



West/Central Area Committee

(City Councillors for Castle,
Market and Newnham Wards)



8 January 2009 7.30pm – 10.10pm Minutes & Actions

Present: City Councillors: Simon Kightley (Chair), John Hipkin (Castle Ward), Tim Bick, Mike Dixon (Market Ward), Rod Cantrill, Sian Reid, Julie Smith (Newnham)

County Councillors: White (Castle Ward), Griffiths (Market) and A Reid (Newnham)

Additional information for public: City Council officers can also be emailed firstname.lastname@cambridge.gov.uk
The Committee Manager for West/Central Area Committee is glenn.burgess@cambridge.gov.uk

Members of the City Council have individual email addresses which are listed on the City Council website: www.cambridge.gov.uk/councillors/members.htm
Members of the County Council can be emailed: Firstname.lastname@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

09/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE ACTION

Apologies were received from City Councillors Rosenstiel and Zmura

09/02 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2008 were corrected to include (under agenda 08/51 page 7) the following as the penultimate paragraph:

A number of Members expressed disquiet about the implication that some of the proposed projects would introduce unwanted clutter onto the open spaces and requested that this be reported to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee

The Decision point was also corrected to read (*correction underlined*):

Decision: APPROVED (unanimously) to approve further investigation of the recommendations for the new West/Central and Citywide projects as stated in the report

The Chair agreed to sign the Minutes at the next meeting.

09/03 MATTERS ARISING

Agenda Item 08/50: outstanding Lead Councillors for approved Environmental Improvement Projects:

Lammas Land cycle parking: Cllr Cantrill
Marlow Road /Eltisley Avenue: Cllr S Reid
Lammas Land Pavilion: Cllr Smith

09/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| Councillor Smith | Declared a personal interest in relation to the Safer Neighbourhoods item as she would be raising issues regarding crime in the area she lived. |
| Councillor Griffiths | Declared a personal interest in relation to the Safer Neighbourhoods item as a Board Member of Jimmy's Night Shelter. |
| Councillor Cantrill | Declared a personal interest in relation to the Safer Neighbourhoods item as the Chair of the Board of Trustees of Winter Comfort. |

In order to ensure the best use of Officer time the Chair proposed that the Environmental Improvements Item be taken next. Members agreed with the proposal

09/05 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME 2008/09

The Director of Environment and Planning gave a brief introduction and update on the service.

It was noted that difficulty in recruiting Landscape Architects and Engineers had led to the current Environmental Improvements Programme not meeting its delivery targets. It was hoped that the recruitment of a new Project Manager and the reallocation of administrative support would result in an improvement in the delivery of the programme.

The Principal Landscape Architect gave an update on the approved schemes as highlighted in the report and noted that the Histon Road Recreation Ground Replanting Mound scheme had encountered a further slight delay due to the land being waterlogged.

The Committee was asked to make decisions on the following improved schemes:

Auckland Road/Parsonage Street footpath resurfacing and lighting renewal

The Principal Landscape Architect highlighted the three suggested options:

- 1) recreate the granolithic concrete path with an improved substrate to keep it stable at a cost of £22,230
- 2) construct a tarmac path at a cost of £18,240
- 3) construct the path with a resin bound gravel surface dressing (omitting areas of block paving) at a cost of £22,000

A letter received from the Planning Inspectorate on 30th December confirmed that replacing the path 'like for like' (option 1) would be the only option not to require a licence. Whilst there would be no cost for a licence, there would be a time implication.

In response to a question from a member of the public the Engineering Projects Manager stated that the footpath was being treated as part of the common.

Through discussion it was decided that a tarmac path (option 2) would not be appropriate as it was unsympathetic to the surroundings.

Members highlighted the importance of gaining views of local residents and felt that, as option 1 had not been included in the original proposals, the public consultation should be redone.

A member of the public commented on the very low response to the original consultation and suggested more publicity and improved public engagement. This was noted by Officers.

Decision: APPROVED (Unanimously) for further public consultation on the following two options:

- recreate the granolithic concrete path with an improved substrate to keep it stable at a cost of £22,230
- construct the path with a resin bound gravel surface dressing (omitting areas of block paving) at a cost of £22,000

With both options to include the addition of brass plates to celebrate the centenary of the path and delegated powers to Officers to progress the most popular scheme without further approval of the Area Committee.

Canterbury Street Traffic Calming

The Engineering Projects Manager stated that a number of options had been proposed as a result of the workshop held in March 2008. These included:

- Homezone
- Left turn access from Huntingdon Road
- Junction Tables at crossroads
- Partial road closure (between North Street and Histon Road)
- 20mph speed limit

All options had been discussed with the County Highway Authority but it was felt that the road closure and the 20mph limit would be only viable options. The Engineering Projects Manager pointed out that the road closure option would be subject to the City Council demonstrating to the Highway Authority that larger vehicles would be able to turn from Canterbury Street into North Street.

Homezones normally work better in new build areas with wider streets, left turn access from Huntingdon Road could be difficult due to the queuing on Victoria Road and junction tables could cause safety issues due to cars cutting corners.

Members agreed with this assessment and suggested that only the practical options were included in the consultation and that potential signage implications be taken into account.

The Engineering Projects Manager confirmed that funds were still available in the budget for the removal of signage and suggestions were welcome from Members.

In response to a request from Members Officers agreed to write a letter of thanks to the two members of the public responsible for the extensive work on the 'Homezones' option.

Decision: APPROVED (Unanimously) to authorise public consultation on the following two options:

- Partial road closure of Canterbury Street between North Street and Histon Road; (subject to the City Council demonstrating to the Highway Authority that larger vehicles will be able to turn from Canterbury Street into North Street).
- 20mph speed limit

Councillor S Reid recommended the following schemes be added to the programme:

- Traffic calming on Granchester Road
- Mobility crossings in Newnham
- Fencing on the path from Gough Way to Cranmer Road.

With the Committees approval Officers agreed to add these to the list of approved schemes and bring back to a future meeting for prioritisation.

Members also agreed with the suggestion from Officers that local disabled people could be involved in the identification of mobility crossing sites in Newnham.

09/06 OPEN FORUM

Q1) Is the Committee aware that young people are holding bonfires on Midsummer Common late at night causing damage to the turf and leaving debris such as furniture. The Authorities (Police and Fire) are not interested and there is confusion in the Council over Bye Laws and means of enforcement. It is illegal but who cares?

The Police Inspector confirmed that it was the first time he had been made aware of this but it would be recorded and looked into.

The Safer Communities Manager stated that he would work with the Police to look at this issue and that a new Enforcement Officer was now in post.

Q2) A Council Tree Specialist today walked the Committee of the Friends of Midsummer Common (FoMC) around the common and pointed out trees that were due to be felled. Given that we raised £1500 last year towards replanting, following necessary felling, we ask the Area Committee to ensure that Council funds are made available for replanting on this occasion.

Councillor Smith (Ex Cllr for Arts and Recreation) agreed to raise this issue with the Aboricultural Team and update at the next meeting.

**Cllr
Smith**

Q3) There was a commitment from the Council, when discussing cattle of Midsummer Common, to mow the common four times a year to improve the condition of the grass. I believe the common was mown only once or twice in 2008.

Councillor Smith (Ex Cllr for Arts and Recreation) confirmed that the common was mown by the Street Scene Team and was the responsibility of the Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services.

A meeting between the Councils Chief Executive, Executive Councillors and Lead Officers had been arranged to discuss green space issues across all portfolios and this topic would be discussed then.

Councillor Bick stated that the Management Plan issued by the City Council still needed to be formally adopted and suggested a Service Level Agreement between Street Scene and the Council could be beneficial.

Q4) What is the state of play of the Berkeley Homes Development on Newmarket Road?

Councillor Dixon stated that discussions may well be ongoing between the developers and Council Officers but until a formal application was submitted no further update would be available to the public or Councillors.

Q5) Proposed removal of Blue signs: are Councillors aware of the meeting in mid January with City Managers and County Officers?

Councillor Cantrill (Ex Cllr for Customer Services and Resources) confirmed that a meeting would be taking place between City and County Officers to look at building a framework for looking at all signage in Cambridge. Members of the Design and Conservation Panel and the Historic Environment Champion were also taking part and hopefully it would result in fewer signs around Cambridge.

Q6) Anti-social behaviour: before Christmas I had two bad experiences, with children present, involving unacceptable behaviour, excessive drinking and violence. If this happens what should we do – tell the Council or call the Police?

The Market Square is dead – I am sure the City Centre could be improved for family life. Why does this not happen?

The Safer Communities Manager advised that with serious incidents it was always best to dial 999. The City Council did not respond to individual incidents but there was a lot of joint working between the Police, the Council and other related stakeholders.

The Police Inspector confirmed that work was being undertaken with Licensed Premises and discussions ongoing about tackling these types of issues.

Members discussed the issue of the proposed 99p pint promotion at The Regal public house on Regent Street and raised concerns about the possible affect on ASB.

Q7) I want to ask some questions arising from the recent news that the council is owed £618K by the company which ran the online ticket sales for the Cambridge Folk Festival.

- **The Council's statement released a couple of days ago states it is taking legal action against SecureTicket UK. Is the Council also taking steps to obtain the money it is owed from SecureTicket's parent company Telsecure? The parent company might have greater assets and be better placed to reimburse the Council.**
- **In November 2008 a decision to buy software enabling the council to bring internet ticket sales for the Folk Festival in-house was made, however the record of decision made by Cllr Smith did not**

- **None of the papers for the upcoming Community Services Scrutiny Committee, where folk festival matters are to be discussed, or the Strategy and Resources Committee where the Council's future budgets are to be discussed make any mention of this money which is owed to the Council. Why not?**
- **Did an elected Councillor make the decision to use this company, or was the decision made by a junior official? Did whoever made the decision ensure the background of the company was investigated?**
- **Were Councillors aware they were dealing with a subsidiary company which was being kept cash-poor? Are the Council's contracts only with SecureTicket UK or are other members of the group of related companies also parties?**
- **Were those deciding to use this company aware Cambridge City Council appear to have been one of SecureTicket UK's first three customers?**
- **Were those deciding to use SecureTicketUK aware it was previously dormant and had another name : "Trendy Fashions Limited"? Following its reincarnation as SecureTicket UK it came out of dormancy and very shortly after that started taking the money for the Cambridge Folk Festival.**
- **The private investment company, operating out of the Cayman Islands, which is behind SecureTicket has protected their interests in the company registering a charge against it at companies house, they will now be top priority creditors. What did**

Cambridge City Council do to protect public money, and ensure the interests of Cambridge residents came high on the list of the administrator's priorities if the company is to be wound up? Was Cambridge's money required to be kept in a client account for example?

Councillor Smith confirmed that as this was a City wide issue and subject to legal proceedings and external audit it would be inappropriate to discuss it at this Committee. She believed that the City Council had acted correctly and had been a victim of fraud. It was however confirmed that the Councils money was required to be have been held in a client account.

Q8) County Councillor Griffiths informed Members that the County Council were having a Cabinet Meeting on 15th January at which proposals for a bus stop on Maids Causeway would be discussed.

Councillor Dixon confirmed that the Area Joint Committee had voted for the consultation on bus stops not to take place but the County Council had gone ahead anyway.

Councillor Bick raised and asked for the Committees views on the following proposal:

Marks and Spencer Motion

The Area Committee notes yesterday's proposal of Marks & Spencer to withdraw from the Grafton Centre. It registers its concern both about the withdrawal of the only foodstore located in that area of the city centre and about the cumulative trend of retail businesses leaving the Grafton/Fitzroy/Burleigh shopping centre. It calls on the City Council Chief Executive to make representations against the Marks & Spencer closure proposal during their consultation period.

And it calls on the Executive Councillor for Customer Services & Resources to convene a meeting of representatives of key interested bodies with a power to influence the vitality of the Grafton/Fitzroy/Burleigh shopping area in order to explore means of enhancing the attractiveness of the area, strengthening its marketing, addressing any obstacles to locate there, and safeguarding it during a period when there may be a number of vacant premises.

Such meeting to include senior officers from City and County Councils, the Prudential as major landowner in the area, key businesses, the City Centre Partnership and ward councillors.

Councillor S Reid supported the proposal and highlighted the ongoing discussions with Primark about occupying the old John Lewis site. It was felt that this would give a boost to the area and encourage more shoppers.

Whilst Councillor Hipkin supported the idea it was noted that, in the current economic climate, Marks and Spencer would make the decision purely on a commercial basis.

Councillor Cantrill (Ex Cllr for Customer Services and Resources) was happy to take the proposal forward and agreed that the meeting should take a broader approach than just the Marks and Spencer issue.

**Cllr
Cantrill**

Decision: APPROVED (Unanimously) – as above

09/07 WEST/CENTRAL AREA – SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS

A joint report had been prepared by the Police and the City Council. The Police Inspector introduced the report and gave an update on the main crime headlines:

- Fall in crime compared to previous period but higher than 2007. Positive December reductions against expected seasonal increase
- Anti-social behaviour (ASB) down in all wards
- “Shoplifting Squad” resulted in 9 in every 10 offences detected and over 150 offenders apprehended
- City Drug Operation has had a wide range impact with 19 arrests made

An update was then given on the priorities set at the last meeting:

Priority 1: Minimising Robbery offences across City West

- 30 incidents during period (Reduction on 2007)
- A spike recorded in August with the operation resulting in 4 arrests. No patterns recorded since
- 6 offences recorded since 1st December

Priority 2: Anti-social use of cycles in the Market Ward

- Using both education and enforcement successfully
- “Sort your lights” Campaign resulted in the Council fitting 150 light sets and issuing 202 tickets. Live media feed on breakfast TV

Priority 3: Theft of cycles / cycle parts across City West

- Figures comparable to 2007 (which was the lowest period on record)
- 58 incidents in December with 26 arrests made

Priority 4: Alcohol-related violent crime in the night-time economy

- Consistent with 2007: decrease on previous 3 months
- 19 "Operation Sodium" patrols conducted
- Street Pastors and Care Tent in place for support and prevention
- Dec 2008 reduction compared to Dec 2007

A summary on crime in each of the wards was then given

Market

- Crime down on previous period, but up on last year
- Cycle crime: downward trend
- Retail offending: against National trend
- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) down
- Violent offences down on last period and 2007
- Robbery spree in August: Successful operation

Newnham

- Remained one of the City's lowest crime areas
- Theft from motor vehicle spike early in the period with 39 against 16 in previous period
- Action against 4 offenders
- 1 offence in December since action
- ASB halved since last year

Castle

- Crime down
- Remains one of the City's lowest crime areas
- Reduction in cycle thefts
- ASB down

Q) Are the Police speaking with bus companies as some of the drivers are very dangerous on the roads. Magdalene Street is a hotspot for this and it is causing safety issues for cyclists.

The Inspector confirmed that this problem had been noted across the City and it was important to know the 'pinch-points'. It was agreed that it would be raised in any future engagement with the bus companies.

Q) It seems in your report that the cycling priorities have now been dropped – the 'war' is not won and without sustained pressure things will slip. Cycling down one-way streets is also a problem.

The Inspector stated that cycle crime was of ongoing concern for the Police and five more campaigns were planned throughout the year.

Q) Anti-social cycling is a huge problem with Regent Street being a hotspot.

It was again confirmed that this was an ongoing priority and Regent Street had been identified as an issue.

Q) Is there any update on the proposal to lock the Lamas Land car park at dusk?

The Safer Communities Manager agreed to follow this up and respond directly to Councillor S Reid.

Q) How are the conflicting priorities weighted – as obviously robbery is a bigger issue to some residents than anti-social cycling.

The Inspector stated that whilst it was very difficult, it had to be based on the *impact* of the offences and the available resources.

Q) As the Adams Road Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator I am surprised that I haven't been made aware of the recent spate of street robberies.

The Inspector apologised but stated that it was a relatively new issue and that local involvement would form a key part of the investigation.

Q) I have been told not to go out at night in the Adams Road area but it seems that the Real Tennis Club members should also be warned.

The Inspector felt that there needed to be a balance between keeping the public informed but not causing unnecessary alarm and panic. The quality and clarity of the information was imperative and it was important to note that this area was still one of the safest in the City.

Q) The report does not seem to cover all of the important issues which affect the policing of central Cambridge. What about:

- **The police wearing cameras (headcams) in Cambridge**
- **Giving police powers to security guards**
- **The expanded TASER deployment**

The Inspector stated that the role of Area Committees was to look at the more local issues affecting the City. The questions raised would however be taken away and a formal response provided. The Inspector went on to say that more often than not local priorities were not dropped but became part of the day job

Q) General questions were asked about carrying out small items of work like installing gates or fences and whether or not funding was available for this.

The Safer Communities Manager replied that capital monies were available for this type of work of up to £5k where this work would benefit the community as a whole. Further details could be obtained on Safer City Grants either by contacting him or by contacting the Community Safety Strategy Officer in the Safer Communities Section.

Through further discussion Members agreed the following as priorities for the next reporting period:

- Fear of violent crime in Newnham
- Anti-social use of motor vehicles and cycles across the City
- Theft of cycles/cycle parts across the City
- Discussions regarding the night time economy

09/08 DATES OF MEETINGS FOR 2009

The dates for Meetings in 2009 were confirmed as:

2009 – 5 March, 30 April

The meeting ended at 10.05pm

Chair