

COUNCIL



THURSDAY, 23 MAY 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 P Murphy, Councillor D Patrick, Councillor M Purser, Councillor W Rackley, Councillor R Skoulding, Councillor W Sutton, Councillor M Tanfield, Councillor D Topgood, Councillor S Tierney, Councillor S Wallwork, Councillor Wicks and Councillor F Yeulett

APOLOGIES: Councillor C Seaton and Councillor Wilkes

C1/19 TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE PERIOD TO THE NEXT ANNUAL MEETING AND TO RESOLVE THAT AN ALLOWANCE OF £4,000 PLUS TRAVELLING EXPENSES BE PAID TO THE PERSON ELECTED.

It was proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Skoulding and resolved that Councillor Mrs Kay Mayor be elected as Chairman of the Council for the period to the next Annual Meeting and that she be paid an allowance of £4,000 plus travelling expenses.

Councillor Mrs Mayor received the Chain of Office, signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and addressed the Council. Councillor Mrs Mayor said it was a privilege to serve as Chairman of the Council and thanked members for their support.

C2/19 TO ELECT A VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE PERIOD TO THE NEXT ANNUAL MEETING AND TO RESOLVE THAT AN ALLOWANCE OF £1,000 PLUS TRAVELLING EXPENSES BE PAID TO THE PERSON ELECTED.

It was proposed by Councillor Mason, seconded by Councillor Mrs Laws and resolved that Councillor Alex Miscandlon be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Council for the period to the next Annual Meeting and that he be paid an allowance of £1,000 plus travelling expenses.

Councillor Miscandlon signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and addressed the Council. Councillor Miscandlon thanked members and said he would support the Council to the best of his ability.

C3/19 TO ELECT A LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE 4 YEAR TERM OF THE COUNCIL AND BE NOTIFIED BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL OF THEIR CABINET.

It was proposed by Councillor Connor, seconded by Councillor S Clark and resolved that

Councillor Chris Boden be elected as Leader of the Council for the four year term of the Council.

Councillor Boden stated;

'Thank you members of the Council; it is an honour to be elected as Leader of the Council. I would like to say it is my intention to serve in this post, for the benefit of everyone in Fenland.

Before continuing, it would be appropriate to give thanks to the former Leader, Councillor Seaton, for his work as Leader of the Council for the past fifteen months. Councillor Seaton has acted in accordance with the best principles of Local Government and I would like it to be recorded in the minutes as a show of thanks and recognition for his work.'

Councillor Boden confirmed the members of Cabinet and their responsibilities.

C4/19 PREVIOUS MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of 21 February 2019 were confirmed and signed.

C5/19 TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL AND/OR THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE.

Councillor Mrs Mayor formally acknowledged and thanked the previous Vice-Chairman, Councillor Mrs Davis, for her support to her as Vice-Chairman for the past 12 months.

Paul Medd stated that as the Council's Returning Officer, he would like to offer his congratulations to all 39 candidates who were successfully elected to represent their constituencies and Fenland District Council for this four year term. He confirmed that both he and officers were looking forward to working with Members and providing all the appropriate support to ensure the Council can deliver its key priorities for the local communities, key stakeholders and residents.

Paul Medd confirmed the names of those successful candidates, their political standing and the Ward they represent;

- Bassenhally - Chris Boden (Conservative) and Kay Mayor (Conservative)
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- Benwick, Coates and Eastrea – Bob Wicks (Independent) and Alex Miscandlon (Conservative)
- Birch – Ian Benney (Conservative)
- Clarkson – Andrew Lynn (Conservative)
- Doddington and Wimblington - David Connor (Conservative) and Maureen Davis (Conservative)
- Elm and Christchurch - Will Sutton (Independent) and Michelle Tanfield (Independent)
- Kirkgate – David Patrick (Independent)
- Lattersey – Alan Bristow (Conservative)
- Manea – Charlie Marks (Independent)

- March East - John Clark (Conservative), Mark Purser (Conservative) and Fred Yeulett (Independent)
- March North - Mike Cornwell (Independent), Steve Count (Conservative) and Kim French (Conservative)
- March West - Jan French (Conservative), Robert Skoulding (Conservative) and Simon Wickes (The Green Party)
- Medworth - Steve Tierney (Conservative)
- Octavia Hill - Samantha Hoy (Conservative) and Susan Wallwork (Conservative)
- Parson Drove and Wisbech St Mary - Sarah Bligh (Liberal Democrat) and Gavin Booth (Liberal Democrat)
- Peckover – Nick Meekins (Independent)
- Roman Bank - Samantha Clark (Conservative), Michael Humphrey (Conservative) and Chris Seaton (Conservative)
- Slade Lode – Daniel Divine (Independent)
- Staithe - David Topgood (Conservative)
- St Andrews - David Mason (Conservative)
- Stonald - Dee Laws (Conservative)
- The Mills - Anne Hay (Conservative)
- Waterlees Village – Billy Rackley (Conservative) and Andrew Maul (Independent)
- Wenneye - Peter Murphy (Conservative)

C6/19 MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL

The suggested meeting dates for the Annual Meeting of the Council and for the ordinary meetings of the Council for 2019/20 were proposed as follows;

- Thursday 18 July 2019
- Thursday 19 September 2019
- Thursday 7 November 2019
- Thursday 12 December 2019
- Thursday 20 February 2020

Councillor Mrs Mayor submitted a motion proposing an amendment to the meeting dates (as per the Agenda) as there are a number of meeting dates that clash with meetings scheduled to take place at Cambridgeshire County Council. She proposed that the meeting dates were revised accordingly;

- Thursday 18 July 2019
- Wednesday 18 September 2019
- Monday 4 November 2019

- Friday 13 December 2019
- Thursday 20 February 2020
- Monday 11 May 2020

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

1. Councillor Yeulett queried why Fenland District Council would amend their meeting dates to avoid a conflict of meetings with Cambridgeshire County Council, as the Council meetings of Fenland District Council should take precedence.
2. Councillor Booth stated that he did not support this amendment to the meeting dates as precedence has been set that Council meetings historically have taken place on a Thursday.
3. Councillor Tanfield confirmed that she did not agree with the amendment to the meeting dates.
4. Councillor Mrs Bligh highlighted that many members schedule work around Council meeting dates and therefore amending these now may mean some members are unable to attend Council meetings.
5. Councillor Patrick stated that those that are members of both the District and County Council need to decide which meetings take precedence and fulfil their obligations.
6. Councillor Tierney stated that elective members serve the interests of the public. If there are two different meetings on the same day, this not only affects members but also members of the public who may wish to attend both of these meetings.
7. Councillor Yeulett highlighted that for many years, many members have been able to balance their attendance at both District and County Council meetings. It is the member's responsibility to decide which meeting takes preference.
8. Councillor Booth asked if the dates could be amended to take place on another Thursday in the month to ensure members availability.
9. Councillor Boden explained that meetings are arranged as per the tiers of Local Authorities and therefore upper-tier authorities, such as Cambridgeshire County Council, taking precedence when setting their meeting dates. He said it was inappropriate to hold meetings on the same day as upper-tier authorities.
10. Councillor Sutton argued that reforms need to take place within Local Government to disperse Cambridgeshire County Council as they are ineffective and no longer fit for purpose.
11. Councillor Count stated that he disagreed entirely with Councillor Sutton's opinion.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour of amending the original Council meeting dates, as per Councillor Mrs Mayor's proposal – Councillor Benney, Councillor Boden, Councillor Bristow, Councillor J Clark, Councillor S Clark, Councillor Connor, Councillor Count, Councillor Mrs Davis, Councillor Mrs French, Councillor Miss French, Councillor Hay, Councillor Miss Hoy, Councillor Humphrey, Councillor Mrs Laws, Councillor Lynn, Councillor Maul, Councillor Marks, Councillor Mason, Councillor Mrs Mayor, Councillor Miscandlon, Councillor Murphy, Councillor Purser, Councillor Rackley, Councillor Skoulding, Councillor Tierney, Councillor Topgood and Councillor Wallwork.

Against the amending of the original Council meeting dates – Councillor Mrs Bligh, Councillor Booth, Councillor Cornwell, Councillor Divine, Councillor Marks, Councillor Meekins, Councillor Patrick, Councillor Sutton, Councillor Tanfield, Councillor Wicks and Councillor Yeulett.

Councillor Booth requested to move an amendment to the substantive motion, stating he would like the original Council meeting dates to be amended to take place on an alternative Thursday

only.

Councillor Mrs Bligh seconded the amendment and Councillor Mrs Mayor opened the amendment to the substantive motion up for debate.

1. Councillor Tanfield supported Councillor Booth's amendment as many members have scheduled childcare and work around Council meetings being held on a Thursday.
2. Councillor Miss Hoy confirmed that she was available on any day of the week as none of her committee meetings at Cambridgeshire County Council clash. She added that this should not be a political discussion.
3. Councillor Boden confirmed that officers had already checked potential meeting dates with Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to ensure there were no further clashes.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour of amending the meeting dates to take place on an alternative Thursday only; Councillor Mrs Bligh, Councillor Booth, Councillor Cornwell, Councillor Divine, Councillor Marks, Councillor Meekins, Councillor Patrick, Councillor Sutton, Councillor Tanfield, Councillor Wicks and Councillor Yeulett.

Against amending the meeting dates to take place on an alternative Thursday only; Councillor Benney, Councillor Boden, Councillor Bristow, Councillor J Clark, Councillor S Clark, Councillor Connor, Councillor Count, Councillor Mrs Davis, Councillor Mrs French, Councillor Miss French, Councillor Hay, Councillor Miss Hoy, Councillor Humphrey, Councillor Mrs Laws, Councillor Lynn, Councillor Maul, Councillor Marks, Councillor Mason, Councillor Mrs Mayor, Councillor Miscandlon, Councillor Murphy, Councillor Purser, Councillor Rackley, Councillor Skoulding, Councillor Tierney, Councillor Topgood and Councillor Wallwork.

The amendment to the Motion was dismissed.

Councillor Mrs Mayor explained that a vote would now be taken on the substantive motion as per her original amendment.

The amendments to the suggested dates, as follows, for the Annual Meeting of Council and for the ordinary meetings of the Council were AGREED by members;

- **Thursday 18 July 2019**
- **Wednesday 18 September 2019**
- **Monday 4 November 2019**
- **Friday 13 December 2019**
- **Thursday 20 February 2020**
- **Monday 11 May 2020**

C7/19 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 we had not received any questions submitted under Procedure Rule 8.6 and asked if there were any questions under Procedure Rule 8.4 from Councillor Tanfield (Leader of the Opposition).

Councillor Tanfield congratulated Councillor Boden on becoming Leader of Fenland District Council. She highlighted that following the recent Elections, twelve members of the new

administration had been elected due to uncontested seats, including the Leader and five members of Cabinet. As these members were not voted for by the public and to ensure the adequacy of the Council's Scrutiny process, Councillor Tanfield asked if a member of the Opposition Group could be elected as Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

Councillor Tanfield stated that by having a member of the Opposition Group as Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel this would support recent guidance released by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to improve scrutiny in Local Authorities and added that many other Local Authorities have taken this approach.

Councillor Boden thanked Councillor Tanfield for her question and agreed that the role of Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel is of utmost importance and the role requires scrutiny in both a rigorous but constructive manner.

Councillor Boden agreed that the guidance was of interest and confirmed that he would be disappointed if the Council do not have a rigorous scrutiny process this Municipal Year and stated his confidence in members achieving this. He added that both he and Cabinet encourage the Opposition Group to contribute their opinions to ensure that the Council is in the best position.

Councillor Boden acknowledged the result of the recent Elections but stated that it was not the fault of these individual members that they faced no opposition. He stated that he is confident that these members are fully committed to their roles. He added that one of his aims as Leader of the Council is to improve and encourage public engagement within the District.

Councillor Tanfield thanked Councillor Boden for his response.

Councillor Tanfield stated that as the Government are focusing on the rail route between Oxford and Cambridge, will the Council focus on securing further investment in Fenland's communities and infrastructure. She added that focus also needs to be on those individuals that cannot afford to buy their own home and how the Council can assist them.

Councillor Boden agreed that this is a very important area which the Council have previously had difficulty in tackling. He stated that the issue of affordable housing in Fenland will not improve under the traditional regime and both he and Cabinet will be considering new innovative ideas over the coming months.

Councillor Boden added that he will be working closely in relation to Spatial Planning with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to ensure Fenland benefits from future improvements and investment. He assured Councillor Tanfield that this issue is at the forefront of his mind.

Councillor Tanfield thanked Councillor Boden for his response.

Councillor Tanfield asked Councillor Boden if he agreed that all Councillors active on Social Media should act as Councillors at all times.

Councillor Boden agreed but said that there is a differentiation between individuals and Councillors and there is a legal distinction in relation to this. In his personal opinion, members should act in an appropriate way at all times, as Social Media can be a dangerous medium that triggers and encourages people to operate in a reactive manner.

Councillor Tanfield thanked Councillor Boden.

WITH PORTFOLIO HOLDER RESPONSIBILITIES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE RULES 8.1 AND 8.2.

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

Councillor Yeulett asked Councillor Boden why in recent Elections, candidates described themselves as 'Local Conservatives' and asked if this decision was taken based on current national politics.

Councillor Boden clarified that the Conservative National Party had changed their registered descriptions prior to the nomination period, which permitted the use of the word 'Local' on candidate's nomination papers.

Councillor Yeulett if Councillor Boden believes that electors will be happy that the Leader of the Council and Cabinet members that were unopposed and faced no election, are to receive both an Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowance.

Councillor Boden reiterated that it is not the fault of members that they were unopposed by Opposition Parties and some might say that this reflects the public's satisfaction with their existing Councillors in these uncontested Wards.

Councillor Yeulett highlighted that Fenland had been described in the National Press as a 'Rotten Borough' due to the level of uncontested seats. He asked Councillor Boden for his opinion on this and the conduct of Conservative candidates during the recent Election.

Councillor Boden stated that electoral reform is not the responsibility of local members and it is not the fault of those members that put themselves forward that they were unopposed. He added that he would not have put himself forward for the position of Leader of the Council if he thought he would bring the authority in to disrepute. His aim is to continue to improve and enhance the Council. He said as Leader of the Council it would be inappropriate for him to comment on individual candidates conduct during the Election, from a political perspective.

Councillor Patrick asked Councillor Boden for assurance that the members of Cabinet, who sit on other committees and Councils, have the capacity to fulfil their obligations to Fenland District Council.

Councillor Boden confirmed that he had carefully considered this and he would be monitoring their workload extremely carefully. He added that any issues would be addressed.

Councillor Divine asked Councillor Boden if any financial assistance could be given to the Empress Swimming Pool in Chatteris, as the Council have previously invested capital into Leisure Centres and Estover Playing Field.

Councillor Boden confirmed that he was aware of the situation surrounding the Empress Swimming Pool and supports the protection of Community Assets. He highlighted that there is a process to follow and it would be inappropriate for him to comment on this until there is further information available.

C9/19 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE RULE 9A.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9A, Martin Curtis attended Council and asked the following

question to the Leader of the Council;

'I would like to start by congratulating Councillor Mrs Mayor on her appointment as Chairman and also to Councillor Boden on his appointment as Leader of the Council. I have some points to make regarding the elections and the process surrounding this. Fenland District Council has become too internally focused and has forgotten about its residents. It is an absolute communications disaster and this needs to change. The only way to achieve this is for people like me to start telling you my views on how you need to change.

Following the lengthy discussions today surrounding meeting dates, why not hold meetings in the evening to encourage electorates to engage in politics? This is an example of you putting your needs first and residents needs second.

When I came to submit this question, I carried out some searches on the Internet. The search facility on the website is another example of where this Council communicates poorly. There are a number of other examples where the website does not communicate effectively to the public. The location of Polling Stations during the Elections is another issue of where residents came second.

My question is this, was it acceptable for hundreds, if not thousands, of residents to turn out to vote in Elections that did not happen due to the lack of contest? Please can the Council outline what was done to make residents aware of uncontested Elections?'

Councillor Boden thanked Martin Curtis for his question. He agreed that it was not acceptable for hundreds of people to turn out to Polling Stations which were closed and confirmed that he had raised this concern with officers too.

Councillor Boden explained that officers had taken the following steps; Press Releases informing residents of which Wards were uncontested, updates via the Council's Social Media accounts, updates via the Council's website, 'My Polling Station' tool available for residents on the website, information sent to the Clerks of the Parish and Town Councils for circulation, the Council's Contact Centre staff were also provided with additional information for residents as well as posters being displayed on those Polling Stations that were closed.

Councillor Boden added that he thought these steps may not have been satisfactory or sufficient and they did not put residents at the centre of the decision making process. Councillor Boden confirmed that there were 17,786 residents in uncontested District Wards and approximately 10,000 residents who had uncontested Wards at both District and Parish level.

Councillor Boden confirmed that he does have concerns over the Council's effectiveness at communicating with residents and added that Councillor Tierney as the Portfolio Holder for Transformation & Communications will focus on this area.

Martin Curtis thanked Councillor Boden for his response and he is confident with Councillor Boden's attitude, the Council will receive the drive and vigour it requires to move forward. He suggested a review of the Council's communications is in order to invigorate and promote public consultation.

Councillor Boden agreed and confirmed that he is confident in Councillor Tierney's ability to significantly improve the Council's communication with the public. He added that this is a common issue in most Local Authorities but assured Martin Curtis that issues regarding communication during future Elections will be considered.

Martin Curtis thanked Councillor Boden for his response.

SEATS.

Members considered and Committee Structure, Political Balance and Allocation of Seats report and received an update in relation to the Committee Structure.

Councillor Mrs Mayor made members aware of an error on page 13 of the Agenda Pack. The number of seats allocated to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee is stated as 1 seat to the Conservatives and 1 seat to the Fenland Independents Alliance. Due to the political proportionality rules governing the Combined Authority, both seats should be allocated to the Conservatives.

She informed members that there were additional papers tabled in relation to this Agenda Item (as per the attached).

Councillor Mrs Mayor proposed an alteration under recommendation 3.4 in relation to the configuration of the Corporate Governance Committee, which would result in an increase by 1 of the number of members of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel who can sit on the Corporate Governance Committee. This amendment fulfilled the wishes of Group Leaders in making their appointments to the Corporate Governance Committee.

Councillor Mrs Mayor proposed that recommendation 3.4 would instead read as follows; Notes the increase in membership of the Corporate Governance Committee from 9 to 11 to ensure all political groups receive their allocation of seats and increase the number of Overview and Scrutiny Panel members who can sit on Corporate Governance Committee from 3 to 4 and delegate to the Monitoring Officer to make updates to the Constitution.

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Miscandlon.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows;

1. Councillor Booth highlighted that part of Councillor Seaton's Portfolio includes 'Dilapidated Buildings and Enforcement'. He asked if this would be best placed with Councillor Mrs Laws as she is the Portfolio Holder for Planning. Councillor Boden said whilst these two areas are certainly linked, the impending Local Plan review will be the responsibility of Councillor Mrs Laws and will form a large part of her workload.

It was AGREED;

- 3.1. To maintain the Committees and Panels set out at Appendix A for the 2019/2020 municipal year;**
- 3.2. That the terms of reference set out at Part 3 of the Council's constitution in relation to the committees and panels referred to at paragraph 3.1 above should continue as currently drafted;**
- 3.3. The allocation of seats and position of Chairman and Vice Chairman on those committees subject to political balance arrangements (Appendix A);**
- 3.4. To note the increase in membership of the Corporate Governance Committee from 9 to 11 to ensure all political groups receive their allocation of seats and increase the number of Overview and Scrutiny Panel members who can sit on Corporate Governance Committee from 3 to 4 and delegate to the Monitoring Officer to make updates to the Constitution.**
- 3.5. The appointments to seats allocated in accordance with paragraphs 3.3 above (Appendix B –tabled) to include co-opted or non-members.**
- 3.6. The list of Outside Bodies and allocation of seats in accordance with political balance arrangements as set out at Appendix A for 2019/20. Appointments will be made at Cabinet in June.**

C11/19 COMBINED AUTHORITY MEMBERSHIP AND OTHER APPOINTMENTS.

Members considered the Combined Authority Membership and Other Appointments report, presented by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Boden confirmed the following appointments to the Combined Authority's Committees;

Combined Authority Board: Councillor Boden Substitute: Councillor Mrs French

Audit Committee: Councillor Benney Substitute: Councillor Miss Hoy

Overview & Scrutiny Committee: Councillor Miscandlon and Councillor Hay Substitute: Councillor Tierney

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

- 3.1. That the appointments and nominations to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority for the municipal year 2019/20**
- 3.2. That the Chief Executive be authorised to make any amendments to the appointments to the Combined Authority Board, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Audit and Governance 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.**
- 3.3. To adopt the schedule of appointments and political allocations set out in the appendices.**

(Councillor Yeulett and Councillor Patrick abstained from voting on this Agenda Item)

C12/19 MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME REVIEW SCOPE.

Members considered the Members' Allowances Scheme Review Scope report, presented by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Boden proposed an amendment to paragraph 5.1.6 of the report to reflect that the Council are against the recommendation that allowances should be backdated to the beginning of the new term of office for Members, in the event of a new/amended scheme being adopted.

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

1. Councillor Tanfield agreed that the original recommendation gives a bad impression of the Council and confirmed that she fully supports Councillor Boden's amendment to reflect that the Council are against such backdating of allowances.
2. Councillor Booth asked that officers ensure that the Independent Review Panel will be impartial and truly independent of the Council in all ways.

The amendment was agreed.

Councillor Mrs Mayor opened the substantive motion up for debate.

1. Councillor Tierney stated that reviews are usually timed to take place at the start of a new administration. He stated that he has never voted in favour of increasing Members Allowances and will never agree to an increase in Members Allowances whilst the Country is in financial distress and Councils are making cuts.
2. Councillor Sutton agreed with Councillor Tierney and suggested that future

independent reviews are undertaken prior to an Election and not after it.

3. Councillor Booth supported Councillor Sutton and asked that the Independent Panel consider future review dates during their deliberations.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Mrs Laws and AGREED;

- 3.1. That the scope of the Member Allowances Scheme review as set out within the report**
- 3.2. To delegate the process for the appointment and selection of the Independent Remuneration Panel to the Monitoring Officer and Head of Legal and Customer Services in consultation with Group Leaders.**

C13/19 MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR WILL SUTTON REGARDING STREET LIGHTING.

Councillor Sutton presented his motion regarding Street Lighting and stated that;

'As a result of the Local Government Reorganisation in 1974, there became inequality between towns and villages with regard to the cost of street lighting. Whereby the towns lighting stocks are owned and financed by Fenland District Council but the villages were left to pick up the cost themselves. This has resulted in double taxation.

However there is an anomaly with regard to the villages of Coates, Eastrea, Turves and Pondersbridge where, if you are fortunate to live in these villages, then the above does not apply.

We need to address the inequality of the cost provision and maintenance of street lighting provided by Fenland District Council. It cannot be acceptable for the towns and villages mentioned above, to be expected to continue with this favourable position at the expense of the majority of villages and their residents. It is time to level the playing field.

This Council should use it's underspends from recent years to fund this resolution. I recommend that;

1. refer this matter for consideration by Cabinet; and
2. if the resolution at paragraph 1 is agreed, that Cabinet considers taking the following steps:
 - a. Consult and agree with those Parish Councils that are willing to take ownership of all Parish Council owned street lighting;
 - b. Recommend an amendment to the budget to incorporate responsibility for all ongoing costs associated with the provision of Street lighting, including power and maintenance, in respect of those Parish Councils wishing to take up this option.

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

Councillor Mrs Davis stated;

'Most of you here will understand why I support the sentiment of the motion. This is a drum that I have been beating since the idea of parishes taking full responsibility of their street lighting was discussed a number of years ago. Things have moved on and in that time a number of parishes have committed expenses to these street lights and indeed, some parish councils have spent in excess of £60,000. All of this money has been raised by the precept.

Councillor Connor and I have argued about the inequality of parish councils paying for their street lighting for a number of years. This was then compounded by the previous Cabinet agreeing that the parish councils should pay further costs towards their street lighting. This adds another huge financial burden to the parish councils and as a result, needs to be rectified.

Parish residents pay their Council Tax just as those that live in towns. It is incomprehensible that parish residents then have to pay an additional amount within their precept so they too can have their streets lit. This is unfair and indeed double-taxation. Parish councils who have already agreed ownership of street lights and some have already spent considerable sums replacing the lights, including the provision of LED lights in order to help reduce energy costs.

I propose that the motion is amended as follows;

‘As a result Local Government reorganization in 1974 there became an inequality between town and parish with regard to costs of street lighting, whereby the towns lighting stock are owned and financed by FDC but the parishes were left to pick up the costs, this has resulted in ‘double taxation’.

We need, directly or indirectly, to address the inequality of the costs of provision and maintenance of street lighting provided by Fenland District Council and those of similar services by Parish Councils, it cannot be acceptable for the towns to be expected to continue with this favorable position at the expense of the majority of the Parish Councils and their residents.

This Council resolves to;

- 1. refer this matter for consideration by Cabinet.; and**
- 2. if the resolution at 1 is agreed, that Cabinet considers taking the following steps:**
 - a. Consulting and communicating with those Parish Councils affected by the referral to Cabinet regarding the ownership of all Parish Council owned street lighting;**
 - b. Recommend consideration of budgetary impact in relation to costs associated with the provision of Parish Street lighting, including power and maintenance.’**

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

1. Councillor Tierney agreed that whilst there are inequalities in relation to street lighting it was previous members of Cabinet that had agreed this policy. He said he welcomed the opportunity to reconsider this issue and fully supports the amendment to the motion.
2. Councillor Boden stated that even as a member of Whittlesey Town Council, he admits that there is an inequality in relation to parish council’s street lighting.
3. Councillor Booth stated that he was happy with this motion and the subsequent amendment and added that he has on many occasions raised this issue. He urged all members to support this motion to reverse the inequalities of the past few years.

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

Councillor Sutton clarified that former Cabinet members had made the decision in relation to street lighting, based on financial information provided to them at the time. He confirmed that he supported the amendment.

A vote was taken on the amendment and the amendment to the motion was adopted.

Councillor Mrs Mayor asked for a vote to be taken on the substantive motion as proposed by Councillor Mrs Davis.

The motion was passed.

(Councillor Booth declared an interest by virtue of the fact that he is a member of Parson Drove Parish Council)

(Councillor Connor declared an interest by virtue of the fact that Doddington is within his Ward and could be affected)

(Councillor Mrs Davis declared an interest by virtue of the fact that she is a member of Wimblington Parish Council)

(Councillor Humphrey declared an interest by virtue of the fact he is a member of Gorefield Parish Council)

(Councillor Sam Clark declared an interest by virtue of the fact that she is a member of Newton-in-the-Isle Parish Council)

(Councillor Marks declared an interest by virtue of the fact that he is a member of Manea Parish Council)

(Councillor Wicks declared an interest by virtue of the fact that Benwick is in his Ward and could be affected)

C14/19 MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR WILL SUTTON REGARDING GARDEN WASTE.

Councillor Sutton presented his motion regarding Garden Waste and stated that;

'During the consultation with residents regarding garden waste, sixty two percent of respondents agreed they would prefer to keep the service at a reasonable cost rather than the only other option, to have no service at all. It came as a surprise to us and the residents of the Elm and Christchurch ward to receive election pledges by the ruling party's candidates, to do away with the charge, I have it on good authority that other wards had similar pledges, so this resolution should extend to the whole of Fenland.

I am of course aware of the Government consulting on garden waste, but these almost certainly won't be introduced until 2023/2024 at the earliest, if at all.

This Council resolves to:

1. Refer this matter for consideration by Cabinet; and
2. If the resolution at paragraph 1 is agreed, that Cabinet considers taking the following steps:
 - a. refund all Garden Waste contributions paid by the residents of Elm and Christchurch and the rest of Fenland, for the 19/20 municipal year, as per the pledges made by candidates of the ruling party in their election publications;
 - b. discontinuing the garden waste charge for the remainder of the 2019/20 municipal year with a full review to take place ahead of the next municipal year;
 - c. recommend to Full Council any budget requirements necessary to give effect to that decision and in so doing spell out very clearly where they plan to find the circa £700K to do so'

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

Councillor Boden stated;

'I propose an amendment to this motion which has been tabled for members (as per the attached amendment). Whilst I support reimbursing members of the public there is a lot of political comment in regards to this motion.

Yes, the government has announced a consultation on garden waste however I would like to consider the wider aspects of Councillor Sutton's motion. We can look at other local authorities that collect their waste and other available innovative schemes. Councillor Tierney will consider these aspects under his role as Portfolio Holder for Transformation.

We have real opportunities to have a service which achieves more and potentially costs less. This is what the amendment aims to achieve whilst informing us, in a prescriptive way, of the changes we can make.

I propose that the motion is amended as follows;

During the consultation with residents regarding garden waste, sixty two percent of respondents agreed they would prefer to keep the service at a reasonable cost rather than the only other option, to have no service at all.

The Government is consulting on garden waste.

This Council resolves to:

- 1. refer this matter for consideration by Cabinet; and**
- 2. if the resolution at 1 is agreed, that Cabinet considers taking the following steps:**
 - a. awaiting the outcome of the re-evaluation of the waste collection service and thereby reviewing all Garden Waste contributions paid by the residents of Fenland,;**
 - b. awaiting the outcome of the re-evaluation of the waste collection service and then reviewing the financial impact and impact on recycling of discontinuing or reducing the garden waste charge ;**
 - c. following the Council's re-evaluation of the waste collection service advise Councillors of any budget requirements necessary to give effect to any recommendations coming from the Cabinet review including the circa net £700K income the Council derives from the current scheme'**

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

1. Councillor Booth said whilst he had concerns that the amendment is not as strong as the original motion, it is a step in the right direction. He highlighted that he has raised the subject of Garden Waste charges for a number of years and is willing to support the amendment if it means the potential removal of this charge.
2. Councillor Booth highlighted that during the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) consultation, residents stated that one service they did not want charging for was the Garden Waste service and yet the Council still implemented this.
3. Councillor Count highlighted that there are certain elements in the background that members must consider in relation to this motion. There are two very important matters going to Parliament over the coming months; including their own spending review and most importantly, the Fair Funding Review which will affect local authority funding. There has been evidence that there will be shortfall of over £52 billion nationally by 2025 if this is not addressed, with evidence showing that District Councils could be amongst the worst affected. He said the Council will have to make decisions with this in mind as it is likely to have a major financial impact on the Council.
4. Councillor Tierney said that he was positive that the Council will move forward over the coming 4 years to save the public money and offer better services. He added that by all members working together this can be achieved.
5. Councillor Tanfield said if the Council considers new waste management options, they must

be thoroughly investigated prior to any commitments.

6. Councillor Sutton explained that he had proposed this motion as local residents had informed him that the Local Conservative Party candidates had promised to deliver a free garden waste service as part of their Election pledge.
7. Councillor Sutton asked which member had been responsible for the Election material released by the Local Conservative Party.
8. Councillor Mrs Mayor reminded Councillor Sutton that this was not a matter related to the agenda item being discussed.

A vote was taken on the amendment and the amendment to the motion was adopted.

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

The motion was passed.

C15/19 MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR WILL SUTTON REGARDING THE USE OF SINGLE-USE PLASTICS.

Councillor Sutton presented his motion regarding the use of Single-Use Plastics;

‘There are very real concerns with some of our residents around Climate Change in general and the use of single-use-plastics in particular.

Anecdotal evidence suggest somewhere in the region of eight million tonnes enters the sea each year. David Attenborough urged: ‘A plastic crisis is engulfing our seas, and we need to stop the problem urgently’.

How can we as leaders of this district allow this to continue without picking up the gauntlet and leading the way in reducing the SUP in all the buildings we own and manage?

I’m not for one minute suggesting we can resolve the world issue but we can in a small way help reduce the issue locally by supporting my motion.

This Council resolves to: Develop a robust strategy to make Fenland District Council a ‘single-use-plastic-free’ authority and encourage the districts institutions, businesses, tenants and citizens to adopt similar measures by;

1. Ending the sale and provision of SUP products such as bottles, cups, cutlery and drinking straws in all council owned buildings, (Including Freedom Leisure) events and services, with immediate effect where possible and feasible, and in any event, no later than Dec 2019;
2. Encouraging schools, clubs and all our outside bodies to adopt measures, with the aim of phasing out SUP, for example containers and cutlery in their premises;
3. Ensuring that the District Council, via its procurement of goods, services and supplies, has integrated the aim to end the use of SUP products by suppliers wherever feasible and appropriate;

Councillor Yeulett seconded the motion and Councillor Mrs Mayor opened the motion up for

debate.

Councillor Miss Hoy stated;

'I propose an amendment to this motion (as per the attached amendment). The reason I propose this amendment is whilst I agree with the sentiment there are elements that I cannot see how the Council can implement.

One of the things is regarding Freedom Leisure who is now responsible for the management of the Council's Leisure Centres. I do not know how we as the Council, can ask them to implement this and remove the sale of plastic drink bottles from the Leisure Centres.

We have no control over the schools in our district and whilst we can try and influence them to make a change, we cannot enforce this.

We need to focus more on recycling in general and the Council have the potential to create a strategy to fully support this.

I propose that the motion is amended as follows;

Many Fenland residents have very real concerns about the use of Single Use Plastics (SUPs), especially following David Attenborough's recent television series about our seas and oceans.

Anecdotal evidence suggests somewhere in the region of eight million tonnes of plastic waste enters the sea each year. David Attenborough urged: "a plastic crisis is engulfing our seas and we need to stop the problem urgently".

This Council should in absolutely no way be responsible, either directly or indirectly, for plastic waste entering our seas and oceans.

THIS COUNCIL THEREFORE RESOLVES:

- 1. That an audit of the disposal of single use plastics used by this Council be conducted and presented to the July meeting of Cabinet to give assurance (or otherwise) that no plastic waste produced by FDC is entering our seas or oceans.**
- 2. That if any evidence is found that single use plastic waste produced by FDC is entering our seas or oceans, immediate action be taken by Officers to change our disposal methods to stop any of FDC's plastic waste entering our seas or oceans.**

The disposal and use of SUPs is but a part of a much wider problem. FDC should be adhering to the "REDUCE, RE-USE and RECYCLE" principles (often called the "3Rs") when considering all of its activities.

THIS COUNCIL THEREFORE RESOLVES:

- 3. That a comprehensive report be prepared and considered by Cabinet this calendar year evaluating our success or otherwise in adhering to the 3Rs principles in all of FDC's activities, proposing improvements to current practice wherever possible. In that context, specific consideration should be given to how the direct use of any SUPs by FDC can be consistent with FDC's adherence to the 3Rs.**
- 4. That the comprehensive report in item 3 above should consider how FDC can, via**

its procurement of goods, services and supplies, wherever feasible and appropriate minimise if not eliminate its indirect use of SUPs via its procurement of goods, services and supplies.

5. That, once FDC is able to display a high level of compliance with the 3Rs principles, we should seek to lead by example and influence the behaviour of the District's other institutions, businesses, tenants and citizens.'

Councillor Murphy seconded the amendment and Councillor Mrs Mayor opened the amended motion up for debate.

1. Councillor Booth highlighted that whilst we cannot enforce this in schools, we can encourage and influence them to follow the same principles as the Council. He highlighted that whilst these policies take time to implement, it should be pursued in a timely manner.
2. Councillor Boden stated that SUPs do have a serious environmental impact however and in the developed world this can be via overdeveloped landfill. He highlighted that the amendment to the motion reflects this and links our use of SUPs with the final destination of these SUPs. He stated that the Council must ensure that none of their SUPs are ending up in the seas and oceans.
3. Councillor Boden said the use of SUPs needs to be considered as part of a wider review into recycling as the Council cannot encourage other authorities without researching their own use.
4. Councillor Tierney agreed that the Council have been too slow to make changes previously. He encouraged members to share ideas with one another to progress this further.
5. Councillor Tierney agreed that before we can advise other authorities on their use of SUPs, the Council must ensure their own use is satisfactory.
6. Councillor Tanfield agreed and suggested that members could visit schools to educate them on their use of SUPs.
7. Councillor Hay said she was pleased to see this motion and agreed that the Council cannot advise others until their own policies are in place. She reiterated that the Council need to fully understand their own use of SUPs and this process should not be rushed.
8. Councillor Sutton supported the amendment and highlighted the importance of this issue to residents in Fenland.

A vote was taken on the amendment and the amendment to the motion was adopted. Councillor Mrs Mayor opened the substantive motion up for debate.

Councillor Yeulett highlighted that during his travels, he has experienced the effects of global warming across the world. He said anything the Council can do to help the environment is worth supporting. He highlighted that whilst the UK should be proud that they are ahead of other countries in tackling global warming, more can always be done.

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

The motion was passed.

(Councillor Mason left the Council Chamber at 6.15pm)

C16/19 MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MRS SARAH BLIGH AND COUNCILLOR GAVIN BOOTH REGARDING IMPROVEMENT TO PLAY EQUIPMENT OWNED BY FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Councillor Booth presented his motion regarding the improvements to Play Equipment owned by Fenland District Council;

'Play equipment can help to improve health outcomes for children across the District by encouraging exercise, it is also important to ensure facilities cater for all age groups. Some of the play equipment owned by Fenland District Council is in need of improvement and enhancement in order to continue to be of benefit to children.

This Council resolves to:

1. Refer this matter for consideration by Cabinet; and
2. If the resolution at paragraph 1 is agreed, that Cabinet considers taking the following steps:
 - a. A review of play equipment provided across the District to determine where improvements and enhancements are most needed;
 - b. Agree the most effective means of undertaking that review for example by establishing a working group; and
 - c. Subject to the outcome of the review, identify with input from officers any external funding that may be available to meet the cost of improvements and, where that does not meet the overall cost, to review the availability of internal funding and where necessary make recommendations to Full Council if budgetary adjustments are required;
 - d. Agree to keep members informed of the progress that is being made via the Portfolio Holders Briefing.

Councillor Mrs Mayor proposed the following amendment to the motion (which was tabled for members prior to the meeting);

'Play equipment can help to improve health outcomes for children across the District by encouraging exercise, it is also important to ensure facilities cater for all age groups. Some of the play equipment owned by Fenland District Council is in need of improvement and enhancement in order to continue to be of benefit to children.

This Council resolves to:

1. Refer this matter for consideration by Cabinet; and
2. If the resolution at paragraph 1 is agreed, that Cabinet considers taking the following steps:
 - a. A review of play equipment provided across the District to determine where improvements and enhancements are most needed;
 - b. Agree the most effective means of undertaking that review; and
 - c. Subject to the outcome of the review, identify with input from officers any external funding that may be available to meet the cost of improvements and, where that does not meet the overall cost, to review the availability of internal funding and where necessary make recommendations to Full Council if budgetary adjustments are required;
 - d. Agree to keep members informed of the progress that is being made via the Portfolio Holders Briefing.'

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

1. Councillor Mrs Bligh highlighted that we are living in a time where, according to some reports, there is a lower life expectancy for children. She added that childhood obesity and diabetes is a very real concern. She stated that by improving play equipment in Fenland, this will help the district's children of all ages by promoting exercise as play.
2. Councillor Tierney agreed with the motion and thanked Councillor Booth and Councillor Mrs Bligh for proposing this motion to the Council.
3. Councillor Humphrey asked for clarification that the review will assess only Council-owned play equipment. This was confirmed.

4. Councillor Tanfield offered her support for the motion and highlighted that when play equipment was previously installed in Friday Bridge, it had been very well received by the local children.
5. Councillor Yeulett asked that the review includes provisions for the 'Sconce' in March East.
6. Councillor Lynn supported the motion and highlighted the positive impact of the new Skate Park in Wisbech.
7. Councillor Miscandlon stated that the recent installation of a play park in Benwick was also very well received. He supported the motion.
8. Councillor Booth supported the amendment but reiterated the importance of member involvement in this review. He added that consideration must also be given to other play equipment provided by the Parish Councils. He reminded members that officers have a proven track record of securing grants and funding from external sources and hopes their expertise can be utilised on this project.
9. Councillor Booth explained that he had originally pursued this review 18 months ago however at the time funding was not available. This has driven him to see how the Council can push this proposal forward further. He added that Fenland has lower health outcomes than the rest of Cambridgeshire and improving play equipment will have a positive effect on this.

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

The motion was passed.

C17/19 NOTIFICATION OF APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY MONITORING OFFICER.

Members considered the Notification of Appointment of Deputy Monitoring Officer report, presented by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Boden stated that he highly endorsed the appointment and feels Amy Brown is a very good choice for the Council.

Councillor Booth asked if future reports could include financial information in relation to appointments.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Humphrey and AGREED;

- **To note the appointment of Amy Brown, Senior Lawyer and Deputy Monitoring Officer - Peterborough City Council, as the Council's Deputy Monitoring Officer.**
- **To approve that Fenland District Council enter into a Section 113 (of the Local Government Act 1972) agreement for the new Deputy Monitoring Officer to be able to carry out their duties.**

6.25 pm

Chairman