the Council, the local MP should also be lobbied as he is the Health Minister. In his view, the Council needs to say we are not going to introduce this charge and try to find a way of not implementing it and, therefore, he supports the petition.

Councillor Murphy reiterated that it is the NHS who is passing this charge on to the local authority, but it will not be introduced yet. He stated that the £5 charge was mentioned in the fees and charges in 2015 and with regard to the £8 charge, that is the cost that the County Council would charge for collection as they have appointed a contractor to carry out the collections with customers being able to use any size box and if it is a large box, it may only result in a yearly collection.

Councillor Murphy emphasised that the Council will not implement the charge until the NHS insists that the Council has to charge.

Councillor Booth expressed the view that it is down to this Council as the waste collection authority to decide whether it wishes to introduce this charge.

Councillor Tierney appreciated the valid points made by Councillors Mrs Bucknor and Booth, however, they have not identified where the £130,000 costs are going to be found to fund the service. In order to fund a service that previously did not need to be paid for; any proposal should state where the additional monies required are going to be found, which could mean that a service would need to be withdrawn and then the opposition will state that this service should not be cut.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor referred to the suggestion that the NHS should be contacted and the MP Steve Barclay has already been written to twice but he has not replied. The Council have decided that they do intend to charge, and with regard to the question of where is the money going to come from, we have read in the report about the various savings that are going to be made due to various projects that are taking place, for example the leisure centres.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that currently there is no other authority planning to implement this charge and as Councillor Murphy has indicated that the Council definitely do not want to implement the charge, then it should not be introduced and the petition of 880 signatures should be supported. She expressed the opinion that this proposal is to do with people's health and there have been no factual facts and figures provided of where the £8 proposal has come from and how much the service is going to cost the authority.

Councillor John Clark questioned whether the Council have written to Steve Barclay MP, the Health Minister, and whether there has been a reply. Councillor Murphy stated that yes a letter has been sent; however, a response is still to be received.

Councillor Murphy stated that he has a letter from Suffolk County Council who has explained, that in budgetary terms, the proposed changes will save NHS England approximately £2,000, based on their figures, and in contrast the expected door to door collection and disposal costs in Suffolk are likely to be in the region of over £100,000.

Councillor Mrs Mayor made the point that there is an amendment by Councillor Mrs Bucknor and seconded by Councillor Booth to the proposal and Members need to vote on this amendment first, which is to support the petition and not to charge for clinical waste collections.

The Leader stated that, as Councillor Tierney has already mentioned, currently as an authority this Council is not charging for collections or intending to charge, but if the NHS do implement the charge, the issue could be brought back to Council for discussion on whether there is a way to carry out the service at no charge.

Amy Brown stated that Members have to vote on the first amendment proposed before any further amendments can be considered.

A recorded vote was held on the amended proposal by Councillor Mrs Bucknor and seconded by Councillor Booth.

In favour of the proposal-Councillors Mrs Bligh, Booth, Mrs Bucknor, Bucknor, Court, Mrs Cox, Mrs French and Skoulding.

Against the proposal – Councillors Benney, Butcher, Count, Cornwell, Mrs Hay, Miss Hoy, King, Mrs Laws, Miscandlon, Murphy, Mrs Newell, Oliver, Owen, Pugh and Seaton.

Abstentions - Councillors Buckton, S Clark, J Clark, Mrs Tanfield, Sutton, Tibbs and Tierney.

Amy Brown stated that now that amendment has fallen the next amendment required a seconder in order for a vote to take place.

The Leader proposed that to move this matter forward, if the NHS does impose a charge, the issue be referred back to Council to see if there is any alternative option which can put forward to mitigate this issue. Councillor Tibbs seconded this proposal.

Councillor Booth stated that he supports the Leader's suggestion; however, it is important that core decisions are debated properly at Full Council with the full facts, and, in his view, the full facts concerning this issue have not been provided.

Councillor Sutton stated he had abstained from the first vote as it is still not sure as to what the outcome will be concerning charging and he does not feel able to vote to stop something that is not actually happening. He suggested that all avenues should be looked at, so this charge does not get implemented and that the four one stop shops in each of the Fenland towns have central collection points for residents to take their boxes to be collected.

Councillor Murphy agreed that Councillor Sutton's suggestion could be considered. He made the point that the timescales for the proposal keep being moved and, in his opinion, it may be that the NHS reconsiders their proposal.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that, although she is not happy with the current outcome, she will support the Leader's proposal. She made the point that this issue was a Cabinet decision with their being no further update to the last email received stating the charge was going to be introduced.

Councillor Mrs Hay stated that the subject was never referred to Cabinet as it was a Portfolio Holder decision. It formed part of the fees and charges in 2015, when Councillor Mrs Bucknor and

herself were part of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and at that time it was felt that there were so few people who would require a collection that the charge would be waived, but the charge has always been in situ.

It was AGREED that there be no charge for clinical waste collections until the matter has been returned to Full Council to discuss the options.

Councillor Mrs Mayor thanked Mrs Marshall for bringing this important matter to our attention and for her contribution today.

(During the decision making on this item, a member of the public was warned about their conduct and subsequently removed from the Council Chamber.)

(The following members expressed a non-pecuniary interest in this item by virtue of the fact that the introduction of charges for the disposal of clinical waste may impact them personally due to underlying medical conditions effecting themselves or family members; Councillors Bucknor, Mrs Cox, Mrs Mayor, Skoulding and Tibbs.)

(Councillors Mrs Bucknor and Mrs French declared a non-pecuniary interest, due to the fact that they had signed the petition not to charge for clinical waste, but stated that they remained open minded to be able to take part in the debate and were not pre-determined.)

(Councillor Owen requested that it be recorded that he abstained from voting on the second proposal.)

C33/18 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.

No questions had been submitted under Procedure Rule 8.6 and Councillor Booth, as leader of the main opposition group, asked questions under Procedure Rule 8.4, as follows:

- Further to the Portfolio Holder email that Members had received yesterday concerning the Wisbech Bowls Club and the fact that this is another decision that has been taken without the engagement of Members, is it now time to change the style of governance within this Council so that we do ensure that all Members are involved in the decision making process? He feels that the Leisure Centre procurement process should have been decided by Full Council, which was not previously supported, and decisions are not being taken in consultation with all Members, and, therefore, the local communities' considerations are not being taken into account. The Leader stated that there is no intention of dissolving the Wisbech Bowls Club, it is on a short term lease of 6 months as the intention was to change the management of the Leisure Centres and the briefing referred to the Council identifying ideas on how to utilise this area. The new Leisure Management Company that are due to assume responsibility of the Leisure Centres will be saving the Council in the region of £350,000 per year, and they are also planning to invest £500,000 in the Hudson Leisure Centre due to expansion. The Bowls Club have an extension until the end of their bowls league and during this time every opportunity will be made to relocate the club and assist in identifying grant funding for them.
- Councillor Booth stated his main concern is the way that decision making is taken at the Council with too many decisions being made by Portfolio Holders and Cabinet, without engagement of the wider back bench Councillors. The Leader stated that the proposal went before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and there was also a Member Seminar on the subject, although attendance at Member Seminars is low. The Leader stated that Cabinet do their best, they provide Portfolio Holder Briefings, Seminars, attend Overview and Scrutiny and are always prepared to speak to Members to answer any questions or queries

that require a response. Councillor Booth stated that, with regard to the all Member seminars, for those Members that work attendance is difficult due to the time that they are held and if they were held in the evenings it could result in a better attendance.

- Councillor Booth queried how confidential information concerning the property and acquisition of 11-12 High Street had managed to appear in the press. Councillor Booth requested that a full investigation take place.

C34/18 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM AND ASK QUESTIONS OF CABINET MEMBERS WITH PORTFOLIO HOLDER RESPONSIBILITIES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE RULES 8.1 AND 8.2.

Standing orders were suspended to allow for full discussion on this item.

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

- Councillor Mrs Bligh stated that Murrow residents have worked hard to be the fifteenth Street Pride Group in Fenland, asking for her thanks to be passed to the Street Pride Coordinator for her assistance in setting up the group, but this group have never been acknowledged in the Portfolio Holder report asking if there is there a reason why? Councillor Murphy stated that he would see that this matter was addressed.
- Councillor Mrs Bligh asked the Leader, due to his position on the Combined Authority, to support the retention of the number 46 bus route, making the point that local residents rely on this service. She stated she had mentioned this issue to Mayor James Palmer at the All Member Seminar, but he was unable to comment as to whether it would be saved after April 2019. The Leader stated he will be happy and prepared to support the retention of this bus service.
- Councillor Bligh asked Councillor Oliver for further details of the 52 cases of anti-social behaviour in Fenland, and whether these statistics can be split into areas, including details of where the CCTV is sited. Councillor Oliver stated he would ensure this is actioned.
- Councillor Bligh asked, due to the heightened awareness of 'period poverty' where young girls are missing days of their secondary education due to not having access to sanitary products, whether there is anything that the Council can do to provide support? Councillor Cornwell stated that he will be discussing this matter with colleagues who have undertaken projects concerning this issue.
- Councillor Mrs French stated that it would appear the Fenland District Council website has some errors on it which need updating.
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor referred to her attendance at a meeting with the Department of Work and Pensions concerning the implementation of Universal Credit and a number of issues which customers have encountered, asking if Councillor Mrs Hay would engage with the One Stop Shop in Wisbech to ensure that customers are directed to the Rainbow Savers Credit Union, who may be able to assist them. Councillor Mrs Hay stated that she will liaise with the One Stop Shop and ensure that they have the details of the Rainbow Savers Credit Union.
- Councillor Tibbs asked whether there is any update with regard to Wisbech Vehicle Exchange and also concerning the derelict building on Petts Close where there are reports on drug mis-use taking place. Councillor Oliver stated that there is no update concerning the Wisbech Vehicle Exchange and he will check with Officers to see if there is any progress. With regard to the Petts Close issue, Councillor Oliver stated he will speak to Councillor Tibbs outside of the meeting.
- Councillor Tierney made the point that it is disappointing to learn of the current situation with Wisbech Bowls Club, with the club being a success story for Wisbech, asking that every effort to be made to protect the future of the club going forward. Councillor Buckton stated that there is no intention to close the Bowls Club, but part of the invitation to tender for the Leisure Services Contract, included whether there were any opportunities for the

redevelopment of the bowls hall. As a result of the procurement process, Freedom Leisure, who have been selected as the preferred provider have submitted two options; doing nothing to the bowls hall or redeveloping the bowls hall resulting in an investment of £500,000 into that area of the Leisure Centre increasing the amount of revenue to the Council of £140,000, which over the course of the contract equates to £2,000,000. If the first option had been chosen then the Council would still be in the same position where it would need to subsidise the leisure centres. Councillor Buckton stated that discussions will continue with the bowls club to identify ways for it to continue.

- Councillor Booth commented that the briefing that Members received implied that Bowls Club members would have to play at clubs elsewhere, suggesting that the club would be disbanded. To build a purpose built bowls club will take a considerable amount of time, and therefore, it would be preferable if the existing club can continue at another location. Councillor Buckton stated that the suggestion in the briefing concerning the use of other bowls clubs was just one option. Freedom Leisure have agreed that there will be no redevelopment in that area until the middle of next year, with all options still needing to be considered. Another option is to use the sports hall, which could accommodate short mat bowls, and although it may not be the preferred option in comparison with a full size bowls green it is an option, even if it is an interim arrangement. The Council will do everything it can to enable the continuation of the bowls club, so that the members can continue to enjoy bowls.
- Councillor Mrs French asked Councillor Murphy whether he has applied for the monies available from the 'Champion of Fenland' scheme following an email she has sent to him. Councillor Murphy stated that he is yet to apply.
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor referred to the agenda pack, which contains details concerning the Wisbech port area, mentioning an increase of ships coming to Wisbech, and how the Port has handled the largest amount of cargo in a single month 'ever', feeling that the word 'ever' is a little optimistic. There is also a mention of the yacht harbour marketing plan, where it mentions that a response is still to be received from Central Government regarding funding and she would like members to be informed with regard to the outcome and whether funding has been awarded. The Leader responded that Councillor Oliver is the Portfolio Holder responsible for the Port area and will ensure that Members are notified when a response is received.
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked whether the Leader will be attending the next Combined Authority meeting in September where the Wisbech Access Strategy will be discussed? The Leader stated that either he or Councillor Oliver will be in attendance and Members will be advised of any decision made concerning the strategy.
- Councillor Booth asked for clarity with regard to the number of business enquiries which have come into the Council, which had previously been discussed at Overview and Scrutiny and had been noted that there were no actual businesses that had moved into Fenland, and asked whether the figures shown could actually show how many successful moves have actually taken place, to give a better reflection and understanding? Councillor Oliver said that he will take that action forward.
- Councillor Booth stated that on Page 48 it mentions the amount of fixed penalty notices that had been issued and he asked whether these fixed penalty notices are collected or is there a default rate? Councillor Oliver stated that he will check to see what the default rate is.
- Councillor Booth queried the information concerning housing benefit claims, making the point that whilst recognising we are outside of the target, the information in the report is marked in green and it should be red. He referred to page 54, with regard to the number of applications for grants being submitted as 0 out of 8 but is marked in green, and as we are almost halfway through the year there should have been at least 4 applications submitted. Councillor Booth added, on page 67 where it mentions FACT, he would like an update as to the outcome and effects on the Council following the investigation that was held. Councillor Mrs Hay stated that with regard to the information concerning housing benefits, which is marked in green as opposed to red, if the figures are compared over the past couple of months, the figure has decreased from 9.4 days to 8.8 days. She advised that ARP has

recently recruited a number of new staff who have required training and this also needs to be taken into consideration. Councillor Booth stated that although the figures are moving in the right direction, the target has still not been met. Councillor Mrs Hay stated that she will monitor the figures going forward.

- Councillor Sutton asked Councillor Buckton to clarify whether the £140,000 revenue that he mentioned in relation to the Leisure Centres forms part of the £351,000 savings or whether it is additional sum of money. Councillor Buckton stated that it is part of the overall £351,000 savings. Councillor Sutton asked that if the Bowls Club remains, then Council is going to lose £140,000? Councillor Buckton confirmed that would be the case. Councillor Sutton expressed the view that it would be wrong to support any club in any town or village when it would cost the Council that amount of money.
- Councillor Sutton stated that he had noted that the planning results continue to be very good; however, nationally the results of the report are listed as majors and non-majors and asked why we are still reporting the results as majors, minors and others. Councillor Mrs Laws stated that she takes Councillor Suttons comments on board.
- Councillor Buckton clarified that Members need to make a distinction between the bowls hall and the bowls club. It is the bowls hall that is being redeveloped, the bowls club is separate and the Council will do everything it can to ensure it continues.
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor advised Members that Nestle Purina have posted on social media a 3 minute promotional video, which also promotes Wisbech, and she would like it considered when promoting tourism in the area.
- Councillor Mrs Hay advised Councillor Booth that with regard to Council Tax support, there appears to be a typographical error on the latest portfolio holder update where the target is actually 9 days and that is why it is marked in green.
- Councillor Murphy advised Members that he had attended the Anglia in Bloom awards ceremony in Bury St Edmunds. There were over 150 people in attendance from all over East Anglia with a number of awards being presented to various areas in Fenland, including 3 gold awards for Wisbech, a gold award for Chatteris and Waterlees and a silver gilt award for Benwick. Brian Massingham from Wisbech was awarded the Mike Ames award for his contribution to the In Bloom project, which is the highest accolade that the In Bloom organisation presents. Councillor Owen congratulated the Wisbech in Bloom team, but questioned the amount of hours of assistance the Wisbech area receives from the Parks and Green Spaces team compared to other Fenland towns.
- Councillor Sutton congratulated all the worthy winners, but agreed with Councillor Owen and requested a break down in costs, to compare the differences in costs for all of the Fenland areas. Councillor Murphy agreed to provide this detail.

C35/18 COUNCIL AUDIO/VISUAL EQUIPMENT

Councillor Buckton proposed that this item be deferred as Members' required further information on the proposal.

Councillor Booth asked that as part of the report in November, could there be more than one option provided as part of the streaming option.

Proposed by Councillor Buckton, seconded by Councillor Mrs French and AGREED that this item be deferred until the meeting to be held on 15 November 2018.

C36/18 PROPERTY ACQUISITION AND REGENERATION, WISBECH

Councillor Oliver presented various options for consideration in connection with an important derelict town centre site, known as "11/12 High Street Wisbech", which is considered a 'high priority' property, located within the Wisbech High Street Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) project area, making the point that the report was one of the most complex and challenging matters that the

Council had needed to consider for a number of years. He stated that grant aid is available from HLF, however, this is time limited and may be at risk if the required major refurbishment cannot be taken forward within the available timeframe, with completion being required by January 2021.

Councillor Oliver stated that there are various benefits including regeneration and delivery, but also financial risks and, therefore, Members need to decide the most appropriate way forward. The current owner is unable to move forward with the development or meet the deadline for the funding, and, therefore, the site would need to be purchased from the current owner. Officers have reached an in principle agreement with the owner for the purchase, together with procurement of draft designs, estimated costs, valuations and viability assessments.

Councillor Oliver advised there are now 4 possible options for consideration and if Members are minded to approve either option 1, 2 or 3, Cabinet will consider a separate report later today recommending approval for a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) to aid the purchase if required. He referred to the risk matrix that has been provided which includes the financial implications for each of the options proposed, explaining that it is important for Members to understand the risk and financial implications so that an appropriate decision can be agreed.

Councillor Oliver informed Members of the recommendation that was reached by Cabinet at its earlier meeting.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses.

Members AGREED to

- **endorse the Cabinet recommendation for the approval of option 2 as contained in the confidential appendices and acquisition of the property as soon as practicable on the terms outlined;**
- **note the need for Cabinet to approve, in principle, to make a Compulsory Purchase Order under Section 226(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)**
- **delegate to the Chief Executive, Corporate Director (Growth and Infrastructure) and Corporate Director (Finance) in conjunction with the Leader, Finance Portfolio Holder and Growth, Heritage and Community Safety Portfolio Holder to implement the preferred option and in particular**
 - **to enter into an agreement to purchase and subsequently acquire the site on the terms outlined, including the possibility of delisting the property.**
 - **to take all action necessary to transfer the property to the identified developer on terms that protect the delivery of the scheme and enable the drawdown of the relevant HLF grant.**

(Members resolved to exclude the public from the meeting during the discussion of the recommendations for this item of business on the grounds that Appendices A-G involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.)

6.00 pm

Chairman