

Question 1.

Active travel and the deteriorating state and misuse of pavements in the city

Living Streets Cambridge recently published its report, from Risky Streets to Living Streets, detailing the results of a survey of over 300 residents about their experience of using their local pavements for active travel. The report clearly emphasised the deteriorating state of footways in the city and the barriers this presents to active travel, especially for the disabled, the elderly and for parents with young children. At the same time it revealed the importance of safe walking to economic activity in the city. Will the Council take the lead in organising a joint action task force charged with making our pavements safe for walking, by escalating repair and maintenance and enforcing regulations about cycling, the use of eScooters, and pavement parking in conjunction with the County Council and the relevant agencies?

Executive Councillor response:

Thanked the member of the public for raising the issue, had read through the findings of the report, particularly the concerns relating to pavement quality. Councillor Bird had raised this issue as Lead Councillor for Disability. The City Council was not the Highways Authority. Felt the County Council and Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) should lead any proposed Task Force. This had already been raised with the relevant members and officers.

The City Council was soon to recruit an Active Travel Officer and this new role would be responsible for developing and undertaking a programme of activities in Cambridge City to promote walking, cycling and the use of public transport across a range of settings including schools, colleges, workplaces, and communities.

It was anticipated that through delivery of projects, activities, events and other initiatives, the post holder would raise the profile of active and sustainable travel to support modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport and thereby help reduce the level of congestion within the Cambridge City area.

Supplementary question:

Felt some urgency with the issue and asked when work might start.

Executive Councillor response:

Conversations had started with GCP and the County Council. They were aware of the issues that Councillor Bird had been raising and also the issue which had been raised in the public question. Confirmed she would let them know when the Active Travel Officer was appointed.

Question 2.

I would like to refer councillors and officers to the following documents:

"Major Facilities Sub Regional Facilities in the Cambridge Area - Review of Evidence and Site Options" published Jan 2013
(<https://files.cambridge.gov.uk/public/ldf/coredocs/RD-CSF/RD-CSF-020.pdf>)

and

Indoor Sports Facilities Strategy published and approved on 02 June 2016
(<https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ielIssueDetails.aspx?IId=16302&PIanId=0&Opt=3#A115718>)

Please can Cambridge City Council, alongside South Cambridgeshire District Council commit to undertaking a review and a progress update of both of these documents, and reporting back to the relevant committees, with specific reference to:

- 1) A new large concert hall - mindful of Cambridge University's recent announcement on a centre of excellence for music performance
(<https://cambridgetownowl.com/2021/03/25/the-time-for-cambridges-new-large-concert-hall-has-arrived/>)
- 2) A new large swimming pool - mindful that this was proposed by the University of Cambridge for their NW Cambridge site but which is yet to be delivered - despite significant actual and planned population growth.

I'm not looking for a comprehensive and detailed answer, just a commitment that such a review will take place and report back in the autumn. Otherwise, what's the point on spending a significant amount of money on the strategies in the first place if there is no intention to deliver what the strategies identify as the needs of our city.

Executive Councillor response:

Could not promise a formal review but would read the reports in full so they could inform her future discussions. Noted that there was now an ice rink. A lot had happened since these reports were written. There were on-going discussions between the Councils and the Shared Planning Service about the commissioning of a Culture Infrastructure Strategy for Greater Cambridge. This would review the case for a new large concert hall taking into consideration the University of Cambridge's recent announcement. The Councils would be updating their Sports Strategies to support the Greater Cambridge Local Plan although timings could be delayed due to the impact of Covid. A Swimming Pool Delivery Strategy to 2041 was scheduled to start early 2022 (Duration to completion approx. 6-months). This would take into consideration a new swimming pool proposed by the University of Cambridge. It is the Councils' understanding that the University of Cambridge remains committed to providing a new swimming pool.

Question 3.

Question submitted on behalf of Friends of the Cam. Two years ago noticed trees started to brown off and did not have enough water. This was the first sign that the springs had dried up, rivers were being maintained by pumps. Had been interested in water supply ever since.

On the 1st of July the Secretary of State for the Environment declared Cambridge Water an area of serious water stress. The Stantec Report, commissioned by Cambridge City Council and published last November, found that 'there is no environmental capacity for additional development to be supplied with water by increased abstraction from the Chalk aquifer. As things stand there was no other water in Cambridge. Even the current level of abstraction is widely believed to be unsustainable'. In view of this, should the council support a freeze on all further development?

A separate member of the public wished to register their support for this public question.

Executive Councillor response:

For sites to have been included in the local plan, the water companies must have committed to be able to provide enough water to service these sites. They have not indicated that this is no longer the case.

There was no basis under planning law to withdraw planning consent. This was not an area where the precautionary principle could be applied. The responsible bodies needed to make clear statements of their inability to do what they had previously agreed they could do.

Stantec on behalf of the councils had produced a forecasting model that indicated the likely growth in consumption of existing local plan commitments over time. This recognised that not all of the growth within the adopted local plans would happen in the plan period (or even the new plan period to 2041). The conclusions suggested that growth in demand can be accommodated within the abstraction permits provided to Cambridge Water by the Environment Agency (EA).

Chalk streams were not adequately protected; potential damage to them were not planning grounds to alter planning decisions. The council was limited in what it could do. The designation as a water stressed area did not in itself change anything. It may mean Cambridge Waters' permitted extraction levels could be reduced when the licenses are renewed but we do not know that. That was a matter in the hands of the EA not the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and to date, the EA has not objected to, or advised the LPA that the planned growth in the adopted Local Plan should not be allowed to proceed.

Supplementary Question:

It was stated that the Cambridge Water Companies were consulted and that they could supply these developments. They can, but at what cost. Data from the Environmental Agency this year stated that Cambridge Water were over abstracting local rivers by 22 mega litres of water per day and Anglian Water were over abstracting chalk streams by 189 mega litres per day. Anglian Water spent 170,537 hours dumping sewage into the rivers in its area. There were unanswered questions from the Director of Planning. How could further development be supplied with water when water bodies are according to the Environment Agency already unable to support the ecology. Trees were drying up, ponds had been lost.

Executive Councillor response:

This was a very important issue. Was aware the speaker had collected information for the planning authority to include for the next local plan. There was more information coming out about research including water. Would try and keep the speaker up to date.

Question 4.

The proposed goal of building good relations seems at odds with punitive actions toward and eviction of Travellers last year. I have seen and heard city councillors speak of a 'process' when they are made aware of Travellers arriving in their wards, but it is very unclear what this process entails. I am concerned, given what we know about police racism locally and nationally, that this process involves the police in a way that causes harm to our Gypsy and Roma Travellers neighbours. This is particularly worrying in the context of the new Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts bill, which strengthens police powers. What exactly is the process for making contact with and supporting Gypsies and Travellers when they arrive in the city, who is involved in the process, and in the last two years to date how many contacts between council officials and Traveller groups who have stopped on Council land have ended in an eviction or Police action?

Executive Councillor response:

The City Council has/will consider a Motion on the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts bill this evening, and similar concerns have been/will be aired and debated.

Process with regards to unauthorised encampments including the impacts on the surrounding community.

The Council operates a protocol which has been developed to help manage the impact of unauthorised encampments. The protocol considers rights of Gypsies and Travellers, our Public Sector Equalities Duties and how to make an assessment of the potential level of impact on nearby and local residents.

The protocol aims are to:

- To establish effective communication between partners, and Gypsies and Travellers;
- To help strike an appropriate balance between the needs and legitimate expectations of members, residents, local businesses and other landowners, and Gypsies and Travellers;
- To set out recommended courses of action which local authorities, the police and other partner agencies should follow to provide an effective response to unauthorised encampments in the city;
- To develop a more consistent approach to unauthorised encampments across the city; and.
- To improve records of unauthorised encampments.

We have an Enforcement Officer within Streets and Open Spaces and they are the key point of contact and responsible for the liaison and contacting those present in any unauthorised encampment.

Each encampment is also considered in respect of the welfare needs of those present. We assess the reason for the visit, the intended length of stay, homelessness status, medical need, and access to services such as education and social care.

Each encampment location is considered on its own merits against criteria such as health and safety, traffic hazards, public health risks, environmental damage, and genuine nuisance to neighbours.

This needs to be a balance of need.

Any complaints or enquiries will be handled by council Enforcement Officer, who will inform the relevant contacts and partners, including local councillors and the Police. Where appropriate the council will share information about the encampment, arrange a joint visit to the site and discuss how the encampment will be managed and supported. We only involve the Police where there is suspected criminal activity.

In the last two years we have dealt with 16 unauthorised encampments, involving 6 family groups. This did not include the most recent encampment at Arbury Town Park. All of these have resulted in evictions after having followed due process and after a Court decision.

We have made temporary accommodation arrangements where and when asked. The Council published information regarding unauthorised encampments on its website.

Supplementary Question:

Was involved in a number of the evictions last year which moved a family of 38 people. The immediate response of the council was a s77 order. The Enforcement Officer was responsible for giving the order to the families. The family had nowhere to go, Cambridge had no transit sites. The family were then issued with a s78 order. Was involved with a colleague in challenging this action. No elected councillors came to speak to the people. Challenged the procedure; it was a hostile procedure.

Executive Councillor response:

Immediate response is to talk to travellers about their welfare needs. The next steps are to apply for a s77 notice and if the notice is not complied with then a s78 order is sought.

Are looking at with neighbouring authorities at potential for stopping sites. This was an on-going process. During the pandemic, a site was provided by the depot on Cowley Road for anyone who needed to self-isolate, funding was also available from the County Council.

Agreed there was a lot more work to do but the start of the process was a lot more welfare focussed.

Question 5.

Market Matters

On the 19th July a message was received from the Head of Environmental Services stating that the report on the market redevelopment to the scrutiny committee has been moved from Oct 2021 to March 2022. Also that the design of a potential demountable stall will be revisited and consideration given to the types of evening events to be held. Market traders have a list of community focussed event and social engagement activities we want to present in this extra time window.

However, the aim of this question is to point out that traders have had (1) A very poor 2020 with the majority of traders unable to trade for most of the year (2) A shut down in the start of 2021 (3) A phased reopening of the market (4) Some return to 'normality' on July 19th.

As a result of this some traders have had to use food banks in place of donating to food banks. The majority of traders have managed to survive by using their savings while retaining most of their staff. A very limited number of traders managed to operate throughout this period as they sell food and other essentials, even there the situation was abnormal and not sustainable being a 'roller-coaster' of over-demand crashing to very poor weeks and months. We are happy to have helped in this period and remain committed to selling local goods, supporting the local community and welcoming residents and visitors alike.

However, Market rents will return to 'normal' (currently they are ~20% lower than normal) in the near future based on foot-fall being 'only' 18% lower than a normal year.

Both market traders and many shop owners are aware that much of the footfall are local people unable to travel far and that we are still missing the large numbers of international tourists, students, conference attendees and other visitors. Records of takings have been supplied by some shops to Market Traders and these show that there is an income gap of 50% or so compared with a normal year (based on the last 5 years), the market overall sees this kind of income gap. Similarly any redevelopment will inevitably produce disruption and/or displacement of market traders.

Timing of the redevelopment is key to ensuring continuity for small local businesses and the incomes of many local families.

SO - can the council confirm that such factors will be considered in timing of any redevelopment, met people do not want this year to be immediately followed by another period of disruption AND can they revisit plans to return the rents to normal as will happen in the next 2 months.

Executive Councillor response:

Was aware of the impact of the pandemic on businesses in the city, including market traders. As you have referred to in your question the Council has provided a programme of specific support to Traders over the last year, both through grant funding and other measures such as rent holidays (*or rent free periods*) as well as pitch discounts. Council officers have organised a number of meetings with traders and will continue to do so to discuss future rent arrangements and consideration of timing of any future development or community use of the square which fit around the market.

The timing of any future market square development will obviously need to consider a broad number of factors including its place within the wider City recovery plans. Were still in the early stages of the project and were currently consulting on the concept design. The results of this would come back to Committee in March 2022. Depending on the outcome of the consultation may then move to the detailed and technical design stage. This would need to be consulted on again before any works start. Added to this still need to find the funding and a temporary location for the market. Was still a long way off the practical side of the work. Hoped life would have returned back to the new normal by then.

Question 6.

Good evening councillors,

I have a statement and question about **Skaters' Meadow Footpath**, which County Council Highways propose to close to motor vehicles to ensure the safety of walkers and cyclists.

Do you personally know the footpath, and have you used it at different times of year? I sent photos and a short summary to councillors by email yesterday and have received responses from some.

The footpath has been used for over 200 years, and the County Council Legal Department has established that it is legally a footpath, so motor vehicles have no legal right to drive and park on it. Historically, the Footpath has been a green welcoming entrance to Cambridge's iconic Grantchester Meadows, but in recent years, commuters, builders, campervans and local residents all seeking to avoid parking charges elsewhere have parked here, as well as visitors to the Meadows. Volunteers have formed a Friends Group that is recognised by the Council. They have watered saplings planted by the Council, and looked after the verges, sowing wildflowers to rewild the area and enhance biodiversity. Drivers have pulled up saplings to make space to park, destroyed signs about the rewilding project, driven over and pulled up protective fencing, and trashed rewilded verges.

Installing bollards as proposed by Highways upholds the law and prevents vehicles from driving and parking there, thus protecting footpath users and enabling the verges to recover. With the surface of the footpath no longer rutted by vehicles, it will be safer for all users, especially those with impaired mobility. Visitors to the Meadows by car can park for free on nearby streets (less than a 5-minute walk), ensuring access for all. Blue badge holders can park at any time without permits, and we suggest that 2-3 Blue Badge bays be placed at the end of Grantchester Meadows Road adjacent to the footpath.

The Highways initiative aligns with the City Council's policies designed to enhance biodiversity and support active travel over car transport, and would help address the Climate and Biodiversity Emergencies that the Council declared in 2019. The proposals from Anthony Browne, the MP for South Cambridgeshire, to convert Skaters Meadow Footpath into a

Pay and Display car park to fund management of the Meadows as a county park, are in direct conflict with these City Council policies.

Our Newnham Councillors have backed the Highways proposal. Can we depend on the City Council to support them and make clear to the County Council that no legal footpath in the city should be turned into a car park?

Executive Councillor response:

The City Council does not own this land and the consultation and the decision to bollard the existing public footpath/ right of way is one being taken by the County Council.

The City Council has supported the County with enquiries with neighbouring landowners. The land ownership remains unknown. The County Council will consider a petition and recommendations on the use of bollards to stop using of the designated footpath for vehicles at the Highway and Transport Committee on the 27th of July¹. Committee decision will help to allow people to express their views without feeling pressured.

The City Council recognises the significant importance this site has for our residents in relation to access to nature and open space and also the benefits this site has helped deliver through the Pandemic. We are happy to support where we can in reaching a decision on the use of the land in question.

Supplementary question:

When casting their votes, many Cambridge residents really want to know where the Council are on the Climate and Biodiversity Emergency. So, my follow up question is whether the Council is serious about the Climate and Biodiversity Emergency, if our Council Executive leaders are going to show decisive leadership or pay lip service to the emergency, and if our leaders support the rights of the pedestrian and sustainable travel on historic footpaths in line with Council policy vs the desire of motor vehicles drivers to park anywhere, regardless of the impact on the environment?

Executive Councillor response:

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https://cambridgeshire.cmis.uk.com/ccc_live/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/1709/Committee/62/Default.aspx

Of course footpaths should not be turned into car parks, but land use changes over time and different people benefit in different ways from these differing uses. It is clear that the land at Skater's Meadow has been used by people with access needs to park vehicles so that they can get to the meadows and the river, but it is also the case that the area of land in question is properly a footpath, that the parking there has been abused by some, and that the biodiversity in the area will be enhanced if bollards are used to limit vehicle access.

This is a decision for the County Council, as the City Council does not own this land. The County will be considering a petition and recommendations on the closure of this land at the Highway and Transport Committee on the 27th of July, and we will support the decision they make as the responsible authority.

Question 7.

Will the City Council commit to ringfence funding to build Traveller sites within the boundaries of the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Team? Will you also commit to working with neighbouring authorities to safeguard against the displacement of Cambridgeshire's permanent Traveller communities due to gentrification and detrimental consequences of local development projects?

Executive Councillor response

The Council has commissioned and is committed to the completion of a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment and we wish for this work to be allowed to conclude to establish where there is an identified need and make any recommendations.

Having the data and information from the Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment will help the Council make the correct decisions and allocated the necessary funding.

We will of course in the interim continue working with neighbouring Councils to explore solutions in the anticipation that the Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment may identify a need.

Question 8.

Paid promotion of activities or products that are potentially harmful to mental or physical health or the environment, such as junk food,

gambling, alcohol or the most polluting forms of transport, are very common on our television screens, radios, social media feeds and across a variety of out of home advertising media. Here in Cambridge, I have noticed in particular that there are many, many adverts for junk food on billboards and at bus stops.

There is a strong precedent for precluding such forms of advertising. Most forms of tobacco advertising and sponsorship were banned from 2003.

I learnt recently that several other councils have developed more ethical advertising policies, recognising both the public health benefits and potential savings to the public purse through restricting advertising of harmful products. Liverpool passed a "Low Carbon Advertising Policy" motion in January of this year. Bristol **Bristol City Council** became the first local authority outside of London to ban advertising for junk food, gambling and payday loans on ad sites it controls. In December last year, **Amsterdam** municipality voted to end advertising for petrol and diesel cars, airlines and fossil fuel companies. Amsterdam implemented this ban on its transport network in May 2021. And in Norwich, the Labour-run council unanimously voted in June 2021 to limit harmful categories of advertising and sponsorship such as gambling, junk food and environmentally-damaging products, through developing an ethical advertising policy/. Since 2019, Transport for London has banned junk food ads on its transport, and several London councils have followed suite since then.

As a Cambridge resident, living near Newmarket Road, I've noticed that McDonalds has placed a LOT of adverts at bus stops which are of course heavily used by school children. The UK has one of the highest rates of childhood obesity in the UK, and it's the NHS which has to pick up the pieces when heart conditions, diabetes etc results. It's a similar story with air pollution: as many as one in five cases of asthma in children in the UK is linked to traffic fumes and other pollution*. It's great to see Cambridge council officers working hard to encourage active travel in our city, and get people cycling and walking - but the council's messaging and investment in this is undermined by car ads.

Will the city council develop an ethical advertising policy which avoids products that are potentially harmful to our communities advertising junk food, alcohol, gambling and damaging products etc. , building on the motion drafted by Norwich Council? <https://cmis.norwich.gov.uk/Live/Document.ashx?czJKcaeAi5t>

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*<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/health/child-asthma-air-pollution-uk-nitrogen-dioxide-children-lancet-a8865016.html>

Executive Councillor response:

The City Council has an interest in an aged contract ²relating to the supply of bus shelters and therefore the advertising within them. The current contract does not permit, political, religious, tobacco or car advertising.

This contract is currently subject to a review and negotiation with the County Council and the discussion is currently centred around how to achieve the best outcomes from any renewed arrangements. The current contract can be terminated by either party with 12 months written notice.

The County Council will be the lead on any new contract, and we would be happy to consider an ethical advertising policy with them.

² The City Council was contracted to the County Council in what is known as a reverse agency agreement at the time the current contract was negotiated

SCHEDULE 6

NO POLITICAL ADVERTISING ANYWHERE IN THE AREA

NO RELIGIOUS ADVERTISING ANYWHERE IN THE AREA

NO TOBACCO ADVERTISING in close proximity to and clearly visible and identifiable from within buildings or boundaries of schools, places of education or playgrounds predominantly used by persons under 16 years of age, nor adjacent to entrances and exits or the pavements forming the boundaries to such schools, places of education and playgrounds, as may be amended from time to time by written agreement between the parties, or upon an item of Street Furniture where the parties agree in writing that any such advertising would be inappropriate

NO CAR ADVERTISING if such advertising contains material which explicitly promotes car use to the detriment of cyclists, pedestrians or the use of public transport.

Question 9.

We know that there are serious material issues affecting Gypsy and Traveller life expectancies and opportunities. For example, recent research showed that 74% of GP surgeries refused registration to nomadic patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. Good relations depend on the provision of adequate support for Gypsies and Travellers, including for example site provision, access to schools and medicine where needed. What concrete actions will you take to build good relations with the Gypsy and Traveller communities in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire?"

Executive Councillor response:

The Council has agreed to express strong concerns about the provisions in Part 3 and Part 4 of the PCSCB Bill, which will have a significant impact on the UK Government's adherence to its international and domestic human rights obligations and which will also affect relations and trust in Cambridge with Gypsy and Traveller communities.

The Council has also agreed to stand in solidarity with Traveller and Gypsy communities in Cambridge and continue to build trust and good relations with them.

We will write to the Home Secretary to express strong concerns about the provisions in the PCSCB bill which impact on civil liberties including the right to protest and peaceful assembly and in relation to the provisions targeting Gypsy and Traveller communities.

We will continue to work with neighbouring local authorities in Cambridgeshire to find solutions where it is found that there is a lack of legal sites and stopping places for Gypsy and Roma Traveller communities.

And we identify opportunities to work with the police to find best practice solutions to supporting Gypsy and Traveller communities when no legal site places are available and to enable them to move to safe stopping places.

Question 10.

I raise concerns about the way in which this very important public project has been managed and presented to you, and at the Council's failure to involve the public properly in the Market Square project, which is a matter of concern for all Cambridge people and their councillors.

I welcome 2 things:

- 1) The improving dialogue between the Council and the market traders, notably that the officers are at last talking to each trader individually; and
- 2) The postponement of the Market Square report until March 2022, after the trials of the market stalls.

BUT

- 3) Can the officers please confirm by when they will have completed their current 1:1 meetings with all 150 Market Traders?
- 4) These meetings, which are essential to understand the traders' needs) should have been part of the RIBA Stage 1 briefing process.
- 5) The draft Concept Design on which the Council has been consulting is premature in the absence of this vital evidence of the traders' needs.
- 6) Both the draft Vision and the draft Concept Design are also premature in the absence of feasibility assessments, to establish which of the range of potential alternative activities set out in the Council's "wish-list" (and in question 17 of the public consultation) have realistic potential for the draft Concept Design.
- 7) All the above information is required as part of RIBA Stage 1 "Agree the brief and establish that the proposals can be accommodated on the site" – but has not been done. Instead, this

project, which I can only describe as half-baked, is being presented as a Stage 2 Concept Design.

- 8) What's also missing from all of the above is the PUBLIC, as key users and ultimate clients for the Market Square project.

Turning to the extended Public consultation:

- 9) The questionnaire is very partial (for example there is nowhere in it for residents in or near the Market Square to register their particular interest);
- 10) The trial stalls which Councillors promised would be on site during the consultation only arrived on 14 July, a week after the scheduled end of the consultation;
- 11) Responses received before 14 July will not have had the chance to consider the potential stalls;
- 12) Both the main consultation and the extended consultation and stalls have been very badly publicised to users of the Square. Try walking around the Square and looking for a poster!
- 13) The Market Square Consultation page doesn't link the demountable stalls survey
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Demountable-stall-trial>
- 14) For all these reasons, the consultation responses will need to be treated with a very large pinch of salt.

What is missing from all of this is any real public engagement in the Vision for the Square, and its surroundings. I hope the Council will use the time until March 2022 not only to pursue the vital practical feasibility issues, but also to involve its public actively in visioning exercises for their Market Square and its surroundings.

Executive Councillor Response:

We welcome your comments about improved communications. We believe that the current consultation has been widely promoted through media and other routes as outlined in my response to your question at Environment and Communities committee, and that there are plenty of opportunities to feedback, including an initial view of the demountable stalls trial, by the extended deadline of 31st July. There will also be further opportunities for stakeholder feedback as more detailed work on the wider city centre recovery is developed, and the project itself progresses.

The proposal to postpone the next report is to help ensure that we have fully considered the points you and others have raised at Council and Committee meetings. Senior Council Officers have met with you and I

know there are further meetings being planned and I would like to suggest that they pick up more detailed consideration of your points at those meetings. The Chief Executive also met with you on 2nd July for a tour of the market and to have an initial discussion of the issues raised in your questions. CEO and other senior officers have offered a subsequent meeting to you and other key market stakeholders to discuss the issues raised in more detail.

Some of the points you have asked here, have been superseded or are out of date following officer engagement with market traders and recent council announcements.

Question 11.

While welcoming Cllr Healy's Motion on the Policing Bill to be put to the full Council meeting on Thursday, 22 July 2021, it comes at a time of grave concern for the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities living within Cambridge and travelling through it. **This Bill will pass.** Its second reading on the 5 July passed in the House by 359 to 263 and will eradicate nomadic life in Britain – this despite the fact it is opposed by the majority of police forces in the country. What is of critical importance, therefore, is what the Council resolves to do in Cambridge. The precedents are not encouraging. To have a Labour Council chasing and evicting an extended family group of Travellers composed of 18 adults and 20 children around Cambridge last summer, is not a good look.

You do not have to wait for the results of a Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA) to recognise need, which only seeks to identify need for permanent sites. Yet the lack of permanent and transit sites is a continual source of flash points between the Gypsy and Roma Travellers community and the settled population of Cambridge. Travellers have a close relationship with Cambridge due to the importance of the 800 year-old Royal Chartered Midsummer Fair within their culture – it is not an 'event' but a gathering of the tribes. Until the Council challenges the systemic racism towards this community and within itself, there will be no improvement in this relationship.

Question: With the imminent threat of the criminalisation of trespass, will the Council now prioritise, with immediate effect, the provision of transit sites in and around Cambridge through the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Team?

Executive Councillor response:

The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment work should be allowed to conclude to establish where there is an identified need and make recommendations. Transit sites, although they should be considered, may not be the best solution. They take up land (which we have not got at this time) and can be expensive to provide and manage. They can also become more permanent if there is insufficient provision elsewhere, therefore for this reason having the data and information from the Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment will help the Council make the correct decisions.

We will of course in the interim continue working with neighbouring Councils to identify transit sites in the anticipation that the Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment may identify a supply and demand need.

Question 12.

I'm very glad to see that Cllr Healy has put forward a motion to this meeting with the goal of putting pressure on the national government to fulfil their human rights obligations with regards to Travellers. However, the council also has human rights obligations to Gypsy and Roma Travellers communities at a local level, and they have repeatedly broken these with Traveller evictions during a pandemic that has disproportionately affected Gypsy and Roma Travellers people both directly and indirectly. Speaking as an infectious disease epidemiologist, evictions and a lack of access to safe, adequate, and legal sites are dangerous to public health. Will Council commit not to evict any more Travellers who stop on public land until adequate sites have been provided and access to health services ensured for Gypsy and Roma Travellers communities?

Executive Councillor response:

There was previously no provision for Gypsy and Roma Travellers households to self-isolate in Cambridgeshire. Public Health (PH) recommend that provision should be made for a site where people could be directed to self-isolate, to manage the risk to themselves and to others. The City Council identified and offered a site for this purpose. This site is now modified and available should it be required by us and neighbouring local authorities

A letter dated 10th November 2020 from the Minister for Communities suggested that Local authorities may want to reassess the support that is required in local areas for Gypsies and Travellers during the current national lockdown, to ensure public health advice can be followed.

Prior to this letter, key stakeholders from across the County had met and discussed self-isolation sites for the Gypsy and Roma Travellers community.

The Vulnerable People Group at the County Council agreed a recommendation to prepare the site, and to fund this work from County COVID specific budgets, to make it available county-wide, and with the City Council's agreement.

The Council operates a protocol which has been developed to help manage the impact of unauthorised encampments. The protocol considers rights of Gypsies and Travellers, our Public Sector Equalities Duties and how to make an assessment of the potential level of impact on nearby and local residents

Each encampment location is considered on its own merits against criteria such as health and safety, traffic hazards, public health risks, serious environmental damage, and genuine nuisance to neighbours and proximity to other sensitive land-uses.

Each encampment is also considered in respect of the welfare needs of those present. We assess the reason for the visit, the intended length of stay, homelessness status, medical need, and access to services such as education and social care.

The Council only evicts where it is deemed proportionate and reasonable and after having made full and through assessments of welfare and impact.

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