



## Decisions of Council held on 19 October 2023

### Public Questions

Please see the meeting recording, Council minutes will follow.

[Council - Thursday, 19th October, 2023 6.00 pm - YouTube](#)

### Agenda item 4a Civic Affairs Committee 18 October 2023

**Resolved** to approve:

- (i) To pause area committee meetings for two cycles (approximately six months) after the November/December 2023 cycle of meetings. (para 3.3-3.5 of the officer report).

**Resolved** to approve:

- (ii) 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 would 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 of the officer report).
- (iii) 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 of the officer report).

### Agenda item 5: Oral Questions

Please see the meeting recording, Council minutes will follow.

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### Agenda item 6a Councillor Bick - A Unitary Council:

Amended motion text.

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, 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.

Council affirms that:

1. Power should reside as close to people as is possible.
2. For purposeful, democratic government, we should therefore consider whether 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.
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 addition Council affirms:

1. Its 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 whatever model of Governance might emerge, working co-operatively and supportively with our 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 could better connect our residents to their representatives and local service providers, and 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 asks the Leader and Chief Executive to 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.

**Agenda item 6b Councillor Young - Short Term Lets in Cambridge**  
Amended motion text.

Council Notes:

This Council notes that letting 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;

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](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/introduction-of-a-use-class-for-short-term-lets-and-associated-permitted-development-rights) ([www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk))

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

**Agenda item 6c Councillor Flaubert - Inclusive play in Cambridge**  
*Amended motion text.*

The Council notes:

That accessible and inclusive play provision is a vital part of any city and that the council 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 Streets and Open Spaces already provide listings of parks and their locations on the city council website but 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 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 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 agrees:

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;

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;

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;

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

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;

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.

**Agenda item 6d Councillor Tong - Towards greater transparency and closer co-operation in Local Government**

The motion was lost (not approved).

**Agenda item 6e Councillor A.Smith - Debate not hate**

Withdrawn.

**Agenda item 10: Written Questions**

These can be viewed in the Information Pack of the Council agenda pages at the following link:

[Agenda for Council on Thursday, 19th October, 2023, 6.00 pm - Cambridge Council](#)