

COUNCIL

TUESDAY, 23 FEBRUARY 2021 - 4.00 PM



PRESENT: Councillor A Miscandlon (Chairman), Councillor R Skoulding (Vice-Chairman) (*left at 6.45pm*), Councillor I Benney, Councillor Mrs S Bligh (*left at 8.37pm*), Councillor C Boden, Councillor G Booth, Councillor J Clark (*left 7.37pm*), Councillor S Clark, Councillor D Connor, Councillor M Cornwell, Councillor S Count, Councillor Mrs M Davis, 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 C Marks, Councillor D Mason, Councillor A Maul, Councillor N Meekins, Councillor P Murphy, Councillor D Patrick (*left at 6.25pm*), Councillor M Purser, Councillor W Rackley (*left at 8.30pm*), Councillor C Seaton, Councillor W Sutton, Councillor S Tierney, Councillor S Wallwork, Councillor R Wicks, Councillor S Wilkes (*left at 7.58pm*) and Councillor F Yeulett

APOLOGIES: Councillor D Divine, Councillor Mrs K Mayor and Councillor D Topgood

Councillor Miscandlon opened the meeting with the following statement: "Members will be aware of the fantastic achievements of Captain Sir Tom Moore who sadly passed away on 2nd February this year. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to ask for you to join me in a minute's silence to remember this incredible and inspirational gentleman who many of you will know was also connected to this area personally and professionally".

A minute's silence was held for Captain Sir Tom Moore.

Councillor Sutton said he fully supported the minute's silence for Captain Sir Tom Moore, not only was he resident of Fenland but he had been a resident of his ward and a near neighbour, but he requested of the Chairman that a minute's silence also be held for all residents of Fenland who have sadly lost their lives to the current pandemic and as a message of support to their loved ones.

Councillor Miscandlon agreed and a further minutes' silence was held.

C38/20 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 14 December 2020 were confirmed subject to the following comment:

Councillor Sutton referred to minute item C30/20 regarding the motion on the incinerator and said the minutes make no mention of the disagreement between himself and Councillor Hoy. This was a clear omission as Councillor Hoy had said he supported the incinerator, which was an untrue statement, and whilst he appreciates it was an unpleasant exchange and that minutes are not verbatim, this should have been noted.

C39/20 TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL AND/OR THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE.

Councillor Miscandlon made the following announcement:

“As the local, global and national efforts to overcome COVID-19 continue, we have all found ourselves making further sacrifices to contain and reduce the spread. At the same time significantly increasing number of Fenland residents including myself and my wife have had their first vaccination. As we know this is the biggest vaccination programme in the history of the NHS and all the staff involved are working tirelessly to support its delivery. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to thank all the people involved in making this a possibility including the volunteers who are turning out in all weathers to provide support and guidance at the various sites. I must therefore encourage everyone to take their place when it is offered. It is so important that we do our bit to protect family members, friends, neighbours, colleagues and everyone around us to increase our future prospects of returning to a more normal way of living”.

C40/20 **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 Miscandlon stated that no questions had been submitted under Procedure Rules 8.6 and asked if there were any questions under Procedure Rule 8.4 from Councillor Cornwell as Leader of the Opposition Group.

Councillor Booth requested to speak and asked the Chairman if, in respect of the order of items on the agenda, item 13 regarding the council tax support scheme could be moved before item 9 or 10 as a decision on that item would have an implication on both the budget and council tax resolution. Carol Pilson advised it is at the Chairman's discretion to alter the order of the agenda. The Chairman therefore agreed to forward item 13 for discussion between agenda items 9 and 10.

Councillor Miscandlon then invited Councillor Cornwell to submit his questions.

Councillor Cornwell addressed the Leader and said residents have raised concerns after reading local newspaper articles detailing what appeared to be county council failures in certain supposedly commercial activities. He asked if the Leader could give an assurance that FDC is not exposing this council to commercial risk and if he would publish the result of this question in a simple public statement to that effect so that the public will understand what is happening. Councillor Boden firstly congratulated Councillor Cornwell on becoming Leader of the Opposition, saying Councillor Cornwell has Fenland's interests at heart and he looks forward to a constructive working relationship together. In respect of the question, Councillor Boden stated that he cannot answer for what the county council does, but he would like to be in their position in respect of some of their investments. Some of the press reports are wrong or mischief making, and some are matters of commercial confidentiality that are not yet in the public arena. A fundamental point about commercial and investment work by councils is that what we are doing will expose us to commercial risk, but it is a matter of management of that risk and whether the risk is suitably balanced by the reward. Therefore, he will not say that we will not expose ourselves to commercial risk; we want to achieve good returns and to do so means having some risk but evaluating carefully against the reward. Councillor Cornwell said he realised this but some people do not understand and that is why he had suggested taking the opportunity to explain that the risks taken by our council are not to the degree as reported, hence his suggestion of providing a simple statement.

Councillor Cornwell congratulated Councillor Lynn on his elevation as portfolio holder and thanked Councillor Wallwork for her contribution as the previous portfolio holder. However he was surprised, given our financial situation, that the Leader did not take the opportunity to reduce the costs of Cabinet by reducing its size, given that in 2016 he had advised the previous Leader to reduce his Cabinet size and costs when they were lower than currently. He would like to know why the Leader has changed his view and ignored his own advice. Councillor Boden said he had given

this consideration but he made no change because of the sheer volume of work being undertaken within the council, which is at unprecedented levels and some of which is not yet public knowledge yet demands a lot of work. Therefore, the situation has changed considerably since 2016. However he is still keen to keep costs as low as possible and he is looking at possibilities that may be reported back to Council within the next twelve months but he will not do this at the expense of the work that needs to be done. Councillor Cornwell said he looked forward to seeing these proposals.

Councillor Cornwell asked the Leader what steps have been taken to FDC's procurement policies and strategies now we are free of the restrictions of the EU since Brexit to give us more opportunity to trade with local businesses or buy British. Councillor Boden said our exit from the EU has not meant all the regulations that we suffered have suddenly disappeared. Generally, procurement practice remains the same, however we still have a lot of procurement regulation handover from the EU which central government has not yet been able to change. When it does, he looks forward to doing what Councillor Cornwell says whilst continuing to achieve value for money, ensuring we give business to local businesses and local services.

Councillor Cornwell addressed the Leader and said members were aware that the Opposition Group had disquiet concerning governance matters concerning the new Audit and Risk Management Committee and its Sub-Committee and decided to boycott its first meeting until further investigations were held. He said that our external auditor had raised concerns over two governance issues in a letter shortly after the last full council when the arrangements for the new committee were made. He does not think these concerns were taken any further and would ask that the Leader re-examine the original proposals, taking those into account those concerns. He added that there will be representatives at the next meeting as he noted there were no challenges to the items presented at the first meeting. Councillor Boden responded that he will re-examine the arrangements as requested but firstly, as was quite clear in December, the situation was confused because a first draft was published for the proposals which was amended in time for the full council meeting but unfortunately did cause some issues. However, officers are confident that the arrangements now in place are lawful and they would not have approved them going forward to full council otherwise. He added that he will write to Councillor Cornwell once he has done that and let him know the result. Furthermore, he is happy to have a or public discussion with the external auditor concerning this.

Councillor Cornwell said the Government has confirmed that the sale of new petrol and diesel cars will end in 2030. Given our rural nature, and to support our new cultural and creativity strategy, which he hopes will be approved later in this meeting, he asked the Leader what plans are we making to examine funding streams for electric charge points? Councillor Boden said we have already started looking at some possibilities concerning the use of our car parks for charging points. In respect of on-street parking, the problems are massive. It is not merely the substantial cost, but the fact that the electricity network is not up to being able to provide kerb-based charging because the system was not designed for that. Councillor Boden added that it is likely that the commercial market, such as service stations, will get involved in providing charging points.

C41/20 **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:

1. Councillor Meekins addressed Councillor Boden and said considering the announcement about Bartletts closing its Chatteris operation in June 2021 with a loss of up to 500 jobs, was FDC aware that this announcement was to be made? If so, what action did FDC take to try and prevent the closure and, assuming that it happens as reported, what will FDC be doing to help find alternative employment for those who lose their jobs and to find an alternative use for the

premises? Councillor Boden responded that he is not sure that we were aware of the time the announcement was going to be made, but we were aware it was going to happen back in 2019. In November 2019 we contacted the company and FDC officers met them in the December. Contact was maintained throughout 2020 and both he and Councillor Benney, as the portfolio holder, were always aware of this. Unfortunately, such discussions take place on a confidential basis and the company has not yet made a formal announcement about why it is closing that site. He can say however it is an internal matter to do with the company and there is nothing FDC could have done to redress the issue or prevent the closure. FDC has informed the company of the support available to employees facing redundancy. Bartlett's intend to market the site and FDC has some potential inward investment enquiries that will be engaged once further details are released to see the site brought back into use. Councillor Meekins thanked Councillor Boden for his comprehensive response.

2. Councillor Hay said she is very pleased that from 1st March the Combined Authority are trialling a daily bus service from March, Wimblington, Doddington and Chatteris linking through to Addenbrookes and Cambridge city centre and hopes it will eventually join up with the CAM Metro. She asked Councillor Boden if he knows when the route map will come out for that. Councillor Boden agreed the new service is very welcome and said that Councillor Count in particular had a lot of input into putting the timetable together so that the timing of the buses was extended to make it easier for patients to attend their hospital appointments at Addenbrookes. An announcement regarding the proposed CAM Metro routes and a route map will be made in March.
3. Councillor Booth addressed Councillor Sam Clark to follow up a question he raised at the last meeting regarding empty homes managed by registered housing providers. He appreciated the response that had been provided but finds it shocking that 44 properties have been left empty for over six months. He asked if Councillor Clark could make every effort to ensure that the number of empty properties empty for this length of time is reduced substantially. Councillor Clark referred the question to Councillor Hoy as she is now the portfolio holder, who responded that Councillor Booth had made a fair point, particularly when so many people are looking for homes. The pandemic has not helped, but it is something that we need to keep a close eye on and there is still work that can be done. She did point out however that this figure did not relate only to Clarion but to other providers as well. Councillor Booth thanked Councillor Hoy.
4. Councillor Patrick addressed Councillor Hoy regarding SWEP (Severe Weather Emergency Protocol). Recently SWEP was abandoned for one evening, people were turned out of a property and left homeless for one night, and then it was reintroduced. He could not understand this and asked for an explanation. Councillor Hoy said SWEP was never cancelled; there is a difference between provisions under SWEP and provisions under Everyone In, which is a Government initiative. The Government were saying that under COVID-19 we must try and house people in respect of lockdown. SWEP is mandatory and applies when the temperature is 1 degree or lower. The difference is that SWEP is about preservation of life, regardless of behavioural issues etc. Under Everyone In, there is a difference and we do not necessarily have to house someone as we would do under SWEP. On the evening in question, SWEP was not in place but the people referred to were removed from a property due to a number of issues in adherence to Everyone In, and it was resolved within a few nights when a different property was sourced. For both initiatives we do rely heavily on government funding as we do not have a core budget for these.
5. Councillor Sutton addressed Councillor Mrs Laws saying he notes planning validation times are reducing and asked where we are with staffing issues. Councillor Mrs Laws said that we are looking to address validation, in 2019 we offered a workshop to the Developers Forum of over 60 members as only 4% of applications were right first time. We then offered a second workshop as this figure only increased to 16%. We need to be flexible with applications and encourage them but at the same time there is a balance of developers and agents using our staff skills and professionalism as an extension of their own office. She said she is preparing two possibilities levelled at agents to encourage them to proof-read their applications and ensure they have the correct reports. There is a tick list on our website which only four developers are currently using but means 98% of their applications are right first time. Staff

shortages were because of health problems and staff needing to use up their annual leave. She has surveyed five other councils and their average is 60-70% right first-time applications, so she will be investigating the reasons behind this and implementing some changes shortly so agents and developers will be using their own staff more. Councillor Sutton thanked Councillor Mrs Laws.

6. Councillor Sutton paid tribute to Councillor Wallwork for her work as previous portfolio holder for Communities and the positivity and passion she had displayed in her role. He addressed Councillor Sam Clark, stating he knows also how passionate she is particularly in respect of Golden Age, and asked how soon do we hope to get back to holding these events once the pandemic is over? Councillor Clark said she has already been attending meetings this week regarding Golden Age as it is something people are going to need once the pandemic is over.
7. Councillor Sutton addressed Councillor Mrs French regarding WVI. On 3rd May 2019 she stated that we are looking at WVI and removing the brown bin charge so he is surprised that the bin charge has increased. He asked for a definitive explanation of what WVI means and when can we expect the removal of the charge as stated. Councillor Mrs French responded that this is something that was looked at back then; it was a government initiative that brown bin charges be removed and we were hoping to have this money reimbursed from government. Unfortunately, we were hit by COVID-19 so it is not currently a government priority, but it is something we will pick back up. Councillor Sutton thanked Councillor Mrs French but said he would still like an explanation of WVI and Councillor Mrs French said that she will provide a full update at the next meeting of full council.
8. Councillor Sutton addressed Councillor Boden. Two meetings ago he asked about the small business grants to political party offices across the country and in particular the NECCA office. Councillor Boden was unable to give an answer at the time because of GDPR but he came back in writing and it was appended to the minutes of the last meeting. NECCA did receive a grant payment which was legal although Councillor Sutton questioned the morality of it but he asked, given that the government have now given out more money, can Councillor Boden confirm whether or not the local office has received further monies. Councillor Boden emphasised that the small business grant fund, which was set up during the first lockdown, had business grants that were given out which were not discretionary, specific rules were set down by Government about whom we may pay and any breach of those rules then we would have been penalised. Every legal application that came in was paid. Regarding the current regime, it is similar with the LRSG winter lockdown payment. There have been 12 payment regimes put into place by central Government, and under that only businesses that are in retail, hospitality and leisure industries are going to qualify so he does not know if NECCA have made any application, and if they had then it would be refused. Councillor Sutton stressed that he understood Councillor Boden was not responsible for choosing who got paid but he still questioned the rules. Various political offices across the country have either refused to claim or given the money back and his understanding is that he believes the MP also thought it wrong to claim. Councillor Boden said he is at this meeting as Leader of FDC to provide answers to questions regarding FDC and Councillor Sutton needs to write to the organisation concerned regarding this question.
9. Councillor Patrick asked Councillor Murphy what can be done to improve the process of speeding up the approval of memorial applications as delay can cause distress to bereaved families, particularly as some applications are six months old. Councillor Murphy explained that the weather has been so bad that this has caused the water table to rise which then causes a delay in the drying and settling of the soil. This is unfortunate but not something that can be controlled.
10. Councillor Hoy wanted to place on record that she is employed by the Conservative Association referenced by Councillor Sutton earlier so she would like this recorded in the minutes.
11. Councillor Mrs Laws referred to Councillor Patrick's query and said from personal experience she found cemeteries staff to be very efficient. She added that stonemasons source their materials from quarries, many of which have not been working in lockdown. Also, FDC advise that no headstone be placed for at least 12-18 months because of the type of soil we have; if the soil has not settled properly then there is a danger of the headstone toppling. She said

contractors are working as well as they can in very muddy and challenging conditions and having to pump water out of many graves before a funeral can take place. Councillor Patrick said he was not criticising staff but had been approached by people who had been waiting 8 months for their applications to be approved on graves that had settled.

C42/20 **MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR BODEN**

Councillor Boden said it was both a pleasure and a privilege to present this motion regarding the naming of the Kings Dyke Crossing.

He stated: "Members will be aware of the welcome progress that is being made in relation to Kings Dyke Crossing and the scheme has reached a stage where an official name is required. As the scheme falls within the boundary of Fenland District Council, we have an important role to play in that. In ordinary circumstances it would fall for example to the relevant developer to propose a name in consultation with officers. In this instance however, and having regard to the profile of this particular scheme, I am seeking your support in requesting that officers give due consideration, under the delegated authority of the Chief Finance Officer, to a suggestion that King's Dyke Crossing is officially named 'Ralph Butcher Causeway'.

Whilst it is acknowledged that streets named after prominent persons are not normally considered to be suitable in Fenland, it is considered that a departure from that guiding principle would be reasonable and appropriate having regard to the significant and instrumental role that former Councillor Butcher played in securing the delivery of the scheme. Many of you will recall that he had been a tireless proponent of a King's Dyke crossing for decades.

I am therefore proposing that King's Dyke Crossing as it is now known should instead be named Ralph Butcher Causeway".

Councillor Miscandlon seconded the motion and opened the motion for debate.

1. Councillor Sutton said he fully supports this motion; he worked very closely with Councillor Butcher and had the utmost respect for him. However, he feels we are bending the rules as nobody living can have anything named after them and he had made a similar request which was rebutted. He would like to see a relaxation of rules going forward as there are people who do things in their lifetime to improve their communities with little or no recognition. He does not know if it is national regulation or our own rules that prevent that and asked if the Leader could look into this.
2. Councillor John Clark said he fully supported this motion and would be pleased to second the motion.
3. Councillor Mrs French said that she fully supports this motion; Councillor Butcher was always a hardworking councillor and she was sad when he retired. Addressing Councillor Sutton's comments, she said she was not sure that there is a hard and fast policy on naming streets after dead or living people. She referred to several streets in March that were named after mayors many years ago and would be happy to look into this.
4. Councillor Patrick agreed that we do not just name streets after councillors but to recognise people within the community.
5. Councillor Miscandlon said he served with Councillor Butcher for eight years. He was a great mentor and is a family man who is well thought of in Coates and the local area. To name the crossing the Ralph Butcher Causeway is a worthy name for the Kings Dyke Crossing and will be a fitting legacy.

The Motion was approved.

C43/20 **MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR BODEN**

Councillor Boden presented a motion on the Saxon Pit Brickworks in Whittlesey.

Councillor Boden stated that: "The former Saxon Pit brickworks in Whittlesey is a site licensed by the Environment Agency for the acceptance and disposal of waste materials. Since the original planning permission was granted by Cambridgeshire County Council in January 2003, only inert materials are meant to have been disposed of there. In late 2007, many local residents in Whittlesey reported an unusual and strong bad smell emanating from Saxon Pit. Despite efforts from both local residents and local Councillors, the Environment Agency has been extremely slow in revealing precisely what has been deposited and Saxon Pit. Our Member of Parliament, Steve Barclay MP, has written several times over the last three years to the Environment Agency concerning what is happening at, and what is planned for, Saxon Pit. Local residents and Councillors are very grateful to our MP for the pressure that he has brought to bear upon the Environment Agency. In November 2020, as a direct result of the pressure exerted by Steve Barclay MP, the Environment Agency revealed the following:

a. 122,858 tonnes of non-conforming waste was accepted and disposed of by the current operator and this non-conforming waste was unlawfully buried within the void in the pit between October 2017 and February 2018.

b. Further waste, in addition to that 122,858 tonnes, had been unlawfully accepted and buried at the site by one or more previous operators pre-October 2017.

c. Formal samples have been taken across the void to varying depths, following investigatory work by the Environment Agency. Borehole drilling, conducted in September 2019, identified significant visual contamination of non-conforming waste down to depths of between 6 and 15 metres. According to the Environment Agency, of the 50 samples submitted for analysis, 43 contained sufficient chemical contaminants to render them hazardous.

d. Without any consultation with local residents, the local Town Council or Fenland District Council, the Environment Agency took a decision in June 2020, unilaterally so far as we are aware, to permit all non-conforming waste to remain buried within the excavation void.

No details have been provided to local residents or the local councils of any investigations or analyses to support the Environment Agency's decision not to insist upon the removal of the unlawfully buried waste, nor has any information been provided to give confidence to local residents that the "hazardous chemical contaminants" do not now and may not in the future pose a hazard to the environment in general and to human health in particular. It is only in the last two weeks that a specialist environmental journalist has revealed that copper, zinc and petroleum hydrocarbons exceed hazardous levels at the site because of the unlawful dumping of "Automotive Shredder Residue". No quantities of these, or any other, hazardous chemicals on site have yet been revealed.

Following recent heavy rain, the onsite storage lagoon (which is meant to contain the majority of the runoff originating within the Saxon Pit area) quickly reached its storage capacity. The landowner temporarily pumped water from the lagoon up a nearby embankment and into the King's Dyke water-course. The Environment Agency have said that they have "formerly sampled outlets into the lagoon" but the detailed results of any analysis of those samples have not been released.

A proposal has now been made to build a recycling plant at Saxon Pit which would accept and process in excess of 50 tonnes per day of Incinerator Bottom Ash and inert waste.

Fenland District Council therefore resolves:

- That the Environment Agency be requested to provide Fenland District Council, on an open basis, with the full analytic results from the 50 boreholes drilled on the site, with full details of the types and quantities of hazardous chemical contaminants that were found by the

Environment Agency.

- That the Environment Agency be requested to provide Fenland District Council, on an open basis, with full technical specifications of any proposed capping of that waste, together with the calculations supporting their conclusions as to the likely effectiveness of such capping over the short, medium and long terms.
- That the Environment Agency be requested to provide Fenland District Council, on an open basis, with the full analytic results of the samples they have recently tested from the lagoon, together with their full assessment of the quantity of water and likely level of contaminants which have been released into the local watercourses in the last two months.
- That Fenland District Council, unless entirely satisfied that the answers to the preceding three points show no danger to the environment or to public health from the hazardous chemical contaminants in Saxon Pit, should (a) make the strongest possible representations to Cambridgeshire County Council's Planning Committee on environmental grounds against any planning permission which is sought to construct a recycling plant at Saxon Pit (b) request Cambridgeshire County Council to take action in respect of the deposition of non-inert waste at the pit, contrary to the County council's planning permission conditions and (c) object to non-inert waste, in the form of Incinerator Bottom Ash, being deposited in future at Saxon Pit.
- That the Environment Agency be requested to provide Fenland District Council, on an open basis, with full details of how the Environment Agency has handled the complaints made, and unlawful dumping that has occurred, at Saxon Pit since October 2017, with a full explanation as to why, in accordance with the Environment Agency's own Enforcement and Sanctions Policy, effective action in respect of the hazardous waste and in respect of those responsible for its unlawful dumping has not taken place.
- That this motion, once passed, be forwarded to Steve Barclay MP, Cambridgeshire County Council's Planning Department and the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.
- That any failure by the Environment Agency to explain its actions and/or inactions in respect of Saxon Pit be referred by Fenland District Council to Steve Barclay MP, to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy with respect to his Department's overview of the Regulator's Code.

Councillor Mrs Laws seconded the proposal and Councillor Miscandlon opened the motion for debate:

1. Councillor Wicks said he fully supports this motion; it has been a travesty that this has been allowed to occur in Whittlesey. Furthermore, the number of untruths told regarding the waste disposed of there is totally unacceptable. It is also unacceptable that we have a national agency responsible for our environment washing their hands of the situation.
2. Councillor Wilkes said he also supports the motion; we need to be able to trust the national agency responsible for our environment and it is a mockery particularly at this time of enlightened awareness of the need to protect our environment.
3. Councillor Hay said she supports this motion and would urge all members to. She is astonished that a national agency such as the Environment Agency (EA) has the powers to ensure that this is put right, and her concern is that other areas could find potentially find themselves in the same position.
4. Councillor Sutton said he supports this motion as should all members regardless of whether or not it affects their area.
5. Councillor Mrs Laws said it is appalling that the EA have not implemented their powers on this site and agreed with Councillor Hay that unless we do something, then this could happen at other sites. We have a responsibility to the residents of Whittlesey as well as the

entire district.

The Motion was approved.

Councillor Connor declared an interest by virtue of the fact he is the Chairman of Cambridgeshire County Council Planning Committee and took no part in the debate or vote on this item.

Councillor Count declared a non-pecuniary interest by virtue of the fact he leads the County Council.

Councillor Mrs French declared a non-pecuniary interest by virtue of the fact she is a sub on the County Council Planning Committee and took no part in the debate.

C44/20 MOTION - SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MRS LAWS

Councillor Mrs Laws presented a motion regarding built environment conservation in Fenland.

Councillor Mrs Laws stated: "Full Council notes that members of local councils have responsibility for setting policy, within legal limits, concerning all areas of Council activity, including Conservation. Members, in determining Conservation policy, need to determine an appropriate local balance between preserving what is good from the past as against providing necessary flexibility to address current and future economic and residential needs. A majority of members, in seeking to determine that balance, would like to commission an external partner to provide guidance and recommendations on how the Council can amend current Conservation policy and practice in Fenland to achieve this aspiration within the following scope:

1. To provide recommendations as to how we may review the geographical extent of every conservation area in Fenland, including whether each conservation area should continue to be so designated. In respect of each conservation area no such review should be commenced without the prior agreement of the relevant town or parish council. In respect of each review, no change should be implemented without the agreement of the relevant town or parish council. Involvement and consultation with the relevant town or parish council must be integral to this whole process.
2. To provide recommendations as to how each town and parish council could initiate an external professional appraisal of any conservation area within their area, subject to no such appraisal having taken place within the previous five years, and subject further to the parish or town council sharing the cost of any such appraisal equally with Fenland District Council.
3. To review and provide recommendations as to how the current approach to the local validation list requirements and materials requirements for listed buildings, conservation areas (and buildings that have a relationship with the setting of these) and non-designated heritage assets may most appropriately be changed given the pro-growth agenda of the Council in the context of challenging property values and the changing dynamic of town centres.
4. With respect to materials requirement in conservation areas and for non-designated heritage assets, Members seek guidance and recommendations as to how the Council can be more flexible than at present in requiring specific building materials for the construction and repair of buildings, specifically, but not exclusively, including recommendations as to how the Council may facilitate, in new build, renovations, improvements and repairs, the use of high quality compatibly designed UPVC windows, and a less onerous specificity in the selection of building materials such as bricks and mortar.
5. To provide recommendations as to how the Council can be more flexible than at present in requiring specific building materials for the repair, renovation or improvement of Grade II listed buildings, specifically but not exclusively including the use of high quality compatibly designed

UPVC windows, and the selection of building materials such as bricks and mortar.

6. To provide recommendations as to how the Council could legally cease planning-related conservation assessments outside conservation areas, except for Grade I, Grade II* and Grade II listed buildings, and except where any planning application relates to a location immediately adjacent to a listed building or a conservation area.

7. To review the draft conservation policies in the emerging local plan and provide recommendations as to how these policies might be drafted to best serve the Council's pro-growth agenda whilst appropriately conserving heritage assets in the District as envisaged in the recently published Planning White Paper.

8. To provide recommendations as to how the Council can provide enhanced protection for and preservation of Whittlesey's iconic mud walls.

Full Council resolves that an appropriately qualified external person be engaged to consult with members and others as to how the aspirations listed above may be practically, legally and expeditiously implemented.

Councillor Connor seconded the motion and Councillor Miscandlon opened the Motion for debate.

1. Councillor Booth said he would probably support this motion but had several questions. Firstly, why do we need a motion as surely this falls within Councillor Mrs Laws' remit as portfolio holder to look into this type of work to get conservation areas reviewed and then taken to full council for approval. Secondly, what is the situation if the town and parish councils do not have the funds to pay towards a review, particularly if they have already set their budgets. Thirdly, why do we not have a financial figure as to how much this review will cost?
2. Councillor Mrs Laws said Councillor Booth is right; conservation falls under her portfolio but members, including some town and parish councillors, have come forward with various ideas regarding conservation. They are not entirely in agreement with the current designated conservation areas so she thought it would be correct to come to full council with this motion to fully involve everyone. She accepted his comment regarding budget setting but to achieve the Coates conservation policy, we did award £600 to bring an up to date conservation policy through as Whittlesey had already achieved an updated proposal. Coates was lagging behind but to bring forward the neighbourhood plan, the council did award this as a contribution. Moving forward we must consider the cost to FDC and the staffing we have, there is current only one dedicated staff member and this would support additional staff that would be needed. The costs are currently being explored with officers and it is unfortunate she cannot give a cost today, but she will bring the cost back to full council. She said we are not asking parish and town councils to pay the full amount but to provide a contribution. If financially it is not possible for them then that is something that will have to be discussed. Councillor Booth thanked Councillor Mrs Laws.
3. Councillor Sutton said Councillor Mrs Laws is very passionate about heritage, but he is surprised by parts of the motion and hopes that she has not been led down a road by others that do not share her passion. This could lead us to riding roughshod over the professional advice of officers; he does not feel he can support the motion without knowing the cost. He cannot see why this motion is required but he would like to make a proposal for an amendment to the motion and that is that if we pass the motion, we are saying that the parish and towns have got to pay whether they budget or not. He wants to know how much it will cost but would like to see where they will pay the cost equally, that could be a huge amount of money. If FDC wants to do this then they should not impose the cost on others. He would like the motion to be withdrawn and brought back to the next meeting knowing what the costs will be or to amend the motion and take out the part about the parish and town councils.
4. Councillor Mrs French said this has been an ongoing issue for years and we have had many

discussions and presentations on the matter. She supports Councillor Mrs Laws plans but has her concerns regarding charging town and parish councils on this. They should not have to pay; it is a matter for the district council, and neither is it a political issue. She can give many examples of old properties in conservation areas that need new windows, some of which have received planning permission but the stipulations, such as only being allowed to use wood and not UPVC, means that replacements will not last as long or will deteriorate far more quickly and will need repainting sooner rather than later. Conservation officers should be taking heed of the Buildings at Risk Register and saving our buildings instead of concentrating on double glazed windows. We should not expect town and parish councils to contribute as she does not believe it is their duty to do so.

5. Councillor Mrs Davis fully supports the motion but would like to see it deferred and brought back to the next meeting because it is difficult to vote when we do not know the costs. Also, this is an FDC policy and if we are going to set policies, then it is not right that parishes and towns must contribute.
6. Councillor Sutton referred to Councillor Mrs French's point about plastic windows. He said that technology has moved on and the quality now is such that you cannot tell the difference between plastic and wood. He added that he is pleased to hear members raising concerns about shared costs. He cannot support this motion as it stands as we would be committing town and parish councils to have to pay; he would request this motion be withdrawn and brought back with costings. If not, he would like to see reference to the contribution to be taken out of it.
7. Councillor Lynn said his understanding is that towns and parishes will only be asked to contribute if they require an appraisal, so he does not see why this part of the motion is an issue. He has been approached many times by shopkeepers in and around Wisbech marketplace who are struggling; they are in buildings in desperate need of repair and this needs to be revised. He will therefore be supporting this motion.
8. Councillor Hoy agreed with Councillor Lynn; she understands the motion to read that if the town and parish council want an appraisal they are being asked to share the cost, if they do not want one, then there will be no cost.
9. Councillor Boden said Councillor Sutton had said there was not the capacity within the FDC Planning Department when he was in charge of Planning for things to proceed as far as reviews of conservation areas were concerned. Passing this motion will assist in the workload of the conservation officer in that a lot of the work she does now will no longer need to be done. It does not change the fact that we do not currently have the capacity to enable us to conduct these long overdue policy reviews. This motion will prioritise those parish or town councils which believe that their need for a review is so great that they will find the money to contribute towards the review happening. It will not be happening in-house but we will need someone from outside to do it for us.
10. Councillor Connor thanked Councillor Laws for putting forward a well thought out and balanced motion and agreed with Councillor Boden. He urged members to support this motion.
11. Councillor Mrs Laws said there is a staffing level to consider, our policies are out of date. There is no question that town or parish councils would be forced to have an appraisal but if they wished to then a contribution would be required. She took on board Councillor Mrs French's comment about the at-risk register, but we have one conservation officer; this will free up some of her time to look at the register and conservation policies. We have modern materials that are such high quality you cannot tell the difference between that and wood and this will give some flexibility. She stated she would not be withdrawing the motion.
12. Councillor Mrs French thanked Councillor Mrs Laws and stated again that she fully supports the motion but is still concerned about the charge to town and parish councils; there should be more consultation. FDC does have a statutory duty to look at this but we have some beautiful buildings in Fenland, and we do need to start preserving these. She also asked that the appointed consultant, if this is approved, speaks in depth to members of the March Society, a local group who are passionate about conservation and listed buildings for buildings when it comes to reviewing buildings in that particular area, and any other local group.
13. Councillor Mrs Laws said without question every society within the district that has heritage or

conservation interests will be included as every town and parish council. Councillor Mrs French thanked Councillor Mrs Laws.

14. Councillor Sutton proposed a motion to remove the part of the motion where town and parish councils would be asked to contribute. Councillor Mrs French said she would not second that proposal but felt that there should be something in the motion to say that town and parish councils would not have to contribute.
15. Councillor Miscandlon recommended that this motion is deferred so that the modified version of Section 2 be brought back to the next meeting of full Council or at a future date. It is important to go through but not in its current form.
16. Councillor Mrs Laws stated she wants the motion to stand as it is.
17. Councillor Connor stated that he still wants to second the original motion.

Carol Pilson stated that as Councillor Sutton has recommended an amendment to the motion, it needs to have a seconder and then the amendment could be taken to the vote.

Councillor Sutton proposed an amendment to the motion and clarified that he would like removed the section that says, "and subject further to parish and town council sharing the costs equally with FDC". Councillor Booth seconded the proposed amendment.

Members were given an opportunity to debate the amended motion.

1. Councillor Hoy said that she felt Councillor Sutton had misunderstood and that it meant that if, for example, Whittlesey Town Council wants its conservation area appraised then it would merely mean they would share the cost of the appraisal with FDC. She said she believed he thought it meant that all town and parish councils would contribute to this. She sympathised with the point that town and parish councils have already set their budgets, however she does not see any other practical way to do this. She would not be supporting the amendment.
2. Councillor Boden asked that members oppose this amendment as it is designed to move us forward and will allow us, even without the officer capacity, to start commissioning external sources to provide us with conservation reviews without us having to make cuts elsewhere.
3. Councillor Booth said his problem with the motion as it stands is that effectively it allows parishes with large reserves to "jump the queue", even if they have had a more recent conservation appraisal.
4. Councillor Hoy said that it appears that some parishes that have not been asking for a review will now want FDC to undertake a lot of work at great cost that will benefit their area but without paying and this does not seem right, particularly when they have not previously been wanting a review.
5. Councillor Cornwell said he has no problem with asking for any of the town or parishes for a contribution, which can be adjusted accordingly to affordability and the size of the job. However, his issue is with the word "equally" and an expectation to meet the costs equally; some parishes may not have the 50% to pay but it is perfectly fair to expect a contribution.
6. Councillor Booth responded to Councillor Hoy's comment and said that Parson Drove has been asking for a review since he joined the Council. This has never been delivered, despite having been told it they were next on the list; he understands about officer capacity but the issue remains around cost to the smaller parishes; he has no doubt they would be willing to make a contribution but if a consultant is going to cost up to £15,000, then he agreed with Councillor Cornwell and this is going to penalise the smaller parishes.
7. Councillor Sutton referred to Councillor Hoy's first comment and stated he had not misunderstood the point. He understands that the expectation was for an individual town or parish council to share the cost with FDC and not to split it amongst them all. Also, he could recall when Councillor Booth asked for a review for Parson Drove and disputed that town and parish councils would be wanting reviews undertaken when they had not previously been asking for them. He agreed that reviews could cost thousands of pounds but paying half the cost could easily be more than a town or parish council precept. He is still of the

opinion that it is wrong to expect the costs to be shared equally with FDC but that it would be better to provide a contribution.

8. Councillor Count said it is not appropriate for the county council to decide conservation policy for FDC and it is not appropriate for FDC to dictate to towns and parishes what should happen in their towns and villages. It is up to those areas to stand up for themselves. If their precepts are insufficient or not large enough, it is up to them to decide what is important for their residents. If they feel this is an important matter for their residents, and FDC is meeting them halfway then that is good enough; FDC should not have to cover the entire cost. Therefore, he cannot support this amendment.
9. Councillor Mrs French said that ultimately this motion is about Councillor Mrs Laws requesting agreement to be able to engage someone to look at the issue of conservation. They would then come back with a report and an idea of costing and at this stage we would go back to the towns and parishes and say if they want something done, this is how much it is going to cost.
10. Councillor Cornwell agreed with Councillor Mrs French; we are not committing to anything at this stage, only to employing someone to make recommendations to us.
11. Councillor Hay said it is long overdue to have someone look at conservation within Fenland. A review of the conservation area in somewhere like Parson Drove is going to cost far less than somewhere like Wisbech so the argument that the smaller parishes are going to share an unfair burden does not stand. They will decide whether they want to have a review in their area, and they will be given some idea of the cost to help them with their decision. The original motion is perfectly reasonable.

Councillor Mrs Laws was given the opportunity to sum up. She said that both Councillors Mrs French and Cornwell had already concluded correctly that her motion is a recommendation and will come back to Council, and she will not be altering it.

A vote was taken on the amendment to the motion proposed by Councillor Sutton and seconded by Councillor Booth. The amended motion failed.

A vote was then taken on the substantive motion proposed by Councillor Mrs Laws and seconded by Councillor Connor. The motion was approved.

(Councillors Wicks declared an interest and took no part in the debate or vote on this item).

(Councillor J Clark declared an interest by virtue of the fact he lives in a listed property in a conservation area, he also took part in Councillor Law's working group and took no part in the debate or vote on this item).

(Councillor Skoulding declared an interest by virtue of the fact he owns some properties in March town centre, which is in the conservation area and took no part in the debate or vote on this item).

(Councillor Benney declared an interest by virtue of owning properties in Chatteris conservation area and took no part in the debate or vote on this item).

(Councillor S Clark declared an interest by virtue of the fact she has a family member in a listed building property and took no part in the debate or vote on this item).

(Councillor Purser declared an interest by virtue of the fact he owns some property in March town centre that may be in the conservation area).

(Councillor Maul declared an interest by virtue of the fact he has a property in the Wisbech conservation area).

Members considered the Council Tax Support Scheme 2021/22 report presented by Councillor Boden.

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

- Councillor Booth is concerned that when this came to Overview & Scrutiny it was said this was not the right year to change. It hits those on the lowest incomes, and this can also be seen in the responses. It is hitting the poorest in society working within the constraints of COVID-19. He believes this has been rushed through and we do not seem to have taken the consultation comments on board. He would propose that we amend the recommendation so that it says it remains at 14% for this year.
- Councillor Yeulett said he would not support this recommendation; the public consultation was against it and the O&S Panel recommended no increase. It is an additional burden on those already suffering the most from COVID-19 and lockdown.
- Councillor Cornwell said he cannot support this. The O&S Panel were given a clear explanation of what is going on and this is not the right year to make any changes on the basis that everybody is going through a difficult time. Read the consultation results; it is quite clear that people are struggling, and we must do our bit to help them.
- Councillor Bligh said she agreed with the previous speakers; this is a year nobody expected, and we should leave it alone.
- Councillor Rackley said as ward councillor for Waterlees, the most neglected ward in Cambridgeshire, he cannot support the recommendation.
- Councillor Sutton said he supports all previous speakers. It seems so harsh in this particular year when there are scores of people already struggling. When furlough finishes there may be more people facing redundancies and he could not face people in that position if he supported this.
- Councillor Mrs French said that Cambridge County Council have been doing fantastic work over the last year and have helped support some 32,000 people across the county. She will be supporting this motion.
- Councillor Hoy said that nobody will be voting for this with any joy, but she has to support this as the money needs to come from somewhere. If not, what cuts do we make to cover this? If we put up council tax, everyone else will be paying and just because people do not receive council tax support, it does not mean that they are not struggling too.
- Councillor Wallwork agreed with Councillor Hoy, this is a difficult subject, and nobody wants to pay more money. When people receive benefits, there is a support network available but there are other people who have been massively affected financially but get no support. Therefore, everyone must share the burden at this time, particularly if we want public services and are not willing to cut them.
- Councillor Bligh said although she agreed with Councillors Hoy and Wallwork, she does not feel that this year is the year to be increasing the contribution.

Councillor Booth proposed an amendment to keep the contribution rate at 14%.

Councillor Boden was given the right to respond. He said that we do have to look at how we got to 14% initially. When we moved from having council tax benefit to council tax support, we were able to subsidise the amount which was expected to be paid by anyone in receipt of council tax support. Those conditions have now finished but we do have the problem of disparity between those who qualify for council tax support and those who do not, and it is a matter of getting the balance right. The amount proposed is the correct balance and he would recommend members support it.

It was proposed by Councillor Booth, seconded by Councillor Bligh that the council tax support contribution rate remain at 14%.

A recorded vote was taken on the proposed amendment.

In favour of the amendment: Councillors Bligh, Booth, Cornwell, Marks, Maul, Meekins, Sutton, Wicks, Wilkes and Yeulett

Against the amendment: Councillors Benney, Boden, S Clark, J Clark, Connor, Count, Mrs Davis, Mrs French, Miss French, Hoy, Humphrey, Mrs Laws, Lynn, Mason, Miscandlon, Murphy, Purser, Rackley, Seaton, Tierney and Wallwork

Abstained: Councillor Hay

The amendment failed.

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

- (i) The contribution rate for working age claimants be increased from 14% to 20% with effect from 1 April 2021;
- (ii) the Council Tax Support Scheme to take effect from 1 April 2021 as set out in the following link be approved:
<https://www.fenland.gov.uk/ctss2021>

The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 impose an obligation on Local Authorities (after 25 February 2014) to record all votes on decisions on budget and council tax, with this in mind Members voted on this item as follows:

In favour of the proposal: Councillors Benney, Boden, S Clark, J Clark, Connor, Count, Mrs Davis, Mrs French, Miss French, Hoy, Humphrey, Mrs Laws, Lynn, Mason, Miscandlon, Murphy, Purser, Seaton, Tierney, Wallwork

Against the proposal: Councillors Bligh, Booth, Cornwell, Marks, Maul, Meekins, Rackley, Sutton, Wicks, Wilkes, Yeulett

Abstained: Councillor Hay

Councillor Count declared a non-pecuniary interest by virtue of the fact he leads the County Council.

Councillor Wilkes said he is in receipt of disability benefits but was not sure if he also gets council tax support within this and therefore declared an interest to remove the avoidance of doubt.

C46/20 **BUSINESS PLAN**

Members considered the Final Business Plan 2021-22 report presented by Councillor Boden.

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

- Councillor Booth reiterated what he had said at Overview & Scrutiny that much of the investment is concentrated on the towns; again, the villages and rural areas are the poor relations. Also, we still do not have the proper metrics to measure how we will deliver because there is no way of measuring many of the items in the project plan.
- Councillor Tierney said officers have worked very hard on this report, but they are experts and

he has more work to do in terms of simplifying and making the information easier to digest.

- Councillor Mrs French said she fully supports this plan, although there is a long way to go. There are many exciting projects taking place across all of Fenland and, in her experience, we have never had such amazing opportunities. She thanked the officers at FDC for doing a fantastic job with Growing Fenland. Fenland has been put on the map as a result of the amount of money coming into the area due to the Combined Authority. She also thanked Councillors Tierney, Boden, Seaton and Count in particular for all they have done and said we have never had the opportunity in the last fifty years to get the funding that we now have.
- Councillor Mrs Laws agreed with Councillor Mrs French; there are people too numerous to mention but without the support of senior members of Fenland and the fantastic work done by a wealth of officers, this would not have been possible and they cannot be praised enough. The Mayor of the Combined Authority promised to bring economy and growth to the north of the county, and he has done that for which praise is due.
- Councillor Sutton said Councillor Mrs French rightly thanked many people, but one person must not be forgotten and that is the Leader at the time, Councillor John Clark. Without his extraordinary effort in deciding to go down the route of a combined authority, we would not be in the position we are now having had millions of pounds invested. Councillor Mrs French agreed and thanked Councillor Sutton for raising this.
- Councillor Yeulett said he will be supporting this plan, but we need to address more of the issue of deprivation in areas of the district that affect education and health.
- Councillor Count said he thoroughly endorses the work that has gone into this plan and he would like to support it.

Proposed by Councillor Boden and seconded by Councillor Tierney and AGREED to approve the Final Business Plan 2021-22.

C47/20 CORPORATE BUDGET 2021/22 & MTFS

Members considered the Corporate Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy report presented by Councillor Boden.

- Councillor Booth said looking at the medium-term financial forecast, it increases by over £1million and looking at the savings we need, if we need to save over a £1million he takes on board Councillor Boden's comments about being more like a commercial organisation. We still have some way to go with culture, but he will be supporting this.

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

- the General Fund revenue budget for 2021/22 as set out in Section 8 and Appendix A of the report be approved;**
- the Medium-Term Financial Strategy as outlined in the report and Appendix B be adopted;**
- the Capital Programme and funding statement as set out in Appendix D of the report be approved;**
- the adoption of any additional Business Rates Relief measures announced in the budget on 3rd March 2021 as detailed in paragraphs 5.7 – 5.9 of the report be approved;**
- the expenses detailed in Section 11 of the report be approved to be treated as general expenses for 2021/22;**
- the Port Health levy for 2021/22 be set as shown in Section 12 of the report;**
- the amendment to the Long-Term Empty Property Premium policy detailed in Section**

13 of the report be approved;

- (viii) the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Minimum Revenue Provision, Treasury Investment Strategy, Prudential and Treasury Indicators for 2021/22 and Capital Strategy 2021/22 as set out in Section 15 and Appendix E of the report be approved;
- (ix) the Band D Council Tax level for Fenland District Council Services for 2021/22 be set at £260.46, no increase on the current year.

The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 impose an obligation on Local Authorities (after 25 February 2014) to record all votes on decisions on budget and council tax, with this in mind Members voted on this item as follows:

In favour of the proposal: Councillors Benney, Bligh, Boden, Booth, S Clark, Connor, Cornwell, Count, Mrs Davis, Mrs French, Miss French, Hay, Hoy, Humphrey, Mrs Laws, Lynn, Mason, Meekins, Miscandlon, Murphy, Purser, Rackley, Seaton, Sutton, Tierney, Wallwork, Wicks and Yeulett

Against the proposal: None

Abstentions: None

(Councillor Marks declared an interest in this item by virtue of the fact he has two addresses at his property, one being the main house and the other an annex where a family member resides. They are currently trying to resolve the rating value for the annex and meanwhile there is one council tax payment in dispute, therefore he chose to take no part in this item).

(Councillor Maul declared an interest by virtue of the fact S106 may apply so he took no part in this item).

C48/20 COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION

Members considered the Council Tax Resolution 2021/22 Report presented by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Cornwell pointed out that the town of March in Section 3(h) of the report was incorrectly named April.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Cornwell and AGREED to pass the resolution set out in the report.

The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 impose an obligation on Local Authorities (after 25 February 2014) to record all votes on decisions on budget and council tax, with this in mind Members voted on this item as follows:

In favour of the Proposal: Councillors Benney, Bligh, Boden, Booth, S Clark, Connor, Cornwell, Count, Mrs French, Miss French, Hay, Hoy, Humphrey, Mrs Laws, Lynn, Marks, Mason, Maul, Meekins, Miscandlon, Murphy, Purser, Rackley, Seaton, Sutton, Tierney, Wallwork, Wicks and Yeulett.

Against the Proposal: None

Abstentions: None

(Councillor Mrs Davis was temporarily indisposed during voting on this item)

C49/20 **CULTURE AND CREATIVITY STRATEGY**

Members considered the Cultural Strategy report presented by Councillor Seaton.

- Councillor Booth requested that on page 13 of the report (*page 214 of the agenda pack*) a change be made so that it reads 'parish and town councils' as it currently only mentions town councils. Councillor Sutton said he would ensure the change was made.
- Councillor Yeulett said he welcomed this report and would be supporting it. He is pleased that FDC is facilitating it and that residents will benefit.
- Councillor Sutton said this has been a long time coming; it is an overarching policy over many other areas of work we do, and he too welcomed it.

Council AGREED to adopt the Culture and Creativity Strategy.

C50/20 **HACKNEY CARRIAGE & PRIVATE HIRE POLICY**

Members considered the Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Policy report presented by Councillor Humphrey.

- Councillor Connor praised the concise and excellent report that had been written by Michelle Bishop, FDC's Licensing Manager, and he wanted his thanks placed on record.

Proposed by Councillor Humphrey, seconded by Councillor Meekins and AGREED to adopt the Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Licensing Policy 2021 - 2026.

Councillors Patrick declared a pecuniary interest and said he would take no part in this item but he left the meeting at 6.25pm before the item was presented.

Councillor Rackley declared a pecuniary interest and left the meeting for this item.

C51/20 **COMMUNICATION REGARDING UNCONTESTED ELECTIONS**

Members considered the Communication regarding Uncontested Elections report presented by Councillor Boden.

- Councillor Hay said she thinks introducing flyers advising of uncontested elections are a good idea but it needs to be on the proviso that the person standing uncontested delivers them prior to election day to save their residents turning out to vote when they do not have to.
- Councillor Booth said we should not restrict this to the candidate as there could be volunteers willing to deliver flyers, or they could be inserted into village newspapers for delivery.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Hay and AGREED that in addition to the actions previously taken in 2019 to mitigate the risk of local residents attempting to cast their vote at elections that have been uncontested that the following further measures are also introduced:-

- production of flyers advising of the uncontested election that could be delivered by the duly elected candidates should they chose to request such flyers
- publication in the parish magazine and local media if there is sufficient time to do so.

C52/20 **SENIOR MANAGER PAY POLICY**

Members considered the Senior Manager Pay Policy report presented by Councillor Boden.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Connor and AGREED to adopt the Senior Manager Pay Policy Statement for 2021/22 at Appendix 1 as required by the Localism Act 2011.

8.40 pm

Chairman