

# COUNCIL



**MONDAY, 2 OCTOBER 2023 - 4.00 PM**

**PRESENT:** Councillor N Meekins (Chairman), Councillor B Barber (Vice-Chairman), Councillor I Benney, Councillor C Boden, Councillor J Carney, Councillor G Christy, Councillor J Clark, Councillor S Clark, Councillor D Connor, Councillor S Count, Councillor D Cutler, Councillor Mrs M Davis, Councillor L Foice-Beard, Councillor Mrs J French, Councillor K French, Councillor R Gerstner, Councillor A Hay, Councillor P Hicks, Councillor Miss S Hoy, Councillor M Humphrey, Councillor S Imafidon, Councillor Mrs D Laws, Councillor C Marks, Councillor A Miscandlon, Councillor J Mockett, Councillor P Murphy, Councillor Dr H Nawaz, Councillor D Oliver, Councillor D Patrick, Councillor M Purser, Councillor B Rackley, Councillor D Roy, Councillor C Seaton, Councillor E Sennitt Clough, Councillor M Summers, Councillor T Taylor, Councillor S Tierney, Councillor S Wallwork and Councillor Woollard

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor G Booth, Councillor S Harris and Councillor Mrs K Mayor

## **C12/23      PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of 17 July 2023 were confirmed and signed.

## **C13/23      CIVIC ENGAGEMENTS UPDATE.**

Councillor Meekins drew members' attention to the civic activities undertaken by himself and the Vice-Chairman in the weeks preceding Full Council.

## **C14/23      TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL AND/OR THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE**

Councillor Meekins paid his respects to former District Councillor Paul (Pop) Jolley who had passed away on 24 September, saying he was a much-loved and admired character who was an elected member of the Council between 1990 and 2004 and then again from 2011 and 2014. During his time with the Council, Pop had served on various committees including Community, Housing and Property, Policy and Resources as well as the Leisure Services Board.

Councillor Meekins said that Pop was also the local member for Manea whose goal was to get things done, was always willing to help, supported good causes and had a heart of gold.

Members joined Councillor Meekins in observing a minute's silence for Paul (Pop) Jolley.

The Chairman thanked everyone who attended his Civic Reception in September and hoped they found it to be as thoroughly enjoyable an evening as he did. He thanked Member Services for their support in organising the event with the next planned event being a coffee morning in aid of the East Anglian Air Ambulance being held on 12 October in the Council Chamber.

## **C15/23      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 Meekins stated that no written questions had been received under Procedure Rule 8.6 and as Councillor Booth has given his apologies for the meeting, it was confirmed that there will be no questions under Procedure Rule 8.4.

**C16/23**      **TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM AND ASK QUESTIONS OF CABINET MEMBERS WITH PORTFOLIO HOLDER RESPONSIBILITIES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE RULES 8.1 AND 8.2**

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

- Councillor Gerstner asked why it has taken so long for the steps in the swimming pool at the leisure centre in Whittlesey to be repaired? He added that it has already been four weeks since they were deemed unsafe to use and it is his understanding that a member of the public took it upon themselves to undertake a temporary repair which he is very concerned about. Councillor Gerstner stated that the public are apparently using the steps, however, this is at their own risk. Councillor Miscandlon stated that the leisure contractor Freedom Leisure has obtained a quotation for the works to be undertaken, however, the original contractor was unable to undertake the repair works and, therefore, efforts are underway to find a solution to get the works carried out. He added that he will visit the swimming pool to review what works are required and then make efforts to see if there is a local tradesperson who can undertake the repair work. Councillor Miscandlon added that it is regrettable that the repair works have not been carried out over such a long period of time and he will raise the issue with Freedom Leisure with regard to addressing repair works in more appropriate time scales.

**C17/23**      **MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR DR HAQ NAWAZ**

Councillor Nawaz presented his motion regarding the County Council and Combined Authority (CPCA) war on motorists.

Councillor Mrs French seconded the motion and Councillor Meekins opened the motion for debate. Members made comments as follows:

- Councillor Gerstner stated that he is not familiar with trip budgets and asked for an explanation to be provided.
- Councillor Tierney stated that sometimes a narrative takes hold of society and with that it can encompass some truth, some misconceptions and some lies which, in his opinion, has happened over the years and is taking place currently and that some of the narratives can bring very ill-considered ideas that carry unthinkable consequences. He made the point that the Net Zero idea, which includes the removal of vehicles from the road, is very real and he stated that whilst it is easy to focus on the County Council who are one of the organisations who are pushing the idea forward, it is not just the County Council and Central Government are also looking into the topic, as are other local authorities, however, the County Council are the focus currently who, in his opinion, are considering very ill-thought-out ideas. Councillor Tierney stated that he is proud that this motion has been brought forward by Fenland District Council and he is under no illusion that whatever is decided today will have an impact in order to stop the narrative, but if nobody speaks up and ideas such as these are allowed to press on then they will not stop until reality makes them stop and by that time, they can have caused a lot of harm, expense and damage to people, individuals and society. He stated that he fully supports the motion, and he does not agree that by removing cars off the road to try and change the weather is a very well thought out narrative and is one that needs to be opposed even though he does agree with some of the environmentalism involved.
- Councillor Boden stated that he is very happy to support the proposed motion and explained that this issue has been discussed at meetings he has attended with the Combined Authority over the past 18 months and many of the phrases that Councillor Nawaz has used have been taken from the documentation provided by the Combined Authority and some of the phrases used will not make sense unless further research is undertaken. He stated that the documentation refers frequently to fiscal measures and, in his opinion, that phrase is used because they believe that people will not realize that it means congestion or growth charging or some other form of taxation and made the point that the other phrase which is used is 'car disappearance' and the concept that is being pushed forward appears to focus on making life very difficult for motorists by placing obstacles in the

way such as making them more expensive and then that will mean that the motorists will no longer wish to own a car. Councillor Boden stated that the County Council and CPCA are trying to make car journeys as difficult as possible for people so that they will no longer travel by car and, in his view, the thinking behind the scheme appears to be ill thought out and looks to punish those individuals who are merely looking to travel to work, to shop or to transport their children to school. He made reference to the point raised by Councillor Gerstner with regards to the phrase 'trip budgets' and he explained that for all local authorities with planning functions such as Fenland, there would be the requirement to consider all vehicle movements coming in and out of any new developments and treat that as a cost which would need to be met in some way and, in his opinion, it is a penalty upon the car user for all new developments. Councillor Boden stated that he is aware that in Cambridge City there are proposals for areas to be built with no access to cars at all for the residential areas and whilst that maybe appropriate for Cambridge City, it does not mean it is relevant to Fenland, with at the current time, the vast majority of people needing a car in order to conduct their daily lives. He stated that he has spoken against and will continue to do so all of these ideas put forward by the CPCA and he explained that the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan was halted when it was raised last month. He made the point that he can see a time in the future when there will be no need for a private car in future decades, however, at this point in time the Council is being asked to make sacrifices which will significantly damage the economy and the lives of the people in Fenland which is unacceptable until there is an appropriate alternative to the current situation.

- Councillor Count stated that he will support the motion which, in his opinion, has been excellently articulated, worded and presented and he thanked Councillor Nawaz for bringing the motion forward. He expressed the view that the motion exposes the desire to increase congestion in order to somehow facilitate and improve the public transport network and that there are ways and means that councillors are being told will stop people being able to use a private motor car which will force people to use public transport and as Councillor Boden has already stated that may well work in congested areas such as Cambridge City but, in his opinion, to adopt a one size fits all approach for areas like Fenland is totally inappropriate. Councillor Count stated that he has attended meetings with a developer who was looking to bring a large retail park forward and that is progressing with the current policies, however, officers based at County Council have advised the developer that a new model of trip budgets is being introduced which will measure the capacity of the entrance road and there will be no increase permitted and the developer was also advised that they would not be allowed to include a larger roundabout which would mean the increase in the flow of the traffic and if the development exceeded the permitted number of vehicles then they would have to pay for trip budgets to pay for things such as buses, which whilst may work in some areas of the county, it does not make sense or work in the Fens. He stated that he challenged this policy with officers and a motion is also coming forward at County Council's Full Council in order to try and review this and go back to the National Planning Policy Framework to ensure that all officers understand where and when they can apply that kind of measure. Councillor Count stated that Councillor Boden has seen that the CPCA has a policy driven change to get rid of cars and this is not about Net Zero and not about climate change, in his view, it is the difference between the aspiration and the levelling up agenda. He stated that everybody wants to see better public transport but, in his opinion, this is not the way to address that issue, especially as there is now a cost implication of £12 for an average Band B property in order to subsidise buses and the vast majority of that money is going to the well served areas to the south of the county, whilst some villages in Fenland have no transport whatsoever. Councillor Count stated that he approached the County Council's Chief Executive and asked for information concerning bus services and once provided the information was drilled down to parish level, with the parish level in the south of the county being 114 and, therefore, every parish over 114 was measured and as a result of the exercise it showed that in Fenland because of the amalgamation of parishes the figure went down to 780. He stated that if there are 3 or 4 villages which make up a parish, they appear to base their policy on a tick box exercise which denotes how you can get to work or school which, in his view, is very unfair to the residents of Fenland. Councillor Count stated that another part of the country has progressed with clean air zones which, in his view, is another measure of removing private motorists off of the road and in Cambridge City the decision was made not to adopt clean air zones as the evidence showed that the impact of removing cars from the streets will only be temporary because of the move to electric vehicles, which when looking to electric vehicles the particulate matter from brakes deriving from the buses will outweigh the NO contribution from the vehicles. He stated that he wholeheartedly supports the motion and it gives Councillor Boden the increased credibility to say that the proposal does not work for Fenland, and it has got to stop.

- Councillor Seaton stated that he fully supports many of the comments that have already been made and he will support the motion. He added that he sits on the transport committee for the Combined Authority, and he finds it very frustrating due to the political makeup of the committee, which means that some members have no real say on what the outcome will be. Councillor Seaton expressed the view that it is very clear that the aim is to remove the car, however, there is no adequate transport service throughout Fenland, and it is 2015 since the last consultation took place with the parishes to ascertain their transport requirements, whilst the results of the consultation do not mean that the parishes will receive what they want but it will give a clear indication to the Combined Authority and the County Council, what is and what is not possible.
- Councillor Mrs French stated that she agrees with the motion and supports it. She added that the County Council have implemented a new policy which states that any new development needs to include a 20mph speed limit and failure to do so will result in the highway not being adopted. She explained that this has already commenced and is in place at the top of Gaul Road where the developer was forced to implement the new rule as well as the requirement to pay for the 50mph speed limit from Peas Hill roundabout to Gaul Road and she stressed to members to be wary of the 'Twenty Plenty' initiative.
- Councillor Nawaz stated that it is evident that the concerns expressed in the motion are shared quite widely and he thanked members for supporting the motion. He added that he would like to endorse what Councillor Boden had referred to with regards to the CPCA Board meeting, as he also attended the same meeting and after reading the agenda and reports he felt concerned with regards to the impact on the rural geography, diverse and scattered communities who have nowhere near enough adequate public transport. Councillor Nawaz made the point that the phrases and language that was used in the meeting were very well hidden and what was said did not fool Councillor Boden and it is pleasing to see that members all appear to be united in purpose and he stated that he looks forward to the progression of the motion in the future.

**Council AGREED that its members whom the Council has appointed as its representatives on the CPCA Board and its committees, and Officers who interact with the CPCA and CCC, should reflect the sentiment within this motion when interacting with CCC, or when representing this Council at meetings of the CPCA or its committees.**

### **C18/23      MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR TIM TAYLOR**

Councillor Taylor presented his motion regarding weeds.

Councillor Woollard seconded the motion and Councillor Meekins opened the motion for debate. Members made comments as follows:

- Councillor Woollard stated that the motion is very comprehensive and covers the issues that are faced by all the town and villages across Fenland and, in his opinion, the County Council appear to have relinquished their responsibility for the maintenance of the highway verges, pathways and drainage culverts which is undermining the efforts of everyone in Fenland to enhance communities with hundreds of thousands of pounds being spent on projects across Fenland such as the new market place development in March which is being spoilt with weeds. He stated that the use of the glyphosate chemical is safe for both humans and animals and has approval for use in the United Kingdom and across the European Union. Councillor Woollard expressed the view that there are too many instances of flooding in Fenland and the clogging of drains and culverts with weeds will only exacerbate the issue of flooding should the policy at County Council continue. He added that it clear that the residents of Fenland are not happy and the change in policy must be addressed which is why he wholeheartedly seconds the motion.
- Councillor Patrick stated that he fully supports the motion and he referred to the very high weeds he has seen in the towns and villages of Fenland which are, in his opinion, a disgrace. He expressed the view that the policy is not just about weeds, but it is also a cost cutting exercise which is leaving the towns looking so dirty and unsightly.
- Councillor Carney stated that he has been approached by many of his constituents with regards to the issue of lack of weed control and roadside drains with concerns over flooding. He explained that he reported it to the County Council in August, received an initial response and he then followed it up and questioned who would be liable if the residents property flooded as a result of the drains not being cleared sufficiently and it is only recently where he has received a response. Councillor

Carney stated that with regards to the use of glyphosate, it is well known to be one of the safest products available for weed control and he has undertaken some research and has ascertained that from the Health and Safety Executive website that glyphosate has been approved as safe and efficacious for a number of years and it also states that the responsible use of pesticides and herbicides in amenity areas as part of an integrated programme control can help deliver substantial benefits for society, management of conservation areas, invasive species and flood risk. He added that it also mentions that it can be used in public spaces for the prevention of weed growth on hard surfaces preventing trip hazards and it also makes reference to ragwort, which is covered by the Weeds Act 1959 which details 5 injurious weeds, and it was augmented by the Ragwort Control Act 2003 and if the Code of Practice is not followed then this can be used as evidence and legal action can be taken against the landowner if the weeds are not properly controlled. Councillor Carney stated that he is more than happy to support the motion.

- Councillor Mrs Laws stated that she is the Chairman of a voluntary Flood Warden Group and she explained that whilst she was in attendance at a recent meeting there was a heavy downpour of rain and at that time she received a message from a resident to advise that there were 220 properties known to be flooding out and over 1,000 at risk of flooding. She stated that 6 of those properties were at significant risk and one of the contributing factors appear to be 'off kerbs' which were installed by the County Council several years ago at great expense. Councillor Mrs Laws explained that 'off kerbs' manage the water on the roads and take water away far quicker and at that time they were blocked through weeds and the water was 3ft away from entering a property whilst two others did have water in their homes. Councillor Mrs Laws stated that it is important that the weeds are controlled for surface water flooding and as the climate changes meaning there are milder winters which means more rainfall. She explained that in March of this year the water table was extremely high in Whittlesey which meant that North Bank had to close for a couple of days. Councillor Mrs Laws explained that following the issue encountered by residents she contacted the County Council with regards to blocked drains and she was advised that there is not a planned programme of works to empty drains and it is only actioned as and when required, which if this is correct she would be interested to know how the County Council are directing their money if they are not having a programme of planned works as she cannot see any action being taken with regards to pothole or highway repairs. She explained that she has received calls from residents with regards to how unsightly their roads are and, in her opinion, they are likely to take matters into their own hands and use toxic sprays which could cause issues for dog walkers and in turn see matters spiralling out of control. Councillor Mrs Laws referred members to the local authority in Brighton and Hove who stopped spraying weeds and as a result they now have weeds which are taller than school age children. She stated that by having overgrown verges, it is encouraging people to walk onto the highway which is a real cause for safety and she made the point that she totally supports the motion but she wants to know what the County Council are doing with all the money they are saving by undertaking no drainage works or weed spraying in order to assist the residents of the Fenland towns and parishes.
- Councillor Miscandlon stated that he fully supports the motion and added that it is a legal responsibility for the authorities to remove ragwort and it is a criminal offence not to and they need to be aware of the detrimental effect it has on animals. He added that he also represents the Internal Drainage Boards, and he has been made aware that they are becoming increasingly concerned about the amount of debris which is falling off the unkept verges into the drainage ditches. Councillor Miscandlon also mentioned that the high weeds are also causing significant hazards to road users due to the obstruction to visibility.
- Councillor Tierney stated that the question has been raised with regards to what the County Council are doing with the saved money they appear to be saving from not tackling the issue of weeds and, in his opinion, those monies are going towards the favourite projects of the County Council, with the County Council not wanting to improve the roads they want them to deteriorate so that people do not use them. He stated that he believes Councillor Patrick is correct in his view which is that there is a money saving element to it. Councillor Tierney expressed the view that those responsible persons at the County Council can be identified by two categories, with one half being ideological dealing with global warming issues and others focussing on saving money on issues that they are not content with in order to spend on issues that they are content with. He expressed the view that the public's perception of seeing a town when it is overgrown with weeds can be one in which they feel unsafe as they feel that the town is unkempt, unloved and uncared for. Councillor Tierney expressed the view that there are many different types of chemicals which can be used safely and are non-harmful to wildlife if you research the effects and costs. He made the point that the controlling members of the County Council need to be advised that their choice of action is not satisfactory, and the towns

and villages of Fenland do matter and that by leaving the area in an unkempt run-down state, it will have a knock-on effect and can lead to a rise in crime and further consequences and those members in power need to be advised of the consequences of their actions.

- Councillor Hay stated that she is disappointed that there has been a need to bring this motion to Council and she made the point that when this policy was introduced the County Council failed to consult with the District, Town and Parish Councils and now that they find themselves receiving complaints they have decided to issue a consultation. She added that a recent event took place in Chatteris giving the public the opportunity to meet the local Police along with an officer from the District Council, she attended the event in order to ascertain what issues members of the public raised and they included potholes, inconsiderate and illegal parking and one of the major concerns raised was the condition of the pathways and gullies, with residents highlighting that there was an issue of flooding which was either caused by or exacerbated by blocked gullies. Councillor Hay expressed the view that the County Council cannot be so financially constrained which precludes them from taking pride in the towns and villages. She advised members that Councillor Marks has started a petition to put forward to the County Council which at the current time has 1763 signatures and she urged all members to engage with their residents and to urge them to add their names to the petition. Councillor Hay stated that she will support the motion.
- Councillor Count stated that the Highways and Transport Committee at the County Council were advised about a pilot project being undertaken by Cambridge City Council with regards to dealing with weeds in a different way which could potentially lead to savings, however, in February the detail concerning the budget was released by the County Council which stated that there would be a saving of £150,000 made by stopping the use of glyphosate and as part of that they stated that they would spend an extra £40,000 engaging with Parish and Town Councils in the first quarter of the year which, in his opinion, was before the growing season commenced. He stated that a new policy was introduced in April 2023, and referred to the current state of the town and villages and questioned what they will look like in the future and he cannot see a future for a first world country that allows its street, roads and pavements to be left to evolve into such a state. Councillor Count stated that it would appear that the engagement process did not take place with any authority apart from Cambridge City Council who had advance notice as they ran the pilot and he did not receive any update on the pilot scheme, he took it upon himself to ask them for an update on what the outcome of the pilot scheme was and he was eventually advised that different methods were trialled to look at their efficiencies to remove weeds and now large weeds are being removed by hand and after that if required they will use glyphosate. He stated he has also been provided further information from the County Council with regards to the invasive weeds such as ragwort, with the first weed spray being undertaken imminently and they have confirmed that they will be using glyphosate and have clarified that it is safe to use with proper training. Councillor Count stated that it would appear that complaints have been received since April from the whole of the county and the Chairman of the Highways Committee has advised him that with any new policy there does need an element of fine tuning and Councillor Count stated that whilst he appreciates that, it has not stopped the number of complaints being submitted and the Director then issued a letter which explained that new policies need to be reviewed and it included part of the new budget setting cycle which comes in force until February and then April 2024. He explained that a questionnaire has now been sent to all councillors and, in his opinion, it is action which is being undertaken far too late and he has provided evidence of an active travel route in March that is on a blind corner, is for cyclists and pedestrians only and the path is now severely restricted for people to use and, therefore, users of the route are having to walk on the highway for safety reasons which he understands is now being investigated. Councillor Count stated that he is aware that the lack of weed spraying was undertaken as a cost saving exercise and now there is a significant issue and the maintenance that is now required will mean that any savings that were made will pale into insignificance when considering the repair works let alone the damage that will be caused by any flooding. He expressed the opinion that it is a diabolical policy that has been implemented and he thanked Councillor Patrick for his support as it is not a political motion. Councillor Count added that the town of March secured over £12,000,000 to change the town centre, and whilst not everybody agrees with the change, nobody he has ever met like the weeds that are now being seen and he stated that on behalf of the people of March he is grateful for the motion being brought forward and thanked Councillor Marks for bringing the petition forward, urging everyone to sign it in order to get the County Council to change their minds.
- Councillor Marks stated that he has recently been contacted by a resident whose home was being flooded for the fourth time, he went to the property and found that there was a gully which was blocked with weeds which he helped to remove. He stated that the residents have experienced four

flooding issues over the past three years and the human cost of that, in his opinion, far outweighs killing some weeds and cleaning out the gullies. Councillor Marks stated that there has been a great deal of slurry work undertaken which is a cheaper way of repairing the pavements in Manea, with the issue being now that the weeds are growing out in the middle of them and once the weather turns colder the frost will end up lifting the slabs which in turn will make them a trip hazard and he expressed the view that the County Council need to take action now to resolve the problem.

- Councillor Taylor stated that there appears to be confusion regarding the use of glyphosate and stated that if the weeds have not been touched for a year then there will be a period of three to four years to get rid of what is already in existence. He explained that glyphosate was originally manufactured as a wormer for cattle, and it was not until the final inspection took place prior to the licence being signed off, that it came to light that wherever the glyphosate had been administered to the cattle, the surrounding ground had been killed off so the manufacturer then realised that they could make more profit using it as a weed killer rather than a wormer. Councillor Taylor stated that there are some weeds such as brambles that will not be killed by glyphosate and other chemicals need to be used. He stated that he is pleased to see that there is so much support for the motion and explained that there is 5ml of glyphosate to 100 litres of water and, therefore, it is a very cost-effective chemical to use in his opinion.

**Council AGREED to respond to Cambridgeshire County Council and advise them of the contents of this motion and the desire to see cyclical spraying recommenced to suppress weeds on Fenland's roads, pavements and gullies.**

### **C19/23      MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR GARY CHRISTY**

Councillor Christy presented his motion regarding the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP).

Councillor Mrs Davis seconded the motion and Councillor Meekins opened the motion for debate. Members made comments as follows:

- Councillor Hoy stated that she was interested to read the letter from the Mayor of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority that was sent to the Leader of Peterborough and whilst there has been some ridiculing, in her opinion, he is a hero due to the fact that he is the only person who has been able to block a LTCP. She made the point that the Leader along with the Leader of East Cambridgeshire District Council have also been against it, but as they are outnumbered on the Board, the only person who can stop it currently is the Leader at Peterborough City Council. Councillor Hoy stated that the reason she feels that it is so important is due to the fact that, in her view, it is a poor document and in the letter it states that people have misunderstood it and should, therefore, read it. She made the point that if you go to the website called Your LTCP, it does not work, along with another link in the letter for the LTCP document. Councillor Hoy expressed the view that one of the issues that concerns her is that they advise that it is going to bring an increase in buses to the area but that is not correct and they appear to dislike cars so much and will make proposals which are damaging. She added that one of the proposals being put forward is to introduce a bus lane on the Elme Hall roundabout in Wisbech and made the point that there is one bus an hour which uses that stretch of road and there is a proposal to include a fast bus lane on a road which already suffers from severe congestion and will be limited to one lane of traffic. Councillor Hoy stated that she finds the proposal ludicrous and such proposals cannot be supported, need to be opposed and if such proposals are implemented it will only lead to more congestion in the Fenland towns.
- Councillor Nawaz stated that he attended a meeting in Huntingdon and, in his opinion, it is evident that doctrinaire politics are in place rather than pragmatic policies to address the real needs of the real people particularly in places away from Cambridge City. He explained that if you visit Cambridge Station, a clear queue of buses can be seen that are waiting for passengers, however, in Whittlesey it is the opposite, and a queue of passengers can often be seen waiting for 30 or 40 minutes which also do not appear to service the Whittlesey area after 7pm. Councillor Nawaz made the point that this causes problems for those parents whose children go to school as the bus timetable, in his view, is totally inappropriate and the train service which operates and stops in Whittlesey is also very infrequent. He expressed the opinion that a comprehensive plan is required which considers the needs of all the residents in Cambridgeshire and not just one particular area of the county which sustains the ruling group of politicians who appear to favour their political

constituency rather than the real concerns and issues of the residents. Councillor Nawaz stated that he will fully support the motion and endorses everything that has been said.

- Councillor Count stated that there is currently the Greater Cambridge Partnership which has failed to deliver their vision for the future, which was to deliver £80,000,000 a year and to produce a high specification strategy for Cambridge City and South Cambridge, including some outlying areas. He stated that the Mayor wanted to bring forward his Local Transport Plan, which relied on congestion charges to deliver some of his aims and objectives, however, that also failed. Councillor Count stated that the appointed Labour representative for the Greater Cambridgeshire Partnership has suggested that other proposals will need to be considered such as paying for parking and he expressed the view that it appears that the knee jerk reaction is to consider how to raise taxes. He made reference to a previous administration where the Greater Cambridgeshire Partnership was introduced and £30,000,000 a year was secured from the Government in order to deliver transport solutions and due to the amount of tax that this area pays into the Government the figure commenced at £20,000,000 and rose to £40,000,000 a year. Councillor Count explained that the Combined Authority was then formed, and they received £30,000,000 a year to deliver transport solutions, however, there are now two separate bodies receiving £70,000,000 a year and the only ideas coming forward appear to be deciding how to receive a further income from the local residents. He expressed the opinion that consideration should be given to spending some of the £70,000,000 a year to make a difference, with the Greater Cambridgeshire Partnership funding of £50,000,000 could be considered being put forward to improve bus services ahead of the congestion charging proposal which failed. Councillor Count stated that issues like these need to be highlighted and he stated that a local transport plan is needed but it needs to be based on sound and reasonable decisions. He stated that there needs to be a projection on what the money is going to be spent on which is something that everyone can unite together on to include Fenland, East Cambridgeshire, South Cambridgeshire, Cambridge City and Huntingdonshire, if it is all fair and equal because at the present time it is not fair and equal and appears to revolve around Cambridge City because of their unique problems which does not suit everybody else. Councillor Count stated that he fully supports the motion.
- Councillor Mrs Davis stated that she fully endorses everything that other members have expressed their views on and made the point that the whole transport policy appears to be in complete disarray which was evident when the contracts were all renewed for the bus routes. She made the point that there was one particular bus route in Fenland which did not know until the night before whether it would be operating a service the next day and this caused a great deal of anxiety for those people who did not know whether they would be able to get to work or get to school. Councillor Mrs Davis stated that information has become known recently which details that grants have been given to at least four bus routes which have just been approved and that funding equates to thousands of pounds so that trials can take place for on demand services. She explained that the one route that had caused the issues for the bus users she referred to previously would have been the ideal route for an on-demand service but as that route is in Fenland it was not selected and she feels that there is a complete disregard for Fenland in all policies and not just transport and, in her opinion, this needs to change.
- Councillor Christy stated that he has also found numerous errors with the GCP document which Councillor Hoy had referred to and from a transport perspective there are many innovative ideas which can be undertaken in Fenland and all that is needed is the funding in order to make that happen which is why it is important for the motion to be supported.

**Council AGREED that the Combined Authority Mayor should show some flexibility on this issue so that all of the Constituent Members of the Combined Authority can support a revised LTCP and work together in effecting its provisions and that this resolution should be sent to all Board Members of the Combined Authority and that FDC Members whom the Council has appointed as its representatives on the CPCA Board and its committees, and Officers who interact with the CPCA and CCC as Highways Authority, reflect the sentiment within this motion when interacting with CCC, or when representing this Council at meetings of the CPCA or its committees.**

## **C20/23      OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT**

Members considered the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report presented by Councillor Mrs Davis



as Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny panel.

Councillor Miscandlon stated that he was the previous Vice Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and he asked that his thanks be extended to all of the officers and members of the committee, and he looks forward to reading the annual report next year.

Councillor Mrs Davis thanked Councillor Miscandlon for his kind words and stated that it is a learning curve as the committee now comprises of newly elected members.

**Proposed by Councillor Mrs Davis, seconded by Councillor Miscandlon and AGREED to acknowledge the broad scope of the work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel during 2022/23.**

**C21/23      AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23**

Members considered the Audit and Risk Management Committee Annual Report presented by Councillor Miss French as Chairman of the Audit and Risk Management Committee.

**Proposed by Councillor Miss French, seconded by Councillor Mrs Laws and AGREED to note the work of the Audit and Risk Management Committee and its compliance with CIPFA's annual checklist for 2022/23.**

5.30 pm

Chairman