



# **CAMBRIDGE** CITY COUNCIL

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Public question for 19 October Full Council meeting

Question 1

\*I declare an interest in having organised democracy and citizenship workshops on a 'pay what you feel' basis. Please also refer to my PQ to Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee at <https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=475&MId=4268> and the response from councillors, plus my PQs to East Area Committee and the debate councillors had (See the video here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7rguMwVj00&t=57m20s>).

Re the motion at 6a by Cllr Tim Bick on Unitary Councils, **please could I ask Cambridge City Council to discuss with its partner councils what co-ordinated actions it could take to help educate residents about how our city and county function and malfunction.**

The feedback that I have had from the first workshop I hosted at Rock Road Library corroborates the statement in the motion 6a that "This fragmentation frequently leaves our residents confused about the location of responsibilities and accountability."

Although I have further events lined up, I do not have the capacity to run such events for the entire city on a 'pay what you can afford' basis - whether barriers be the costs of event hire to the efforts needed to advertise the events when the fragmentation of, and costs of advertising on social media means that fewer people find out about such things compared with a decade ago.

While I'm happy to contribute towards such efforts, it's something that needs to be led by local government rather than well-meaning volunteers.

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Item

## **REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE- RECOMMENDATIONS FROM GOVERNANCE REFERENCE GROUP 9/10/23**

**To:**

Civic Affairs Committee 18/10/2023

**Report by:**

Robert Pollock, Chief Executive

Email: robert.pollock@cambridge.gov.uk

**Wards affected:**

All

### **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this report is to consider recommendations from the Governance Reference Group (GRG), a non-decision making body, for Council to consider on 19 October 2023.

### **2. Recommendations**

To recommend to Council:

- To pause area committee meetings for two cycles (approximately half a year) after November/December 2023. (para 3.3-3.5)
- That Council Procedure Rules (Appendix A2 Rules of Debate on the Budget) is amended to change the length of speeches per group from up to 45 minutes to up to 15 minutes, and to note that the Council meeting on 15 February 2024 will deal with all agenda business and the scheduled 'follow on' Council meeting date of 29 February 2024 is therefore no longer required. (para 4.3)

- To change the deadline for Oral Questions from midday before the day of a Council meeting (noon two days before for the Annual Meeting) to the Friday before-ie the same deadline as Written Questions. To limit the number of Oral Questions for consideration at any meeting to 12 and that a majority of those received are to come from opposition councillors. The Mayor will have authority to allow additional questions deemed to be of an urgent nature. (para 4.4)
- Public Questions (except for Planning Committee) to be received in writing, in full, by noon two days before a meeting, not read out, with a Councillor reply of up to two minutes, a public supplementary of up to two minutes and a councillor reply to that of up to two minutes. (para 4.5)

### 3. Background

- 3.1 On 20 September 2023 this Committee considered and agreed the terms of reference of a Councillor working group (GRG) and its work programme and indicative timeline.
- 3.2 On 9 October 2023, the GRG met to consider further Area Committees and 'quick wins' to smooth and make more effective some of the Council's procedures and processes.

#### **Area Committees**

- 3.3 GRG considered on 11 September and then again on 9 October (see appended report), the current position for Area Committees. GRG concurs with one of the Centre for Public Scrutiny's recommendations (from February 2022) that Council should pause holding Area Committees, but that should be after the November/December cycle of scheduled meetings and the pause should be for the following two cycles ie until September 2024. GRG had considered an immediate pause, however, there is an already planned for round of Environment Improvement Programme Grants to be consulted on (but not decided, as

Area Committees by nature of being on-line cannot make decisions). This also gives more notice of the pause.

- 3.4 During the pause, GRG has asked that officers keep it updated on progress for options of alternative arrangements, which GRG will consider as part of its future work.
- 3.5 GRG noted that the Liberal Democrat members did not support a pause.

#### 4. **Council Procedure Quick Wins**

- 4.1 GRG considered individual Councillor suggestions for what was badged as a 'quick win'. These were suggestions that would require minimal resource to implement, no adverse effect on our governance-more a change in custom and practice to benefit (primarily) Councillors but also those engaging with the Council's democratic practices.
- 4.2 GRG recommends changes to the Council Budget debate, Oral Questions at Council and Public Questions to Meetings (other than Planning Committees).

##### Council Budget Meeting

- 4.3 The Budget Meeting has separate rules for debate. These allow for each political group to speak in introducing its budget, or alternative budget, for up to 45 minutes. GRG recommend that this is reduced to up to 15 minutes per political group. GRG believes that this will enable the 15 February 2024 Council meeting to deal with all agenda business rather than the adjourned meeting approach (ie two dates but one meeting) which had been used in the budget cycle 2022 and 2023.

##### Oral Questions

- 4.4 Some members proposed deleting Oral Questions as a Council Agenda Item. However, GRG recommends a limit of up to 12 oral questions per Agenda. A majority of those received should be from opposition councillors (and that the number of opposition questions should be in proportion to political group size). GRG also agreed to an earlier deadline so Oral Questions will be submitted by noon on the Friday before the Council meeting, as is the case for Written Questions. The

Mayor has the authority to allow Oral Questions deemed of an urgent nature.

## Public Questions

### 4.5 GRG recommends changes to the scheme as follows:

- all questions must be in writing in full to allow for publication before the meeting
- the question will not be read out
- an answer will be given (2 minutes)
- a supplementary may be asked (2 minutes)
- an answer will be given (2 minutes)

No change to submitting public questions by noon two days before the meeting and up to 30 minutes allocated to public question time.

Some members requested that if questions are of a similar topic then the members of the public are grouped together as far as possible. Officer do try to arrange this, within the boundaries of sharing personal data and individual member of the public preferences.

### 4.6 GRG considered other submitted quick wins, but there was no agreement and these will need to be considered further covering:

- Notice of Motions
- Use of an earlier guillotine for Council Meetings
- Changing the time of the Annual Council Meeting

## 5. Implications

As part of its on-going work programme, GRG will be monitoring the implications of the changes proposed in this report and report back to Civic Affairs Committee as appropriate.

## 6. Appendices

Reports to GRG on Area Committees 11.9.23 and 9.10.23

## 8. Contact

[Robert Pollock@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:Robert.Pollock@cambridge.gov.uk), Chief Executive.

## **Governance Review Group 9 October 2023**

### **Area Committees-update**

At its meeting on 11 September, GRG considered a paper on Area Committees (attached again for reference) and Members at the meeting agreed to consult their Groups further on whether to pause area committees.

Since writing the report for 11 September it has been highlighted that the Council is in the process of preparing its Environmental Improvement Programme 2024 with the intention of reporting to Area Committees in November/December for consideration prior to an Executive Councillor decision (as in 2022). This has been the intention since the request for applications was promoted in June (on news releases and on the Website).

An option to pause after November/December cycle is therefore recommended, if the principle of a pause is supported.

A submission has been received from the Lib Dem Group since the last meeting for GRGs attention (copied below).

**GRG is requested to consider pausing Area Committee meetings for two cycles following the next cycle (November/December).**

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### **Extracted Notes of GRG 11 September 2023**

#### **3. Area Committees**

Subjects discussed included:

- i. The need to articulate options and alternatives to Area Committees (via community engagement, consultations etc.)
- ii. The potential to engage external organisations to support producing an options appraisal for alternative forms of neighbourhood engagement.
- iii. A desire to ensure we get a broad scope of feedback from a wider demographic – perhaps by targeting and a more tailored approach to obtaining feedback - e.g. young people.
- iv. Consider, in future options, the value of engaging people on their terms, where they are

- v. If Area Committees were paused, this would take place after current (September 2023) round of meetings is completed.
- vi. Chief Executive Robert Pollock stated that it was important to not be seen to be limiting the democratic process, therefore important for members and officers to go away, consult people to explore a better way to engage residents. Then can come back with options for Members to consider at a future meeting.
- vii. Chair stated after discussion with Members that they would go back to their respective Political Parties to discuss the possibility of pausing Area Committees for 6 months while further options for possible replacement to engage residents are explored.

Lib Dem Group submission received since 11 September GRG

The Lib Dem group is keen to participate in agreement on potential development beyond area committees, but does not accept that they should be halted before the follow-on is ready to go. There are important aspects of ward councillor visibility and role in projects which should not terminate without new opportunities for similar.

One idea which we would like addressed in the officer briefing and analysis on this is the following:

Annual Ward Public Meetings to take place between June and October to focus on councillors' objectives for their wards for the year and the opportunity for public feedback and discussion; including an open forum and an opportunity for an officer or speaker from another organisation for Q&A on a matter of current relevance. Simple background dashboard of ward environmental data provided. Run under the auspices of a mid-ranking officer, but not as a decision-making, minuted proceeding of the council; EIP and community grant funding to be allocated to ward councillors collectively to agree consensus recommendation to Executive Councillor for formal decision.

Ends – appendix follows

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## Governance Reference Group 11 September 2023- Area Committees and community engagement

### Introduction

GRG is considering area committees and community engagement as the first work stream under its terms of reference. The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny recommended in February 2022 that the Council consider pausing area committees whilst a review is undertaken which should align and build on wider work about how the Council engages communities and residents. .

The Chief Executive briefing paper circulated at the last meeting puts the question: how can the Council improve and strengthen its engagement with communities- including area committees or alternative models in the context of increasing financial pressures in local government?

GRG commented at its 3 August meeting that there is an opportunity for a quick win to free up member and officer resource to focus on developing a new approach as the Council continues to modernise and change the way it works under the 'Our Cambridge' programme.

### Decision:

**Officer recommendation:** To pause Area Committees for at least 6 months to allow officers and members to work with a range of colleagues and partners to research, review and determine alternative approaches.

(For discussion and determination)

### Background

Area committees have been part of the Council's structure since June 2003. Since May 2021 Area Committees have had no decision-making powers as Members agreed that they remain on-line being aware that by law councillor decision making is required to be made in person.

The responsibilities (and potential responsibilities) listed in the Constitution (see appendix) mostly are as set out at inception in 2003. The reality is that some functions listed are now decided elsewhere or were never delegated to Area Committees despite the provision being made available at the time.

There have been several reviews of Area Committees over the years most in an attempt to re-invigorate local engagement:

- July 2010 Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee - Community Empowerment and local participation in decision making [Agenda for Strategy](#)

[and Resources Scrutiny Committee on Monday, 5th July, 2010, 5.00 pm - Cambridge Council](#)

- July 2012 Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee - Area working-review of participation pilot [Agenda for Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on Monday, 9th July, 2012, 5.00 pm - Cambridge Council](#)
- July 2014 Environment Scrutiny Committee - Planning applications revert to Planning Committee from Area Committees. **This reduced the number of each area committee from 6 to 4 per year** [Agenda for Environment Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 8th July, 2014, 5.00 pm - Cambridge Council](#)
- September 2016 Civic Affairs Committee - Public Involvement in decision making [Agenda for Civic Affairs on Tuesday, 27th September, 2016, 6.00 pm - Cambridge Council](#)

May 2022 Civic Affairs Committee -retain virtual Area Cttees (and therefore non-decision making) whilst reviewing options suggested by Centre for **Governance and Scrutiny**. Very few local authorities have area committees. Many of those most similar to Cambridge, such as, Exeter City, Gloucester City, Ipswich, Lincoln City, Norwich City, Oxford City, St Albans, and Stroud do not; Sheffield City Council does though it is a unitary with a population of around 550,000 people.

**Case study: Stevenage Brough Council (c. 90,000 pop.)**

Stevenage disbanded its four Area Committee around 2015/16. After a gap of around four years, developed a 'Co-operative Neighbourhood' approach. This was part of a wider shift from a 'top-down' way of working with communities to one that put an emphasis on supporting residents to deliver what matters to them in their local area. ,

Since 2020, six Co-operative Neighbourhood Area plans have been developed with residents. Some officer capacity is provided to help areas develop local investment proposals and support delivery. Ward Councillors play an important facilitative role with residents as do local anchor institutions and community organisations.

The area plans reflect a strength or asset-based approach to working alongside and with local communities on their local priorities. A senior officer is attached to each Co-operative Neighbourhood Area plan to bring some accountability for delivery. The total annual budget spend, excluding officer capacity, for this six area plans may be in the region of £200k.

[Co-operative Neighbourhoods \(stevenage.gov.uk\)](http://stevenage.gov.uk)

### **Area Committee attendance**

The last collection of data for attendance in-person was 2016/17 when for four meetings of each area committee there was:

North: 41 attendees of which there were 10 speakers

South: 32 attendees 7 speakers

East: 10 attendees 5 speakers

West: 60 attendees 20 speakers

Viewing figures for virtual meetings can be seen on the Council's You Tube Channel- however it is not possible to establish who has viewed the recording. When broadcasting live the number watching has consistently been fewer than 10 viewers and some of those would be council officers.

There was a budget pre-covid of £6,800 to cover venue hire and audio for 16 meetings per year.

Other opportunities for community engagement

Residents have been 'voting with their feet' and using other channels and opportunities to find out about council activity in their area, express their views and opinions.

The Council provides other forms of local engagement in some areas of the city, some of which have been in place for a number of years, covering North West Cambridge, North East Cambridge and East Cambridge [Get involved in the new neighbourhoods - Cambridge City Council](#)

The local police who attend area committees bi-annually have recently started to hold their own separate community forums [Cambridge | Cambridgeshire Constabulary \(cambs.police.uk\)](#). Members of the public, and councillors, can attend to inform policing and community safety activity, and engage directly with the police. The police have indicated, in the light of this development, that they do not see attendance at Area Committees as essential – our understanding is that no other Cambridgeshire district has had an equivalent of Area Committees for community safety/policing engagement. .

The Cambridge Joint Area Committee has recently been reconstituted – this will provide a forum for councillor engagement on local and neighbourhood issues within its remit, including highways matters and local project budgets.

The council provides various other channels for community and resident engagement and input to council thinking, planning, priorities and projects, including:

- (i) Consultation and community engagement on specific policies and projects via CitizenLab which is much more engaging than previous on-line systems, and has generated much higher levels of engagement and input on local environmental issues. We have 2,960 registrations on [citizenlab](#) now.

The site launch July 2022. Top engaged consultations:

- 735 participants - [Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Order 2017](#)
- 528 participants - [Putting residents and communities at the heart of the conversation](#)

- 369 participants - [Environmental Improvement Programme 2022](#)
- 240 participants - [Punt Touting Public Spaces Protection Order](#)

Current consultations:

- [Environmental Improvement Programme 2023-24](#) (263 participants so far)
- [Inspired Living – A design code to enhance design in Northern Cambridge neighbourhoods](#) (209 participants so far)
- [Taxi vehicle age limits](#) (170 participants so far)
- [Impact of licensed premises](#) (5 participants so far)

(ii) citywide initiatives such as the “Cambridge Together” rich picture, which included an online and in person survey of residents’ priorities, the Budget Consultation and others regular receive several hundred responses from residents

- (ii) Public speaking at committee and Council meetings
- (iii) Tenant engagement (including tenant reps on Housing scrutiny committee, Open Door, etc.);
- (iv) Neighbourhood engagement on major projects such as housing redevelopment or neighbourhood priorities such as currently running for Kings Hedges-Arbury-West Chesterton.
- (v) Engagement in community centres and through Community Development and Housing teams.
- (vi) Cambridge Matters
- (vii) Website and social media
- (viii) Complaints, compliments and customer feedback channels

Our partners also hold local engagement events on specific projects and initiatives.

### **Decision making**

The only decisions currently for Area Committees are annual local grants, which for the last two years have been approved by officers following advisory comments from each area committee. **If area committees were paused for a period of time, officers recommend these grants revert to the Executive Councillor and Scrutiny Committee.**

Policing and safer neighbourhood reporting affords each area committee an opportunity to comment on, but not decide, local policing priorities. A representative of the Council’s safer communities team supports the police representative for this bi annual agenda item.

All other agenda items in the last 3 years have been information or consultation items, plus any public questions in the Open Forum. An illustrative example for agenda items of one Area Committee, the North is given. For the two years 2021/23

other than local police reporting (bi annual), environmental reports (bi annual), area grants (annual) the following agenda items were included:

GCP City Access consultation (all 4 area cttees)

GCP Making connections consultation (ditto)

Local Plan consultation (ditto)

New road classification consultation (ditto)

GCP updates on Fen Road/Histon Road/Milton Road

Residents' projects (using environmental improvement grant)

Herbicide free trial update

### **Constitutional implications**

There are none. Area committees currently hold no decision-making powers and the decision currently being recommended to be made is to pause, not remove, Area committees from the Constitution. A pause is recommended until such time as GRG, Civic Affairs Committee and if required Council, consider the conclusions of this aspect of the governance review project.

Officers believe it would be wise to plan to carry out a full review of the purpose of, and options for, neighbourhood/community engagement over the next six months , potentially involving external expert support such as New Local or similar organisation that has experience of empowering local communities.

## Article 8 – Regulatory and Area committees

### 8.1 Regulatory committees and sub-committees

8.1.1 The Council will appoint the committees and sub-committees set out in section 12 of Part 3 of this Constitution to discharge the functions allocated to them in that section.

### 8.2 Area committees

8.2.1 The Council will appoint four area committees comprised of electoral wards of the City as follows:

| Title of Area Committee | Comprising Wards  |
|-------------------------|---|
| East Area               | Abbey<br>Coleridge<br>Petersfield<br>Romsey                   |
| North Area              | Arbury<br>East Chesterton<br>West Chesterton<br>King's Hedges |
| South Area              | Cherry Hinton<br>Queen Edith's<br>Trumpington                 |
| West/Central Area       | Castle<br>Market<br>Newnham                                   |

8.2.2 Each City Councillor representing a ward within an area committee shall be a member of that area committee, including members of the Executive.

8.2.3 Each area committees shall invite county councillors for its area to be non-voting co-opted members.

8.2.4 Area committees may invite representatives from other agencies and groups to participate in the proceedings of area committees as and when appropriate, other than by way of co-option as voting members. Area committees are encouraged to involve:

- Representative(s) from tenants' groups and residents' associations
- Local young people's representative(s)
- Local Police representative
- Local voluntary sector representative
- Local education representative
- Local GP or health representative

8.2.5 Area committees have these principal purposes:

- ~~[To make decisions concerning executive and regulatory functions of the Council which have been delegated to them from Council decision 28.5.21 suspended whilst Area Committees meet virtually];~~
- To consider issues which affect their area;
- To act as a consultative body in respect of the interests of their area;
- To provide a forum for local residents to raise issues about their area;
- To facilitate themed discussions about issues of concern locally. Examples might include issues concerning crime and anti-social behaviour, traffic management/ congestion, public transport, health or education.

8.2.6 Powers and functions delegated to area committees are set out in section 12 of Part 3 of this Constitution.

8.2.7 The proceedings of area committees shall be governed by the Area Committee Procedure rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.

## **SECTION 11: AREA COMMITTEES**

Following a decision by Council on 28.5.21, Area Committees are held virtually and are non-decision making so section 11 only applies in an advisory capacity only.

## **11.1 Introduction.**

11.1.1 This part of the Constitution describes the Council functions for which area committees are to be responsible. Some are executive functions, and the delegation is made by the Executive Councillor responsible for that function. Some delegations relate to regulatory matters, and these are made by the Council.

11.1.2 The principal areas for which area committees have responsibilities are:

- Environmental Improvements
- Parks and Recreation Services
- Community Services (excluding management of the Council's housing stock)
- Streetscene Services
- Projects funded by developer contributions that relate to public art, the public realm, community facilities and open space
- Safer City grants

## **11.2 Environmental Improvements**

11.2.1 The relevant Executive Councillor may delegate a budget to area committees for the purpose of carrying out environmental improvements. In delegating a budget, the Executive Councillor may set criteria or conditions for its expenditure.

11.2.2 Area committees are not obliged to spend delegated capital budgets in the year in respect of which they receive them. It is open to area committees to "save up" capital budgets of this kind for environmental improvements.

11.2.3 Area committees shall have the role of investigating, identifying, consulting on and approving local environmental improvement projects, subject to their budget and to any criteria or conditions set by the Executive Councillor.

11.2.4 Area committees may be consulted on periodic reviews of Council policies and strategies affecting local environmental issues (e.g. the Planning Obligation Strategy, the Walking and Cycling Strategy).

11.2.5 Area committees may seek additional funding for environmental improvement projects, by bidding for other Council funding (for instance, 'Sustainable City' grants or City Centre Management grants). They may also seek additional

external funding, for instance through partnership schemes or other sources of grant aid.

11.2.6 Each area committee will be required to submit an annual report to the March cycle of the Environment Scrutiny Committee, setting out progress with schemes being dealt with by that area committee and identifying any projects where additional funding may be required so that a decision can be made about budget allocation. Such a system will also enable the Executive Councillor and Scrutiny Committee to consider planned 'rollovers' of budgets from one year to the next and to take an overview of environmental improvement work in the city.

### **11.3 Parks And Recreation Services**

11.3.1 Area committees will contribute to the scrutiny of local Parks and Recreation Services by considering parks and recreation issues which affect their area. In pursuit of this, area committees are asked to encourage links between themselves and local sports clubs and facility user forums, such as the Allotment Forum.

11.3.2 Area committees may recommend changes to the provision or management of local parks and recreation services, although any recommendations would need to be considered in the context of budgetary provision, overall parks and recreation policies and competing needs.

11.3.3 Area committees may be consulted on periodic reviews of Council policies and strategies affecting parks and recreation services (e.g. Parks Strategy, the Sports Development Strategy).

### **11.4 Community Development**

11.4.1 Area committees will contribute to the Council's community development role by promoting public awareness and involvement, making the links between local communities, Housing Associations, Tenants Groups etc. and the area committees.

11.4.2 Area committees may consider the provision of community facilities at neighbourhood level, identify any gaps, and make recommendations on priorities for development.

11.4.3 Area committees may be consulted on applications for grants for community activities in their areas, and may monitor the use of grant aid by recipients.

11.4.4 The Executive Councillor for Communities may delegate a budget to area committees to enable area committees to award grants for community activities in their areas. In delegating a budget, the Executive Councillor may set criteria or conditions for its expenditure.

11.4.5 Area committees may monitor and review neighbourhood services in their areas for children and families; e.g. Community and Neighbourhood Play Areas.

11.4.6 Area committees may extend the Council's engagement with children and young people by including a role for young people in the work of the committees..

## **11.5 Streetscene Services**

11.5.1 Area committees may consult local people about local priorities for streetscene services. (Street cleansing, public conveniences, grass cutting and maintenance of planted areas.)

11.5.2 Area committees may set local priorities for streetscene works subject to :

- Maintaining minimum statutory service standards;
- Accommodating changes within agreed budgets; and
- Not adversely affecting services in other areas.

11.5.3 Area committees may review and monitor the provision of streetscene services within their areas. They may make recommendations for changes or enhancements to the Executive Councillor or to service managers.

11.5.4 Area committees may review and monitor the provision of the Ranger Service within their areas. They may make recommendations for changes or enhancements to the Executive Councillor or to service managers.

## **11.7 Decision-making on Projects Funded by Developer Contributions**

11.7.1 Area committees are to be given delegated budgets and delegated decision making powers in respect of projects funded by developer contributions in the following terms:

11.7.2 The projects funded by developer contributions within the scope of area committees are projects relating to:

- Public Art
- Public Realm
- Community Facilities
- Open Spaces

11.7.3 Any decisions by area committees about the use of developer contributions for projects will be made in accordance with Council policy and budgeting procedures and, with the exception of public art, will take account of area needs assessments to be adopted by each area committee.

11.7.4 Funding from developer contributions will be given to area committees on the following basis:

- Where developer contributions derive from a planning application determined by an area committee, the use of contributions made for the purposes set out in paragraph 12.7.2 shall be determined by that area committee.
- Where developer contributions derive from a planning application determined by the Planning Committee, the Executive Councillor for the relevant service area shall determine the proportion of the developer contributions to be made available for the use of the area committee with a presumption that 50% of contributions made for the purposes set out in paragraph 12.7.2 shall be made available.
- If a developer contribution given to area committees is not committed to be spent within three years of receipt by the Council, the Executive Councillor may decide how the contribution is to be spent.

11.7.5 The area needs assessments referred to in paragraph 12.7.3 shall be made in accordance with the following principles:

- An area needs assessment will be produced every three years for each area committee and will be based on a desk top analysis.

The assessment will seek to do the following:

- Quantify the existing population within the area, split by age structure;
- Estimate new development taking place within the area over the next three years and assess its impact on the existing population;
- Summarise existing provision of facilities etc with commentary on the potential for enhancing or modernising them;
- Identify the need or scope for new provision of facilities etc or new projects.

The area committee will consult on its area needs assessment before approval.

The area needs assessment will be used by officers to develop and cost projects and to identify the extent to which they may be funded by developer contributions, for the purpose of preparing a report for the area committee.

This report will form the basis of area committee decisions to approve projects.

11.7.6 The area needs assessment may be used to identify projects not funded by developer contributions but funding for these would be subject to the Council's regular budgeting procedures.

11.7.7 Area committee decisions on public art projects funded from developer contributions will be made on the basis of officer reports submitted from time to time.

## **11.8 Safer City Grants**

11.8.1 The Executive Councillor may allocate a budget to area committees for making grants.

11.8.2 Area committees shall determine applications for grants in accordance with any policies or other guidance set by the Executive Councillor.

11.8.3 Officers shall advertise the availability of grants and invite applications. Applications shall be reported to the area committees, according to the area in which grant aided works are proposed, in March or April/May onwards depending on Area Committee dates, each year for consideration.

11.8.4 If funds remain after the "bidding round" described in 12.8.3, further grant applications may be made. These shall be determined by Strategic Director after consultation with the Chairs of Area Committees, relevant Ward Councillors and Opposition Spokes Persons as and when the applications are received and outside of Area Committees.

11.8.5 Any safer city grant allocation unspent by an area committee by 1 December in any year shall be returned to the Executive Councillor for reallocation to any area committee that has suitable unfunded grant applications for inclusion in the 'Citywide' pot for re-distribution to other areas, if appropriate applications have been made.

11.8.6 Grant applications that relate to the area of more than one area committee shall be determined by the Executive Councillor in consultation with the Chair and Opposition Spokespersons of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee.

### **11.9 Planning and development briefs**

11.9.1 New planning and development briefs (including Supplementary Planning Documents and planning guidance) on sites within the City boundary (but not within the Cambridge Fringe sites), whether produced by Planning Services or by a developers agent under the editorial control of Planning Services shall be referred to the relevant area committee prior to consultation, and prior to final adoption by the Executive Councillor, in place of current pre-scrutiny arrangements, other than:

11.9.2 (Where cross area committee boundary proposals are involved; or proposals related to major schemes involving more than 250 dwellings or 10,000m<sup>2</sup> of other or mixed floor space the default pre-scrutiny process will include presentation to the Area Committee(s) but the final recommendation will be from Development Plan Scrutiny Sub-Committee to the Executive Councillor).

11.9.3 Any Neighbourhood Planning proposals which may be promoted under the provisions of the Localism Act will need to be considered by Development Plan Scrutiny Sub-Committee because of their relationship with emerging policy development through the review of the Cambridge Local Plan

### **11.10 Tree Works**

11.10.1 The Executive Councillor may delegate decisions on tree works to area committees.

### **11.11 General**

11.11.1 The Council, its committees, Executive Councillors and officers may, from time to time, delegate such further functions to area committees as they judge appropriate.

## **Part 4EE: Area Committee Procedure Rules**

NB-Council agreed on 28.05.21 that Area Committees will continue to meet virtually. Whilst meeting virtually Area Committees are non-decision making. Any decisions following an area committee's deliberations will be taken by the relevant Councillor or Officer empowered to do so.

### **1. Appointment of area committees**

- 1.1 The Council will have the area committees set out in Article 8 of the Constitution.
- 1.2 The Council will appoint members to the area committees in accordance with Article 8 of the Constitution.

### **2. Role and Functions of area committees**

- 2.1 The role and functions of area committees are set out in Article 8 of the Constitution. The terms of reference of area committees are set out in Part 3 of this Constitution.

### **3. Meetings of area committees**

- 3.1 Area committees shall set their own timetable of meetings but shall, so far as practical, meet at least four times a year. Area committees shall usually meet between Monday and Thursday in the evening. However, area committees may choose to meet at other times of the week for business reasons.
- 3.2 Area committees may decide where their meetings are to be held but shall, so far as they can, hold meetings in locations that are reasonably accessible to people with disabilities.
- 3.3 That the Democratic Services Manager, after consultation with the Chair of the Area Committee, be authorised to call an additional meeting of an Area Committee if the business for that cycle warrants it.

- 3.4 That in the interests of better community involvement, additional Area Committees should, as far as possible, be held in the local area.
- 3.5 That the Democratic Services Manager, after consultation with the Chair of the Area Committee agree what time the additional meeting commences.

#### **4. Co-opted Members**

- 4.1 Each area committee shall invite county councillors where the clear majority of a County Council Division is within the area to be co-opted members. County Councillors may vote on all matters except for any decision relating to city council funding and the election of the Chair and Vice Chair. Area committees may appoint such other non-voting co-opted members as they choose. Co-opted members may be appointed either in respect of the whole work of the area committee, or in respect of specific aspects of that work.

#### **5. Quorum**

- 5.1 The quorum for an area committee shall be three members, not including co-opted members.

#### **6. Who chairs area committee meetings?**

- 6.1 An area committee shall, at its first meeting of the municipal year, elect City Councillors as Chair and Vice-Chair and shall be responsible for filling any vacancy.
- 6.1.1 In the absence from any meeting of the Chair and Vice-Chair, a City Councillor Chair for that meeting shall be appointed by the meeting, but shall relinquish the chair if the Chair or Vice Chair subsequently arrives at the meeting.

#### **7. Procedure at area committees**

- 7.1 Procedure at meetings of area committees will be governed the Council Procedure Rules which apply to committees, as supplemented or amended by these rules. Subject to these, and subject to compliance with the law, area committees may set their own procedure.

- 7.2 Area committees shall not be classed as regulatory committees for the purposes of Council Procedure Rule 51.
- 7.3 The Council's rules on public speaking rights and petitions shall apply to area committees..

## **8. Format of area committee meetings**

- 8.1 There shall be two main parts to meetings of area committees.
- 8.2 Area committee meetings shall begin with an open forum stage, at which members of the public may raise issues of concern or interest in respect of the local area. This open forum stage shall last up to 30 minutes but may be extended at the discretion of the Chair. The Chair may also impose a time limit on individual contributions to the open forum.
- 8.3 The second part of area committee meetings shall be formal consideration and decision-making by the area committee of matters within its remit.
- 8.4 Area committees may decide to hold themed meetings to discuss issues of local concern; for instance, crime and anti-social behaviour, traffic issues, public transport, health or education. In the case of themed meetings, area committees may vary the format described above, subject to retaining the formal part of the meeting described in 8.3 above.

## **9. Agenda items**

- 9.1 Any member of an area committee shall be entitled to give notice to the Democratic Services Manager that he/she wants an item relevant to the functions of the committee to be included on the agenda for the next available meeting of the committee or sub-committee. On receipt of such a request the Democratic Services Manager will ensure that it is included on the next available agenda.
- 9.2 Area committees may decide to add items to the agenda for future meetings, for instance to give further consideration to matters raised during the open forum stage of a meeting.
- 9.2 Further provisions for inclusion of items on agendas are included in the Council's Conventions for the Conduct of Council Business, which are set out in Appendix F of the Council Procedure Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution.



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# Agenda Item 3

| Number | From                  | To  | Question  |
|--------|-----------------------|---|---|
| 1      | Richard Robertson     | Executive Councillor for For Housing and Homelessness                   | Please can the Executive Cllr for Housing and Homelessness give us an update on progress with the private tenants' forum?   |
| 2      | Baiju Thittala Varkey | Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure  | How is Cambridge going to be affected by the new Building Safety Act?   |
| 3      | Russ McPherson        | Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services                  | Can the Executive Councillor give an update on the Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream project?  |
| 4      | Karen Young           | Executive Councillor for Communities                                    | Last year the Council set up warm spaces for those who have difficulty in heating their flats or houses. What plans does the Council have this year?  |
| 5      | Delowar Hossain       | Leader  | At the last meeting the leader of the council said he could not comment in response to my question on road closures in Nightingale Avenue, Bateman street, Luard Road, Panton Street, Story's Way, Carlyle Road, Vinery Road and would need to investigate this further. What was the outcome of his investigation? |
| 6      | Rachel Wade           | Executive Councillor for Community Wealth Building and Community Safety | The new Real Living Wage is being announced in less than a week by the RLW foundation. What is the council doing to ensure the new rates and the Real Living Wage is promoted to businesses and residents in the city?  |
| 7      | Tim Griffin           | Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services                  | Could the Executive Councillor outline how and why the focus for the strategic EIP funding has changed this year?   |
| 8      | Olaf Hauk             | Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services                  | Could the Executive Councillor for Open Spaces please explain why there has been no Trumpington ward walk-about as part of the herbicide-free trial?"   |
| 9      | Dave Baigent          | Executive Councillor for Climate Action and Environment                 | The climate crisis is being felt around the world and this year has been the hottest on record so far. What are we doing a council to reduce our own emissions and how is it going?   |
| 10     | David Levien          | Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services                  | Following several requests for street trading licences to be granted for Hobson Square Trumpington, can the executive report on progress to grant these?  |
| 11     | Dinah Pounds          | Executive Councillor for Climate Action and Environment                 | There has been some debate about whether we suffer from poor air quality in Cambridge. What is air quality like in Cambridge and what are we doing as a council to improve it?  |

|    |                   |   |  |
|----|-------------------|---|--|
| 12 | Elliot Tong       | Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services                  | <p>Although I know many residents look forward to the firework season, for others its an ordeal for beloved pets and some humans.</p> <p>Displays based on lasers, drones and LEDs , with or without music, offer an exciting modern alternative to traditional fireworks displays but don't have the same risks. Costs are comparable to conventional displays but are coming down as these displays become more common.</p> <p>Will the executive councillor take action to protect pets, humans and planet from the adverse impact of noise, fire and pollution and investigate these options with a view to having an alternative Guy Fawkes display in 2024 that we can all enjoy? Will the executive councillor also work with the 2024 May Ball committees to help them explore this environmentally friendly option?</p> |
| 13 | Naomi Bennett     | Executive Councillor for Housing and Homelessness                       | <p>We note from the figures in the summer edition of Open Door that average water use in the council properties surveyed is considerable in excess of local averages and required maximum allowances for new developments. We note that the high use is considered due to the use of less modern plumbing fixtures. We note that there are no comparable figures for the private rental sector which contains many older style properties. Will the executive councillor for housing bring forward plans to roll out more modern fixtures to council houses and will she also consider what steps need to be taken to support and encourage private landlords in older properties to make such changes?</p>  |
| 14 | Antoinette Nestor | Executive Councillor for Community Wealth Building and Community Safety | <p>In August 2023, the Council was reaccredited by the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance. What does the accreditation signify?</p>   |
| 15 | Ingrid Flaubert   | Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services                  | <p>Is the Executive Councillor aware of the rate of failure of newly planted trees in the city's streets and open spaces and is this a source of concern?</p>  |

|    |                    |   |  |
|----|--------------------|---|--|
| 16 | Matthew Howard     | Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services                  | <p>I welcome the council's various initiatives to encourage more tree planting. In these times of extreme weather, we hope our trees will help keep us cool and comfortable as well providing a home for small creatures. However, our trees can't protect us if we don't protect them from lack of water. We have seen the mass dieback of the trees planted along the A14 from thirst and the amazing work done by community groups such as Friends of Logan's Meadow to keep new trees alive. Will the executive councillor agree that we need a tree plan that goes further than planting trees and covers protecting them from drought too ?</p> <p>Will the executive councillor, join me in writing to our local water companies to ask them to follow the example shown by Southern Water and roll out a slow release water butt scheme . Not only does this provide water for trees but it improves rainwater capture as well as decreasing flood risk?</p> |
| 17 | Daniel Lee         | Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services                  | <p>In many parks there are simply too few bins, with the majority of those available being general waste leading to many bins spilling over, which is needless to say not ideal in areas where one might reasonably expect children to play and doubtless attracts animals. Additionally there is very often no separate bin for recyclable goods nearby meaning lots of recyclable packaging may be ending up in landfill. Could the Executive Councillor explain what the Council is doing to improve the provision of bins in public spaces so that parkgoers can enjoy the wonderful open spaces that this city has to offer?</p>  |
| 18 | Cameron Holloway   | Executive Councillor for Community Wealth Building and Community Safety | <p>As freshers arrive in Cambridge for the first time, how is the council ensuring students and young people feel safe in our city at night?</p>   |
| 19 | Patrick Sheil      | Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure  | <p>How is the Design Code trial progressing in the north of the city, and how might it help improve the planning process in the long run?</p>  |
| 20 | Anthony Martinelli | Executive Councillor for Community Wealth Building and Community Safety | <p>Could the Executive Councillor update us on progress with the King's Parade barrier?</p>  |

|    |                 |   |   |
|----|-----------------|---|---|
| 21 | Tim Bick        | Leader  | Could the leader inform the council of the various occasions he and other representatives or officers of the council have so far met with representatives or nominees of the government, arising from the government's announcement in July of its "Cambridge 2040" initiative, and who was involved in the meetings?   |
| 22 | Cheney Payne    | Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure  | With the demolition of homes in Darwin Green due to start, could the Executive Councillor please provide us with any update on the progress towards engaging with Barratt David Wilson concerning the future demolition schedule and their efforts to work with the local community?  |
| 23 | Katie Porrer    | Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services                  | Can the Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services please provide an update on the findings so far from the herbicide free trials in the city, and in particular on which methods of management for weed growth on kerbs and pavements are proving most successful. Can the Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services please provide an update on the findings so far from the herbicide free trials in the city, and in particular on which methods of management for weed growth on kerbs and pavements are proving most successful. |
| 24 | Jean Glasberg   | Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control, and Infrastructure | Will the executive councillor confirm the amount of the annual financial contribution made by Cambridge University to the planning service and outline what precautions are in place to ensure that the independence of the planning service is not compromised?  |
| 25 | Dave Baigent    | Leader  | Can you update Council regarding progress on Cambridge 2040?  |
| 26 | Delowar Hossain | Executive Councillor for Community Wealth Building and Community Safety | Could the executive councillor outline what measures the council is taking to enforce the highway code , other rules of the road & footpaths regarding cars, cyclists and E-scooter in our city?  |

Agenda item 6a – Cllr Davey proposes and Cllr Griffin seconds the following amendment to the New Unitary Council motion. (Deleted text ~~struckthrough~~, additional text underlined.)

~~Council notes its past interest in reform of local government structure in our area, reflected in the motion overwhelmingly supported by members in November 2014\* and the renewed public interest in it today.~~

Council notes that:

1. There is renewed public interest in how Cambridge is governed.
2. Although many important partnership relationships are in place between this and other councils, that the current fragmentation of responsibilities and decision-making presents an unhelpful hurdle to strategic focus on the big range of issues which bind the city of Cambridge ~~and the south of the county~~, affecting lives and livelihoods of all our residents.
3. This fragmentation frequently leaves many of our residents confused about the location of responsibilities and accountability.
4. Past doubts about the critical mass required to justify unitary status are being questioned again, as they were in the 1890s, after both World Wars, in the 1950s and again in the 1960s. ~~dispelled by recent and projected population growth in our area.~~

Council ~~re-affirms its belief~~ that:

1. Power should reside as close to people as is ~~consistent with effective decisions that impact them~~ possible.
2. For purposeful, democratic government, we should therefore consider whether aspire to a single tier council, amongst other options, framed around the urban geography of the city, is the most appropriate model of Government for our city. ~~the logical community of interest within an economic subregion: a shared area of identity within which most people both live and work.~~
3. We support the calls currently being made for deeper devolution of powers from central government and are committed to working with the Mayor to progress those discussions, for the benefit of both Cambridge and the wider region, to ensure we can best support our communities through the cost of living, climate and biodiversity emergencies. Specifically we believe devolution in

relation to single funding settlements and fiscal powers, devolved skills and adult education budgets and clearer, transport responsibilities would give power back to local communities ~~In our situation this would mean a unitary council for the southern part of Cambridgeshire.~~

In addition Council it affirms:

1. It's continued commitment to the many, complex partnership arrangements of which it is a part as the best available current means of pursuing joined-up decision-making so long as local government structure remains as it is.
2. Its awareness that ~~even with a unitary council~~ whatever model of Governance might emerge, working co-operatively and supportively with our neighbours would remain mutually partners and communities is essential to deliver better outcomes for our residents.
3. That the increasing expectations of change and economic growth that face us in this area make it no longer optimal that we have less dedicated local self-government than city areas such as Peterborough, Luton, York, Bedford, Reading or Bath. In particular reference should be made to the structures in Manchester given that this city sits within a Combined Authority.
4. Its belief that an alternative model of local government ~~unitary council would~~ could better connect our residents to their representatives and local service providers, and ~~improve~~ facilitate joined-up decision-making, and strengthen our voice in dialogue with central government and improve the life chances, health and wellbeing, and opportunities for our residents.

Accordingly, ~~Council renews its call on~~ asks the Leader and Chief Executive to ~~participate in~~ initiate discussions with other Authorities in the region and then central Government to identify options for a less fragmented and more cohesive model of Government for Cambridge, that best serves the needs of its residents. These discussions should involve and engage with the people of the city in a meaningful way, thereby recognising the need for our governance structures to reflect the wishes of the people we serve ~~Cambridgeshire authorities and~~

~~government to build a consensus for a new single tier authority for the south of the county with appropriate solutions for the remainder.~~

~~\*Motion passed on November 6 2014 by 37 votes to 0 with 3 abstentions from the minutes~~

~~**Resolved** (by 37 votes to 0, with 3 abstentions) that:~~

~~Council notes:~~

- ~~i. — The urgent need to increase the relevance of public decision making to people's daily lives and to rejuvenate our local democracy.~~
- ~~ii. — The opportunity to tackle this in an appropriate way in England following the Scottish referendum and the commitments made there for increased devolution from Westminster.~~
- ~~iii. — The recent report of the RSA City Growth Commission presenting just the latest evidence that city regions, if empowered to do so, can serve to boost national economic growth.~~
- ~~iv. — The groundswell of support in the local business community for a single council providing coordinated, accountable leadership for the Greater Cambridge area.~~
- ~~v. — The welcome debate opened up at the County Council for alternative approaches to local government in our area, to which the City Council will be asked to participate.~~

~~Council believes that:~~

- ~~i. — The survival of the proud tradition of municipal innovation and enterprise, which historically transformed social conditions and enabled strides in prosperity is under threat from the control tendencies of all recent governments.~~
- ~~ii. — There is much to do in our area, yet too often our locally elected representatives are circumscribed from taking actions that local people expect of them.~~
- ~~iii. — Both the unwieldy structure of local government covering the city of Cambridge and the centralisation of the vast majority of revenues arising from the area are major sources of frustration with the democratic process.~~

- iv. ~~Power should reside as close to people as is consistent with making effective decisions that impact them.~~
- v. ~~Irrespective of demarcations between councils, voluntary collaborations between them are being shown to offer economies of scale and critical mass where needed for cost effective service delivery.~~
- vi. ~~For purposeful democratic, local government we should aspire to a single tier council framed around the logical community of interest within an economic sub-region: a shared area of identity within which most people both live and work;~~

~~Council calls on the Leader and Chief Executive to:~~

- i. ~~Participate in discussions with other Cambridgeshire authorities and Peterborough to seek a consensus for a single tier solution of several unitary authorities including one for greater Cambridge, and a local referendum if supported in principle, including full involvement of residents, local community organisations, the business community and Universities.~~
- ii. ~~Seek in the interim negotiations with central Government on the Greater Cambridge City Deal acceleration of the already proposed legislation to enable a Greater Cambridge combined authority.~~
- iii. ~~Develop and articulate the case for:~~
  - a. ~~The retention without strings of a majority of the public revenues arising in this area from business rates and other property based taxation, allowing for the remainder to be redeployed nationally for equalisation.~~
  - b. ~~Local accountability to local people for setting business rates and council tax levels.~~
  - c. ~~Clear devolution of powers from Whitehall, working in partnership with Cambridgeshire councils, Peterborough and similar city regions, to remove obstacles to sustainable growth for Greater Cambridge including~~
    - i. ~~Lifting the Housing Revenue Account cap and transferring related housing powers~~

- ~~ii. Addressing additional strategic transport infrastructure that is essential but not covered by the City Deal or already agreed~~
  - ~~iii. Increasing capital and revenue funding for schools and skills development~~
  - ~~iv. Removing barriers to enable councils to tackle inequality, and~~
  - ~~v. Strengthening local planning powers for Greater Cambridge.~~
- ~~iv. A proportional voting system within a newly empowered local government.~~
- ~~v. A national constitutional convention to provide the stimulus for a new mindset in Westminster and Whitehall and a general framework for progress in all these respects.~~

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# Agenda Item 5

Agenda item 6b – Cllr Thornburrow proposes and Cllr Nestor seconds the following amendment to the Short Term Letting in Cambridge motion. (Deleted text ~~struckthrough~~, additional text underlined.)

Council Notes:

This Council notes that letting Advertising a room on Air BnB and other similar platforms started off as a practical way to generate occasional income for a few, renting out a spare room or a whole dwelling for a few weeks of the year whilst on holiday, but the practice has grown hugely since the site was founded and is now widespread ~~enormously commercialised~~;

This Council further notes that this has had the effect of taking out privately owned and rented property from the market for long term living, and putting it in the market for short term and holiday lets and other temporary use; short-term lets through Airbnb may adversely affect the housing market, reduce the sustainability of communities, be the source of neighbourhood nuisance, and lead to substandard accommodation being offered to visitors;

Council acknowledges that it could address issues around short term lets under planning law if change of use was required but national planning policy and legislation currently do not identify these lets as a separate use class and so establishing change of use is complex and subject to appeal. However, in January 2019 Cambridge was the first local authority, outside of London, to successfully defend an appeal against planning enforcement after it was issued in December 2017.

Council therefore resolves to:

Mandate its representatives working on the development of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan to take this issue into account and explore what additional controls may be feasible under existing powers and legislation.

Ask the Leader or Chief Executive to write to local Members of Parliament drawing their attention to this resolution and asking them to support measures to bring forward greater control on the market for short-term letting through the implementation of the measures proposed in the April 2023 consultation [Introduction of a use class for short term lets and associated permitted development rights - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/introduction-of-a-use-class-for-short-term-lets-and-associated-permitted-development-rights)

Continue to update the planning committee on compliance work with regard to the enforcement of short term lets at regular intervals.

~~Currently, there are few or no proactive controls available to the Local Planning Authority or council to oversee such changes of use, particularly in smaller properties, and therefore no means by which neighbours can put forward their views on such changes, or where additional comings and goings from servicing of such properties can be properly assessed.~~

~~Uncontrolled changes of residential property to continuous short term lets have the effect of:~~

- ~~-Squeezing the housing market for people who want to live close to where they work;~~
- ~~-In particular, driving out young people at the lower end of the price range who want to live where they were brought up and raise children and thus reducing the long term sustainability of communities;~~
- ~~-in some cases enabling a source of neighbourhood nuisance by virtue of the use of inappropriate buildings or locations;~~
- ~~-Turning Cambridge into a town with unsuitable or substandard accommodation for visitors to Cambridge;~~

~~-Therefore, this council:~~

~~1. Calls on central government urgently to put in place regulation to enable local councils to control the practice of short term lets, as consulted on in the recent "Introduction of a Use Class for Short Term Lets and associated permitted development rights" (12 April 2023) and requests the Chief Executive to write to the Housing Minister to express this council's support for this.~~

~~2. Calls on the Executive Councillor for Planning & Infrastructure to work across the council to shape the emerging Local Plan to address these concerns, exploring the use of all the powers which are at our disposal now and in the future to improve the situation, such as:~~

~~-How best the Local Planning Authority could use current or future legislation to require a change of use permission to be obtained for any dwellings used as short terms lets on a permanent basis;~~

~~-Clarifying how many days a year a property could be let before reaching the definition of permanent (for example, 90 days per annum, as used in London);~~

- ~~-Applying minimum space and safety standards for short term lettings similar to those in use for existing HMOs (Houses of Multiple Occupation);~~
- ~~-Ensuring that impact on the long term sustainability of a neighbourhood is considered as part of any change of use application to a short term let;~~
- ~~-Ensuring that the comings and goings and associated deliveries and servicing of short term rented dwellings are considered as part of this change of use application to a short term let;~~
- ~~-Including a presumption that ancillary dwellings approved as such should not later be converted to short term lets;~~
- ~~-Considering whether it would be reasonable to include a condition for new build dwellings to require change of use permission for short term lets until national policy on this is clarified.~~

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# Agenda Item 6

Agenda item 6c – Cllr Carling proposes and Cllr Wade seconds the following amendment to the Inclusive Play in Cambridge motion. (Deleted text ~~struck-through~~, additional text underlined.)

~~This council~~ The Council notes:

~~That accessible~~ Accessible and inclusive play provision is a vital part of any city ~~and that~~. ~~Under the current equality legislation,~~ the council ~~has to~~ therefore endeavours to make play areas and facilities accessible and inclusive in line with equality legislation. In this context, inclusive means maximising opportunities for a range of differing children's abilities, especially children with disabilities;

That our Streets and Open Spaces team already work hard to ensure that any play equipment suppliers provide a range of inclusive play when bids are submitted and that bids are rejected if this criterion is not met;

That in line with what residents rightly expect, all playground areas in Cambridge are free to use;

~~That in the recent Cambridge Together Project's Resident and Community Engagement project, residents fed back that they would like to see a range of playground offers at free or low cost for families/children, young people and other adults;~~

That Streets and Open Spaces already provide listings of parks and their locations on the city council website but ~~as yet, this does not state which inclusive play equipment is located at each park or playground. However, according to a recent national study playgrounds continue to be inaccessible for many disabled children because they are not designed for their needs and have limited choices~~ this does not currently include details of the equipment present at each site. However, it would be helpful for residents and families – especially those with accessibility requirements – to have access to such information in order to help them identify the best spaces for them to use;

~~That as yet, there is no city wide map of inclusive play equipment and a structured means of engagement with families when designing inclusive playgrounds~~ when new play areas are proposed, the Council conducts a consultation – one facet of which is to seek views from residents regarding the accessibility of the proposed equipment;

~~That as yet, there is no city wide map of the play equipment suitable for different age groups;~~

~~That as yet there is no data on distances to travel for residents for inclusive and age appropriate play equipment.~~

That the Council holds catchment area data, which is a measure of the distance between residents and their closest play areas, and that this is informing our investment strategy for all types of play area: LAPs, LEAPs, NEAPs and Destination play areas;

That play equipment providers are becoming increasingly conscious of the urgent need for inclusivity and accessibility of play equipment, and that new equipment offers are increasingly incorporating this need, which the Council welcomes.

Council calls for agrees:

~~An addition to the existing city map of play areas (<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/>) to include a function to allow residents to search for types of inclusive play equipment and different age ranges of equipment across the city so they can identify easily where they may wish to play with their families. This should include a function to allow families to understand layout, play equipment overall space facilities and possible barriers to ensure safety, as well as photographs of the site;~~

That as part of ongoing work on developing a new investment strategy for play equipment, the Council will consider how best to provide information to residents on the play equipment available at different sites – with particular emphasis on enabling people with accessibility requirements to make informed choices about play areas – and will bring proposals for doing so to a scrutiny committee alongside the proposed new strategy;

~~A gap analysis to identify areas in the city lacking inclusive play equipment and types of age ranges of play equipment;~~

That a gap analysis is already underway as part of this work, which will inform the investment strategy and allow improved decision-making around inclusive play equipment;

Engagement That engagement with families of disabled children when making adaptations to play areas is important to increase accessibility and to identify areas with a lack of choices, and that this is already undertaken in the council's consultations;

~~A commitment to secure facilities for those children that need to remain seated in their wheelchairs to tackle a current lack of choices;~~

That equipment must be inclusive for all users, including wheelchair users - industry specialists do not recommend specific equipment for people in wheelchairs due to the tendency of such equipment to isolate users from others;

That the provision ~~Provision~~ of sensory opportunities in playgrounds is a key part of the existing tender process, and that the Council will remain committed to this;

~~Scrutiny of play equipment infrastructure so it meets a variety of play needs for all children;~~

That children have a variety of play needs, and that the Council meets these through the use of different suppliers and through creating play areas of different natures – no two play areas in Cambridge are alike;

~~The council's future play strategy to ensure that these gaps are considered when play equipment is being updated or where S106 or other contributions to development are being agreed, to ensure that reducing the travel times to inclusive and age appropriate play is a priority.~~

To reiterate its existing commitment to ensuring new housing developments provide play areas where required, and to continue emphasising the need for inclusivity when using S106 contributions from developments to improve play areas.

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Agenda item 6e – Cllr Bennett proposes and Cllr ... seconds the following amendment to the Debate not hate motion. (~~Deleted text struckthrough~~, additional text underlined.)

This council notes the intimidation and abuse of councillors, in person or otherwise, undermines democracy; preventing elected members from representing the communities they serve, deterring individuals from standing for election, and undermining public life in democratic processes.

This council further notes that increasing levels of toxicity in public and political discourse is having a detrimental impact on local democracy and that prevention, support and responses to abuse and intimidation of local politicians must improve to ensure councillors feel safe and able to continue representing their residents.

This council therefore commits to challenge the normalisation of abuse against councillors and uphold exemplary standards of public and political debate in all it does. The council further agrees to sign up to the Local Government Association's (LGA) Debate Not Hate campaign.

The campaign aims to raise public awareness of the role of councillors in local communities, encourage healthy debate and improve the response to and support for local politicians facing abuse and intimidation.

In addition, the council resolves to:

- Write to the local Members of Parliament to ask them to support the campaign
- Write to the Government to ask them to work with the LGA to develop and implement a plan to address abuse and intimidation of politicians
- Regularly review the support available to councillors in relation to abuse and intimidation and councillor safety
- Work with the local police to ensure there is a clear and joined-up mechanism for reporting threats and other concerns about the safety of councillors and their families
- Take a zero-tolerance approach to abuse of councillors and officers

Encourage all councillors to leave outdated adversarial playground politics behind them and sign the clean campaign pledge, to be our best

selves and be role models of courteous, inclusive and considerate behaviour to each other, to officers and residents at all times.

## **Council 19 October 2023 Written Questions and Answers**

### **1. Councillor Levien**

**To Councillor Carling the Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services:**

Re: Establishing a dog exclusion area in Trumpington Community Orchard

Could the executive Councillor confirm whether or not a Dog Exclusion Area has been established in the Trumpington Community Orchard following multiple applications over a number of years?

#### **Response:**

The dog control Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) was first created in 2017 and lasted for a period of three years. It has been reviewed, extended, and varied in 2020 and 2023. At the current time there are no specific restrictions on Trumpington Community Orchard, however the citywide restrictions of failing to clear up dog mess or putting a dog on a lead when requested to do so by an authorised officer do apply to the site (these two restrictions apply to all land which is open to the air and which the public are entitled or permitted to have access).

The process to create a PSPO is specific for the city. Officers must present proposals for consultation to the relevant scrutiny committee (which is the Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee) for approval and Executive Councillor sign off.

Officers then undertake the necessary statutory consultation before returning to a later committee date for the final order to be scrutinised and approved.

The most recent cycle of the dog control PSPO is as follows:

- December 2022 – Locations for the 2023 PSPO finalised.
- January 2023 – Environment and Community Scrutiny committee – Executive Councillor approval received to proceed with consultation.
- February and March 2023 – PSPO statutory consultation.

- June 2023 – Environment and Community Scrutiny committee – PSPO scrutinised and Executive Councillor approval received.
- October 2023 – varied and extended PSPO comes into force for a period of three years.

Officers were first notified of a request to include Trumpington Community Orchard as a dog exclusion area in July 2023. An earlier request made to the former Executive Councillor had been made in March 2023 but had not been passed to Officers. Either of the requests for Trumpington Community Orchard to be included at this stage would have been too late to be included within the 2023 review, since locations were finalised in December 2022.

An Enforcement Officer for this ward area within Streets and Open Spaces (enforcement officers are responsible for dog control duties within the city) has confirmed that they were not aware of any applications received for this area to be considered as a dog exclusion area. The officer spoken to was responsible for the south area wards of the city for a number of years. No details are held by the team of any previous contact made in regard to creating a dog exclusion area at the orchard.

PSPOs are subject to stringent rules, with a requirement for evidence justifying their use, and officers do not currently have any such evidence for this area of land. Currently, officers and I are only aware of a single email requesting the implementation of a dog exclusion area.

PSPOs can be introduced in a specific public area where the council is satisfied on reasonable grounds that certain conditions have been met. The first condition is that activities carried on in a public place within the council's area have had a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality; or it is likely that activities will be carried on in a public place within that area and that they will have such an effect. The second condition is that the effect (or likely effect) of the activities is (or is likely to be) of a persistent or continuing nature, is (or is likely to be) such as to make the activities unreasonable; and justifies the restrictions imposed by the notice.

The primary purpose of the PSPO is to empower local authorities to deal with anti-social behaviour that adversely affects other people using the same public space, whether it is a park, town centre or rural footpath. PSPOs can only apply to public places. This means any place to which the public, or any section of the public, on payment or otherwise, have access to as of right or by virtue of express or implied permission. A PSPO

may only prohibit or impose requirements that are reasonable to prevent or reduce the detrimental effect from continuing, occurring, or recurring.

Currently dog exclusion areas are limited only to fenced children's playgrounds, fenced bowling greens, fenced tennis courts, outdoor pools/splash pads and areas designed for play/recreation. Including Trumpington Community Orchard as a dog exclusion area would be a new area not covered by the current order. No exclusion restrictions currently apply to community orchards and gardens across the city, and officers would need to undertake further work to see if such an area would meet the legal tests and could be supported.

At the current time officers recommend that the first stage in addressing concerns raised would be to improve dog fouling signage and officer patrols in the area, which would be informed by intelligence from Trumpington Community Orchard volunteers and visitors to be able to target the patrols at key times. Through this, officers will be able to gather intelligence to consider if an exclusion area would be suitable for a 2026 order (when the review period would be during 2024/2025), but this will be heavily reliant on information provided to the officers or witnessed by them. I am more than happy to liaise with you further on this with a view to working towards a solution.

## **2. Councillor Hossain**

### **To Councillor Davey the Leader**

As one of the councils represented on the GCP, the city council shares responsibility for the £24 million works on Milton Road in my ward. These works have been held back by delays and caused massive disruption, with many residents struggling currently to use the road due to poor temporary paths, particularly the disabled and other vulnerable groups. In September we learned that even completed parts of the new paths are too narrow for regulations and will need to be redesigned. How did this ludicrous error take place and how much tax payer money will it take to correct this?

### **Response:**

The Milton Road project aims to improve public transport, cycle and walking infrastructure to make it far easier to move around Cambridge whether you are going to work, school or meeting friends. The GCP have worked with the community to develop the plans and provide

sustainable travel options so they have alternative to the car and feel they are improving the environment.

The work is now over halfway through and we are starting to see in some sections how the completed scheme will look – with new bus stops, cycle ways and trees being planted. As part of this work the widths of the footpaths have been designed to meet standards and guidance. However, in some places, it transpired underground utilities were not positioned in the location marked on the utility plans. These obstructions could not be picked up by the Ground Penetration Radar survey (GPR) as they were under overgrown vegetation.

As a result, telegraph poles and streetlighting columns could not be situated in the designed location, but were installed as close as possible to that position. This means in some cases the width of footpaths has fallen below the minimum requirements. Remedial works will be carried out and will necessitate shifting the demarcation kerbs which have already been installed to create the required width, while also retaining the required minimum width for the cycle path.

The exact costs are still to be determined.

### **3. Councillor Hossain**

#### **To Councillor Carling the Executive Councillor for Open Space**

Almost all of Cambridge's parks have barriers or fences to stop unauthorised vehicle access. Arbury Town Park in my ward is a clear exception. This has led to many cases of traveller encampments on the park which has led to noise, environment and anti-social behaviour issues and caused distress to local residents. Residents of King's Hedges don't understand why their ward is the only one without proper barriers to prevent this. Why hasn't this council put in place the same protections against unauthorised encampments that they have in the rest of our city?

#### **Response**

Whilst many of Cambridge's parks and open spaces have boundaries with homes, property, hedges or fences, there are several that do not. Examples of these include Parker's Piece, Dudley Road Recreation Ground, Lammas Land and Arbury Town Park. As such, it is not correct to suggest that "almost all" of Cambridge's parks have such barriers.

While King's Hedges has recently suffered from anti-social behaviour and other issues on Arbury Town Park, this is a citywide concern and we are committed to solving it in the long term, in part through the provision of suitable sites for encampments, working alongside the vast majority of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community members that are conscientious towards residents and do not cause the issues you describe above. Most parks and open spaces that have hedges and fences are sites where the proximity of play areas, or other uses of space (for example by dogs) carry a low risk of children and/or animals exiting onto roads and streets.

Fencing boundaries are not universally applied as fencing is a costly treatment, and one which alters the character and historic way in which these sites were originally designed, set out and managed. As a result, there are often implications for their use and enjoyment by residents. Indeed, I am aware of concerns from residents surrounding Arbury Town Park that fencing would not be an acceptable solution to the problems you describe because of this.

The Council does recognise that the nature of open access site boundaries, whilst having their own unique character and positive elements, does enhance the vulnerabilities associated with unauthorised access. As such, while long-term solutions across the city remain our ambition, we are already examining options to combat the recurrent issues occurring at Arbury Town Park.

Namely, the Council is exploring a range of environmental boundary treatments that might be viable without impacting on the character of the area in the way that fencing would.

Solutions being investigated include (but are not limited to) shallow mounding/bunding with wildflower displays, tree planting and the possibility of strategically placed previously felled tree trunks. The solutions proposed are two-fold and would deter access, but also make a valuable local contribution to the environment and as a consequence, align with the Council's commitments to tackle the biodiversity emergency that we have previously declared.

The range of options under consideration would be subject to successful funding via the City Council's Capital Programme. Officers have put forward prospective schemes in the September 2023 Capital Improvement rounds for 2024/25 which will be reviewed by Councillors, alongside a range of requests, with outcomes and allocated projects known in early 2024.

