

Ruth Betson, District Councillor
Report to Cambourne Parish Council
5th March 2019

I usually stay as apolitical as possible in my reports, however having participated in an Extraordinary Council meeting as well as a normal Council meeting last week, both dealing with **vast** sums of money, I feel it necessary to report certain items that may be of interest.

Beverley Agass, CEO of South Cambs District Council

At an extraordinary meeting held on Thursday 23rd February (closed to press and public), Liberal Democrats agreed Mrs Agass leaving the Council with early access to her local government pension. In order for this to happen the Council will contribute £202,500 into the local government pension scheme towards the cost of her early retirement. I want to make it clear that in this closed meeting I voted against this decision and it is my opinion that this is a huge amount of council tax payers' money being spent for a member of staff to retire early. I am restrained in further comments that I can make on this issue due to it relating to employment but be assured that the Conservative group raised the grave concerns that we had about this large sum of money in the meeting.

Budget

This press release went out from the Conservative Councillors at SCDC:

PRESS RELEASE

Friday 1st March 2019

STARTS

Conservatives brand Lib Dem budget for South Cambs “irresponsible, secretive and high risk”

Conservative councillors at South Cambridgeshire District Council say the first budget put forward by the Liberal Democrats shows a lack of transparency and high risk financial planning.

“We always said that we wouldn’t oppose for the sake of opposing” says Cllr Peter Topping, Leader of the Conservative group, “however we see this budget as irresponsible and high risk. We are surprised that while the Lib Dems talk a lot about transparency they are not prepared to put their proposed investment decisions to scrutiny but prefer secret meetings. This is public money.”

The Conservative councillors voted against the new administration’s budget in full Council on Thursday 21st February 2019. They opposed it for several reasons, namely:

- £3 million pounds worth of cuts required in the next 4 years on top of the £2.5 million already identified.
- The investment strategy is high risk and short on detail.

- £100 million of borrowed money is being handed over to four individuals to invest in secret meetings.
- The Liberal Democrats intend to reduce the council's reserves by over 60% in the next 5 years.
- After spending £50,000 on hiring management consultants the Liberal Democrats now plan to spend £1 million on a top down reorganization.
- The Liberal Democrats voted down a bid to tackle fly-tipping across the district put forward by the Conservatives.

Conservatives put forward two amendments to the budget both of which were voted down by the Liberal Democrats. Cllr Peter Topping proposed an amendment that increased funding for tackling fly-tipping and keeping our villages clean, a key concern of many residents. An amendment from Cllr Heather Williams called for more transparency of the administration's investment strategy but this too was voted down by the Liberal Democrats.

ENDS

Contact

Cllr Peter Topping, Leader of the Conservative Group at South Cambridgeshire District Council, 07825 876582, cllr.topping@scambs.gov.uk

Next meetings

9th March – catch up with Cllr Philippa Hart, Portfolio Holder for Customer Service & Business Continuity

14th March – evening surgery

21st March – Scrutiny Committee

4th April – Council

Best wishes,

Ruth Betson

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