



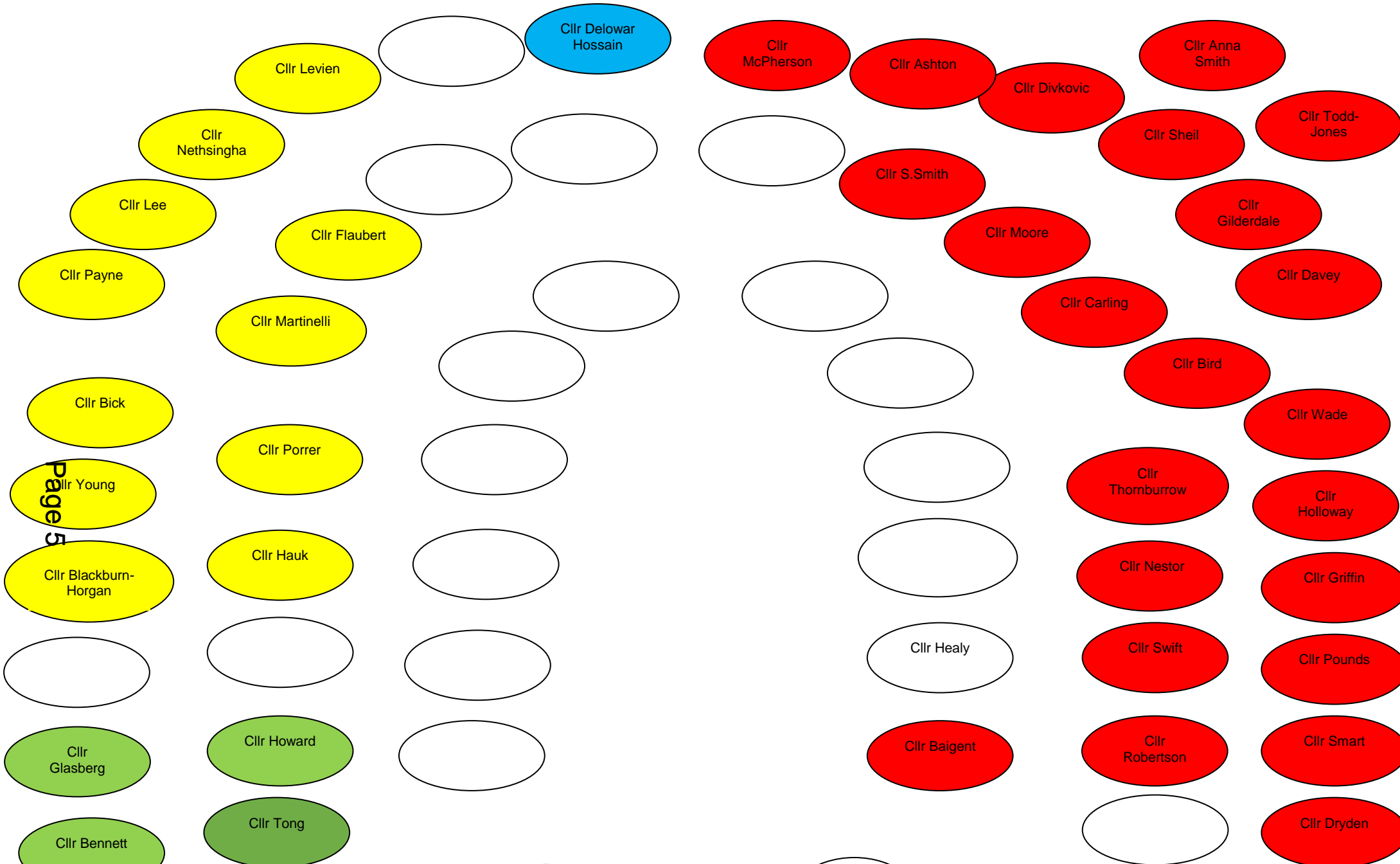
CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

INFORMATION PACK

Date: Thursday, 15 February 2024

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Committee Officer/Lives stream operator

Deputy Mayor – Cllr Thittala Varkey

The Mayor – Cllr Gawthrope Wood

Head of Legal Services

Democratic Services Manager

Cllrs Todd-Jones and A. Smith will sit at single desk

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Public Questions

Question 1 - Cambridge Young Greens

Following the barbaric Hamas-led attack that took the lives of over 350 children and young people in October of last year, we have seen an eruption of violence in the middle east. Recent events, including the International Court of Justice's ruling last week, have brought the Israeli government's continued attempts to commit genocide against the Palestinian people to the forefront of the national conversation. Residents of Cambridge, many of whom have family and friends who reside in either Palestine or Israel, have been shocked by the needless waste of nearly thirty-thousand lives - both Palestinian and Israeli - that has taken place over the last four months alone.

These events have been particularly distressing for young people in Cambridge. It is estimated that half of the occupants of the Gaza strip are children, and a further 20% are under the age of 30. Tragically, over a third of the recent casualties have been children.

Last year, HC Bill 325 was put forward in an attempt to sabotage the peaceful and democratic efforts of Palestinian rights activists, who have sought change by calling for boycotts, divestments, and sanctions (BDS) against the state of Israel. While the local authority has already been severely limited in its freedom to procure its goods and services as it pleases, what implications might this mandate have for Cambridge City Council?

Question 2

With reference to motion 10a - If this motion is passed, how will Care Experienced people be involved in the implementation of the treatment of Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic and how will the Council involve Care Experienced people in their policy-making?

Question 3 – County Councillor Goodliffe

Anyone who has experienced being in Care has experienced loss or trauma or more often both. Their Adverse Childhood Experiences follow them into adulthood. They also often have less support than their peers in terms of supportive family, adults who can assist with the usual tasks we help our own adult children with – applications, forms, preparation for life in the form of job interviews, daily tasks and other needs. Just this week I have assisted my own adult children in their work, university projects, how to fix a household appliance and ordering things on the internet.

Similarly our duty as a corporate parent does not end when a Child reaches the magic 18 years. Whilst County may hold the Corporate parenting role for Children's Services, we always need to work with our City and districts to manage housing, planning and open spaces to name but a few areas. As such according to the McAllistair Review:

"First, the 'corporate parenting' responsibility that applies to local authorities needs to be extended to all public bodies for children in care and care experienced adults, to reflect the shared responsibility they have to these children and adults. Second, to tackle the stigma and discrimination many care leavers face in their day to day lives, the UK should be the first country in the world to recognise the care experience as a legally protected characteristic in equalities legislation."

Many care experienced people face discrimination, stigma, and prejudice in their day to day lives. Public perceptions of care experience centre on the idea that children are irredeemably damaged and that can lead to discrimination and assumptions being made.

This stigma and discrimination can be explicit, and often comes with assumptions about the likely characteristics of children and adults that have care experience. They can also be implicit and are evidenced in the way care experience is discussed in schools, workplaces, and the media.

At its worst this can lead to care experienced people being refused employment, failing to succeed in education or facing unfair judgements about their ability to parent when they have children and families of their own. Care Experienced people often face discrimination and stigma across housing, health, education, relationships, employment and in the criminal justice system, and as corporate parents, councillors have a collective responsibility for providing the best possible care and safeguarding for the children who have been looked after by any authority.

Therefore, I am delighted to see this on the agenda for Cambridge City today. I am pleased on behalf of a group of people who need to be seen, heard and embraced by all local Authorities. Care experienced people face significant barriers that impact them throughout their lives, and despite the resilience of many care experienced people, society too often does not take their needs into account.

Care experienced young people are often hidden and this we need to make sure they are seen. I look forward to working with Cambridge City Council to ensure that in Cambridge and Cambridgeshire we value Care Experienced people and work together to ensure that their best possible future is achieved.

Question 4 - Secretary of Cambridge Stop the War Coalition

Since 2014, I have personally organised public meetings, vigils and protests for our Cambridge community to demonstrate our solidarity in Cambridge for the struggle of the Palestinian people against Occupation. [Even in the social distancing era of 2021 we gathered](#) in our hundreds to protest the attacks on Gaza by Israeli Occupation forces. Now, since October 2023 to the present day, the [people of Cambridge continue to come out in large numbers here](#) and to support the national protests in London. We have residents from Palestine living in our community and students from Gaza studying in our Universities. In acknowledgment of the depth and breadth of support from the Cambridge community for the struggling people of Gaza under Occupation, and in solidarity with our many Palestinian residents, would the city council consider a show of solidarity for the people of Palestine now by flying the flag of Palestine at Guildhalls?

Some information for context:

Our petition on [change.org](#) asking the City Council to Fly the Flag of Palestine at Guildhalls got 2763 signatories.

203 of these are Cambridge residents. I have attached the spreadsheet of the Cambridge signatories.

The petition can be viewed at [Petition - Fly Palestine Flag at Guildhalls - Change.org](#)

We are living in an unprecedented era of militarisation after a bloody history of the last 100 years of war.

Some areas of the world do not know peace.

Since South Africa's case at the International Court of Justice it has become apparent that the world is witness to an ongoing genocide in Palestine.

We urge you all to demonstrate a simple, but powerful act of solidarity with those suffering and to show the world that the City of Sanctuary stands with the people of Palestine.

Question 5

The attacks by Hamas on October 7th 2023, and the scale of the subsequent continual Israeli bombing of Gaza have sent shock waves around the world. Already by November the UN Secretary General was saying that we are witnessing a killing of civilians, especially children, that is unparalleled and unprecedented in any conflict since he took office.

Since that date, and as at the beginning of this week, the recorded deaths from Israeli military action were over 28,000 people, including more than 12,000 children, and among whom there are at least 340 medical workers and 120 journalists. Around 7,000 people are still missing, 70% of whom are women and children. 68,000 people have been wounded, in many cases with life-changing injuries. There has been devastation of the entire civic infrastructure. This after 17 years of siege on Gaza. Aid trucks still do not have adequate access. Widespread hunger and disease are the inevitable corollaries, everyone is at risk.

Collective punishment is a war crime, as is hostage-taking (as well as the initial Israeli hostages, thousands of Palestinians, including children, have been abducted and imprisoned). The principles of international law and conventions on human rights must be central to the responses of our political leaders to this crisis, no matter who perpetrates them.

South Africa, as a signatory to the 1948 Genocide Convention, brought a case to the International Court of Justice last month, which concluded that a 'Plausible Case' for Genocide could be made against Israel, also a signatory. Its role is to make legal rulings, not to enforce them, so it did not call for a ceasefire, but the Provisional Orders, if implemented, would have very much the same effect. There are immediate implications for public figures in the UK, as since 2001 there is personal liability in law for complicity in Genocide.

This situation did not start on October 7th, and it will not end solely with a ceasefire. The underlying causes must finally be acknowledged and tackled. Gaza is an occupied territory and part of Palestine, which has been subjected to expulsions, military occupation, apartheid, siege and severe human rights violations over a period of 75 years. Israel has enjoyed decades of impunity while regularly flouting international law and committing war crimes. People living under such regimes look to international institutions to stand up for justice, without which there cannot be peace. Failing that, as re-affirmed by UN Resolution 45/130 in 1990, they look to 'the legitimacy of the struggle of peoples for independence, territorial integrity, national unity and liberation from colonial domination, apartheid and foreign occupation by all available means, including armed struggle'.

There is crucial work to be done by you, our local political representatives, to put pressure on our national ones. Silence and neutrality are not options here, they make you complicit. Israel must not be allowed to flout international law any longer: the implications for the rest of Palestine, and beyond, do not bear thinking about.

Gaza has everything to do with us in Cambridge. We are an international City of Sanctuary, welcoming students, visitors and refugees from all over the world. Public opinion is overwhelmingly in favour of a ceasefire in the UK and internationally,

witness opinion polls and huge demonstrations in many cities. This is certainly what we experience in Cambridge, where people also express their care and concern with generous donations.

Question

Will the City Council call for:

An immediate permanent ceasefire

The unhindered entry of all necessary humanitarian aid into Gaza, including the immediate restoration of funding to UNWRA.

An immediate end to the attacks, arrests, land theft and demolitions in the West Bank

An end to the illegal control systems of military occupation, siege and apartheid

And demand that our government does likewise?

Question 6

For those Councillors who do not know me, I am John Preston, longstanding Cambridge resident, artist, historic environment consultant and lecturer. I worked in the Guildhall for over 20 years as conservation officer then historic environment manager for the Council; I have organised events and exhibitions in it. I cycle to shop in the market. My question raises issues of public involvement in, and the physical capacity of, our city, firstly in relation to the Market Square and the Civic Quarter in agenda item 7a.

I welcome the inclusion of the Guildhall and the Corn Exchange along with the Market Square in the Civic Quarter combined project (bid SC 873 on page 330), but the Council's plan to appoint architects in April to take proposals to RIBA Stage 2 is seriously premature, perpetuates past mistakes in relation to the Market Square, and risks wasting scarce resources and losing any remaining public goodwill.

Cllr Simon Smith says on the Civic Quarter website: "By working with the community and stakeholders, we will find out what people want from the Guildhall, market and Corn Exchange and spaces between.....". But the Council should have found out what people want as part of the brief, before getting anywhere near the detailed design stage. Its 2019 Market Square Feasibility Study "*recommended that visioning workshops with technical stakeholders and the community are arranged prior to design progression to develop and agree a vision and objectives for the scheme*"(BDP Feasibility Study, 9.3, p 108). But this did not happen, then or since.

The so-called “vision” agreed by Councillors in 2022 for the market square was aspirational at best, as were the Council’s responses to the very inadequate public consultation. The trials of demountable stalls (without which the Council’s proposed evening events are a non-starter) were a total fiasco. The Council has still not published its cultural report on potential events, or any evidence on how these could be accommodated whilst maintaining a viable market within the limited space and time available. So neither of the 2 key elements of what is presented to you as an “agreed vision” were or are credible. It was, and remains, demonstrably clear that the project has failed to pass its first hurdle: RIBA Stage 1 “agree a brief and establish that it can be accommodated on the site”.

So rather than rushing ahead to appoint an external design team, why doesn’t the Council take up the offer of help made by the Chair of the Cambridge Association of Architects in a recent Civic Quarter meeting? Come on City Council, hold public briefing workshops facilitated by local architects, and let’s explore the possibility of a realistic vision which resolves, to public satisfaction, the many competing demands on, and potential opportunities offered by our Market Square and civic buildings. Only then you will have a basis for appointing a design team with a viable brief.

And in terms of public goodwill, if you value the market as you claim to do, how about actively promoting it, as East Cambridgeshire does for Ely Market?

Supplementary Question

In my supplementary I will respond to the Executive Councillor’s comments. I will also raise a further and very current public involvement and physical capacity issue: the urgent need for a publicly-accessible digital model to allow the individual and cumulative impacts of tall and bulky development proposals to be shown to and assessed by Councillors and public. The urgent need for such a model has been highlighted by the Grafton Centre and Beehive proposals; it could be extremely helpful for the Hartree project (agenda item 6d).

Question 7

What progress has been made in providing a Traveller site/(s) in Cambridge, including transit sites?

A year after the last budget meeting, we are again raising the issue of the lack of Traveller sites in Cambridge. Over 3 ½ years after the rhetorical statement by the then Labour Councillor (subsequently the Executive Councillor for Equalities, Anti-Poverty and Wellbeing) on the impact of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill in criminalising the travelling way of life, the Council have still failed to provide

any meaningful solution or change to their policy of eviction. We have pointed out that as the only Labour Council in Cambridgeshire, surrounded almost totally by a sea of Tory councils, this was unacceptable. Within the Greater Cambridgeshire Partnership alongside South Cambridgeshire, with a notorious record of anti-Traveller housing policies, particularly aimed at the Irish Traveller community, Cambridge Council have effectively followed their lead. Finding a pitch of ground for legal stopping places has been beyond the GCP. In their response last year, Cambridge Council stated they had changed their focus to looking for permanent sites, despite the fact that it is the lack of transit sites that causes the greatest conflict between the Traveller and settled communities. As we have consistently pointed out, English Romani and Irish Travellers have protected status under the ECHR which includes the right to a home. (1) We are not aware what the new GTANA has recommended, if in fact it has reported.

While the Council would likely decry the treatment of the Bedouin in Israel and Palestine, another travelling people, similar empathy towards the Travellers in our County appears lacking, alongside the ambition to resolve this long-standing problem.

Notes

1 In fact Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 stated 14 years ago that public bodies should have regard to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; foster good relations; to remove and minimise disadvantages suffered by those due to their protected characteristics; and to encourage them to participate in public life.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/>

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Correction to vote from Housing Scrutiny Committee regarding recommendations t – x.

HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23 JANUARY 2024

5.30 – 8.36pm

Present: Councillors Pounds (Chair), Griffin, Holloway, Lee, Porrer, Robertson, Swift, Thittala Varkey, Tong

Tenant/Leaseholder Representatives: Diana Minns (Vice Chair), Mandy Powell-Hardy

Executive Councillor for Housing and Homelessness: Councillor Bird

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL (Executive Councillor for Housing and Homelessness)

2024/25 Housing Revenue Account Budget Setting Report

As part of the 2024/25 budget process, the range of assumptions upon which the HRA Business Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy were based, have been reviewed in light of the latest information available, culminating in the preparation of the HRA Budget Setting Report.

The HRA Budget-Setting Report provides an overview of the review of the key assumptions. It sets out the key parameters for the detailed recommendations and final budget proposals and is the basis for the finalisation of the 2024/25 budgets.

Councillor Pounds had left the meeting before the vote on the Part 2 recommendations. Councillor Robertson (Vice-Chair Councillor representative) chaired this vote.

The Housing Scrutiny Committee considered and approved recommendations L - s by 5 votes to 0 with 3 abstentions.

The Housing Scrutiny Committee considered and approved recommendations t - x unanimously.

Accordingly, Council is recommended to:

- i. Approve the revised need to borrow over the 30-year life of the business plan, with the first instance of this anticipated to be in 2023/24, to sustain the proposed level of investment, which includes ear-marking funding for delivery of the 10 Year New Homes Programme.
- ii. Recognise that the constitution delegates Treasury Management to the Chief Finance Officer (Part 3, para 5.11), with Part 4F, C16 stating; 'All executive decisions on borrowing, investment or financing shall be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer, who is required to act in accordance with CIPFA's Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Local Authorities.
- iii. Recognise that the decision to borrow significantly to build new homes impacts the authority's ability to set-aside resource to redeem the HRA Self-Financing debt at the point at which the loan portfolio matures, with the need to re-finance debt in the latter stages of the business plan.
- iv. Approval of capital bids, as detailed in Appendix E (3) and Appendix F of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- v. Approval of the latest Decent Homes and Other HRA Stock Investment Programme, to include re-phasing of elements of the programme between capital and revenue, as detailed in Appendix F of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- vi. Approval of the latest budget sums, profiling and associated financing for all new build schemes, as detailed in Appendix F, and summarised in Appendix H, of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- vii. Approval of allocation of £15,285,000 of funds from the budget ear-marked for the delivery of new homes into a scheme specific budget for Newbury Farm, in line with the scheme specific report presented as part of the committee cycle.
- viii. Approval of the revised Housing Capital Investment Plan as shown in Appendix H of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- ix. Approval of inclusion of Disabled Facilities Grant expenditure and associated grant income from 2024/25 onwards, based upon 2023/24 net grant awarded, with approval of delegation to the Chief Finance Officer, as Section 151 Officer, to approve an

in year increase or decrease in the budget for disabled facilities grants in any year, in direct relation to any increase or decrease in the capital grant funding for this purpose, as received from the County Council through the Better Care Fund.

- x. Approval of delegation to the Chief Finance Officer, as Section 151 Officer, to determine the most appropriate use of any additional Disabled Facilities Grant funding, for the wider benefit of the Shared Home Improvement Agency.
- xi. Approval of delegation to the Director of Communities to review and amend the level of fees charged by the Shared Home Improvement Agency for disabled facilities grants and repair assistance grants, in line with any recommendations made by the Shared Home Improvement Agency Board.
- xii. Approval of delegation to the relevant Director, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, as Section 151 Officer, to draw down resource from the ear-marked revenue reserve or capital reserve for potential debt redemption or re-investment, for the purpose of open market land or property acquisition or new build housing development, should the need arise, in order to meet deadlines for the use of retained right to buy receipts or to facilitate future site redevelopment.
- xiii. Approval of delegation to the Chief Finance Officer, as Section 151 Officer, to make any necessary technical amendments to detailed budgets in respect of recharges between the General Fund and the HRA, with any change in impact for the HRA to be reported and incorporated as part of the HRA Medium Term Financial Strategy in September or November 2024.

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General Fund Budget Setting Report (BSR) - Supplementary Information

Council 15 February 2024

Updates for Council

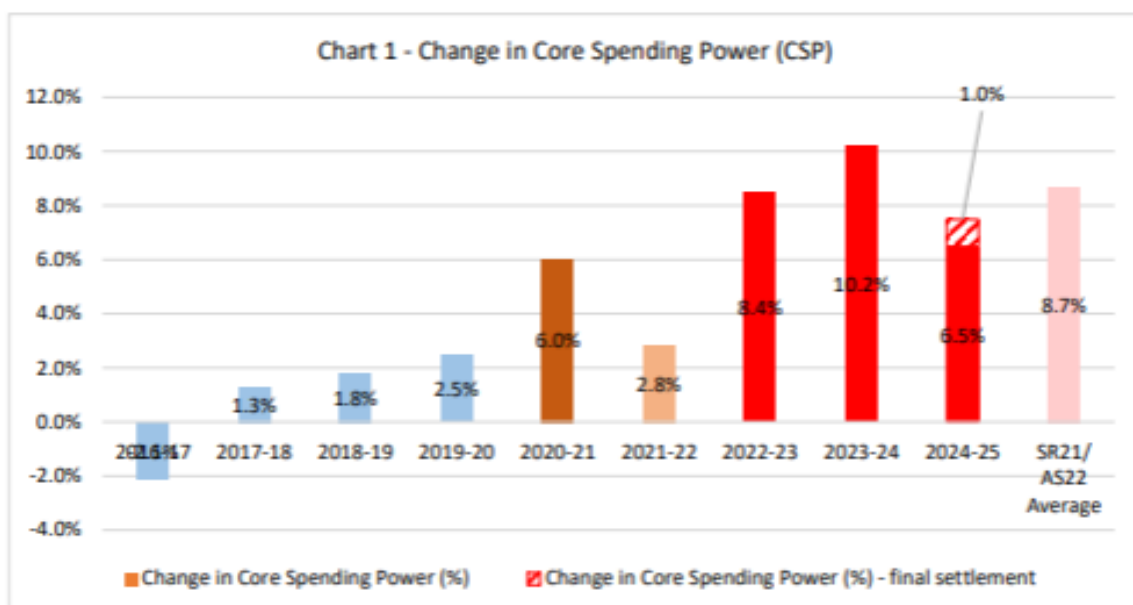
Recommendation 2(c) page 238 – Council Tax Setting – for approval.

The recommendation refers to Appendix A(b), pages 294 and 295 of the agenda. Following approval and formal notification by the preceptors, an updated version of the appendix is attached for approval. Amendments are highlighted and underlined.

Final local government finance settlement

The final local government finance settlement was published on 5 February 2024. As the council's funding has increased as a result, a summary of the changes is included and updated BSR tables provided.

The headline increase in funding for 2024/25 for the local authority sector was £600m. £500m of this was targeted at authorities with social care responsibilities. The overall increase in Core Spending Power (CSP) was 6.5%. The council's increase is 6.12%.



Core Spending Power table - page 260

Core Spending Power (CSP) - £m	2023/24 Final finance settlement	MTFS 2023	2024/25 Provisional finance settlement	2024/25 Final finance settlement	Final 2024/25 change from 2023/24
Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA), including Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	4.591	4.601	4.853	4.853	5.71%
Core funding grants, including funding guarantee	4.634	5.097	3.201	3.393	-26.78%
New Homes Bonus (NHB)	0.053	0.053	1.733	1.733	3169.81%
Council Tax ¹	9.712	10.306	10.173	10.173	4.75%
	18.990	20.057	19.960	20.152	6.12%

The increase in funding for 2024/25 is £263k, and the outlook for 2025/26 has been increased by £285k as a result.

Future prospects - page 261

Core Spending Power (£m)	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Business rates income	9.996	10.178	8.606	9.314	10.065
Less: Business rates growth	(5.313)	(5.414)	(3.761)	(4.389)	(5.052)
Baseline Funding Level	4.683	4.764	4.845	4.925	5.013
Revenue Support Grant	0.170	0.174	2.480	2.400	2.312
Grants	5.176	4.849	0.000	0.000	0.000
Council Tax	10.253	10.651	11.113	11.591	12.035
	20.282	20.438	18.438	18.916	19.360

As a result, contribution from reserves required to balance the 2025/25 budget has reduced by £263k to £1,634k. However, as the medium term outlook on funding remains uncertain, there is minimal impact on the resulting four year budget gap of £9.5m.

Savings requirements - page 268

Savings requirements - £000	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Total
Net savings requirement – new each year (MTFS 2022)	2,339	1,028	4,589	1,846	1,251	11,053
Net savings requirement – cumulative (MTFS 2023)	2,339	3,367	7,956	9,802	11,053	
Reduced income	762	650	650	650	650	
Bids	576	350	350	350	350	
Savings	(1,172)	(972)	(972)	(972)	(972)	
Increased income	(309)	(359)	(229)	(229)	(229)	
Net bids and savings	(143)	(331)	(201)	(201)	(201)	
Use of business rates growth to fund services	(1,500)	(1,500)	(1,500)	(1,500)	(1,500)	
(Increase) / decrease in baseline funding level compared with MTFS 2023	(82)	(71)	2,392	2,312	2,224	
Decrease / (increase) in core grants and RSG compared with MTFS 2023	<u>(196)</u>	<u>120</u>	<u>(2,480)</u>	<u>(2,400)</u>	<u>(2,312)</u>	
10% NHB transferred to GCP investment and delivery fund	173					
Decrease in council tax income - change in tax base and 2.99% increase	53	55	55	56	57	
Collection fund surplus - council tax	(123)					
Collection fund deficit - business rates	1,237					
Technical adjustments	(130)	(130)	(130)	(130)	(130)	
Contribution from reserves	<u>(1,634)</u>					
Total funding changes	<u>(2,202)</u>	<u>(1,526)</u>	<u>(1,663)</u>	<u>(1,662)</u>	<u>(1,661)</u>	
Change to indicative cost of capital financing strategy	6	57	137	207	260	
Total changes to savings requirements	<u>(2,339)</u>	<u>(1,800)</u>	<u>(1,727)</u>	<u>(1,656)</u>	<u>(1,602)</u>	
Revised net savings requirement - cumulative	<u>0</u>	<u>1,567</u>	<u>6,229</u>	<u>8,146</u>	<u>9,451</u>	
Revised net savings requirement -new each year	<u>0</u>	<u>1,567</u>	<u>4,662</u>	<u>1,917</u>	<u>1,305</u>	<u>9,451</u>

As a result of this, the forecast balance on the general reserve is £263k higher throughout the period, assuming that net savings are delivered in line with the budget gaps identified.

General reserves - page 278

GF reserve £'000s	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Balance at 1 April (b/fwd)	(28,061)	(22,987)	587	1,637	1,687	1,737
Contingency funding for adults with multiple disadvantages programme - BSR 2023/23	60	60				
WREN solar project - approved MTFs 2022 and BSR 2023/24	1,470	130				
Budgeted contribution to reserves per approved 2023/24 budget	(932)					
2022/23 Carry forwards	1,568					
2023/24 Funding approved at outturn – Greater Cambridge Impact (£200k)/Place Group Programme Delivery (£218k)/Climate Change Reserve (£80k)	498					
Funding approved at MTFs for 2023/24 pay award above 3% assumption in 2023/24 BSR	651					
Funding approved at MTFs to complete Our Cambridge transformation programme	700					
Restructuring arising from Phase 1 of City Services Review	548					
Application of previously approved funding in service budgets for capital projects	511					
Transfer to Civic Quarter Development Reserve		20,000				
Transfer to Climate Change Fund		750				
Contribution to balance 2024/25 budget		1,634				
<i>Indicative funding for further restructuring arising from future phases of Our Cambridge</i>		1,000	1,000			
<i>Indicative funding for the Climate Change Fund (CCF)</i>			50	50	50	50
Balance at 31 March before business rates growth (c/fwd)	(22,987)	587	1,637	1,687	1,737	1,787
Business rates growth – indicative growth element (at risk)	(7,400)	(5,313)	(5,414)	(3,761)	(4,389)	(5,052)
Use of business rates growth to fund services	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
Balance at 31 March including business rates growth	(28,887)	(9,126)	(11,990)	(14,201)	(17,040)	(20,542)

Appendix A (b)

Council Tax Setting 2024/25

1. The Council calculated its Council Tax Base 2024/25 for the whole Council area as **45,490** [Item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")]
2. The Council calculates that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2024/25 is **£10,252,991.10**.
3. That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2024/25 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:

- | | | |
|-----|------------------------|--|
| (a) | £220,831,839.10 | being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act |
| (b) | £210,578,848.00 | being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act |
| (c) | £10,252,991.10 | being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. [Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act] |
| (d) | £225.39 | being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), all divided by the amount at 1 above (Item T), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year. |

4. To note that Cambridgeshire County Council, the Cambridgeshire Police & Crime Commissioner Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Fire Authority, and the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each of the categories of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated in the table below.

5. That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the table below as the amounts of Council Tax for 2024/25 for each of the categories of dwellings in the Council's area.

Dwelling Band	City Council £	County Council £	Police & Crime Commissioner £	Fire Authority £	Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority £	Aggregate Council Tax £
A	150.26	1,079.88	<u>190.32</u>	54.84	24.00	<u>1,499.30</u>
B	175.30	1,259.86	<u>222.04</u>	63.98	28.00	<u>1,749.18</u>
C	200.35	1,439.84	<u>253.76</u>	73.12	32.00	<u>1,999.07</u>
D	225.39	1,619.82	<u>285.48</u>	82.26	36.00	<u>2,248.95</u>
E	275.48	1,979.78	<u>348.92</u>	100.54	44.00	<u>2,748.72</u>
F	325.56	2,339.74	<u>412.36</u>	118.82	52.00	<u>3,248.48</u>
G	375.65	2,699.70	<u>475.80</u>	137.10	60.00	<u>3,748.25</u>
H	450.78	3,239.64	<u>570.96</u>	164.52	72.00	<u>4,497.90</u>

The Council determines that, in accordance with Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the basic amount of its council tax for 2024/25 is not excessive

Liberal Democrat Group Amendment to the General Fund Budget

This amendment:

- Refocuses on the true findings from this year's public consultation on the budget and commits to reviewing the consultation process for future years;
- Doubles the City Services' Community Action Days to help reduce fly tipping;
- Restores and expands the Environmental Enforcement Team by two officers;
- Prohibits mopeds, motorcycles and unlicensed e-scooters from council open spaces;
- Funds two acoustic monitoring cameras to deter late night street racers;
- Enables a feasibility study for the replacement/upgrading of the Jesus Green toilets;
- Calls for acceleration of the transformation programme; reviews of market stall holder recruitment and of future steps with the crematorium; and evaluation of income generation from service provision to external organisations in other areas.

The council is channelling a lot of effort into strategy and envisaging big projects, as it should. But in doing so it seems to have stopped listening to the everyday needs of residents - and even stopped asking. It should be capable of doing both things.

The tightness of overall resources, the drive to re-design services and the challenges of the city's growth should not prevent flexing of resources to support improvements in outcomes, capitalising on what already works.

Incredibly the council's public consultation on the budget failed even to ask for feedback on what is actually in the budget. No helpful questions were asked about what could be done - more or less of. It only consisted of a series of abstract propositions. Even the responses to them are misread or misrepresented in the Budget Setting Report.

In describing the outcome of the consultation, the report (p252) completely ignores that the priority considered most important for the city was "essential public services", and instead falsely declares that others were, which actually drew much less support (p297). It also inaccurately states (p265) that responses indicated that people supported "reducing the specification of some services", when precisely the reverse was the actual response, in which they opposed it by a large margin (p306). Apparently Labour councillors were intent on reading the results as what best suited their own thinking, irrespective of what people actually said in the consultation.

The airbrushing of "basic services" from priorities speaks volumes and the erosion of service standards are part of a trend. In the Housing Scrutiny Committee we have already challenged the underperformance of housing maintenance for existing tenants and offered practical measures to start to correct this, only for them to be swept aside, despite little coherent argument against them.

In this General Fund budget we are proposing a series of measures to improve the council's approach to anti-social behaviour – speaking directly to what people are actually telling us is their priority of basic public services and the council's top three most valued services. There is no shortage of evidence of how public nuisance touches people's lives – whether it's fly-tipping, littering, waste management, private property used as a urinal, alarming late-night

noise from street racers, unsafe or illegal use of motorised two-wheelers. These are live concerns across the whole city and they are legitimate ones.

This is not the first time we have raised these issues. But that didn't stop last year's Labour budget cutting back on Environmental Enforcement Officers. And it didn't stop proposals to deter noisy street racers or to take action on e-scooters both being faintly blessed before just disappearing into the long grass. Meantime the council forges on without making a dent in the 2000 reported cases of fly-tipping each year, while at the same time preventing any further public monitoring of trends and performance by scrapping area committees which carried that out. So our amendment this year gives the opportunity to respond positively to try and make more of a difference with a series of practical funded measures. These in no way change the calculus for future financial strategy.

The measures build on community effort, clearer information and education, improving choices for the avoidance of nuisance, as well as making patrolling more intensive across the city.

Anti-social behaviour impacts people right across the social spectrum. But the wellbeing of the frail and the vulnerable is especially affected. It also makes it harder to grow and maintain community pride and cohesion, which we need to build in Cambridge.

On our wider critique of financial strategy, we welcome that plans are finally underway for the refurbishment of the Guildhall which could save ongoing costs and increase ongoing income from our still enormous reserves, potentially helping us avoid cutbacks in services and meet other policy objectives, such as carbon reduction. But our amendment addresses our other unanswered goals: an acceleration of the transformation process which since last year has instead been spread out even longer; a review of those services which are suffering from declining income; and examination of the scope for income generation from service provision to other organisations.

Cllr Karen Young – Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Finance & Resources

Cllr Tim Bick – Liberal Democrat Group Leader

The amendment to the budget recommendations:

A. On page 238, after “(a) Approve” insert:

“Subject to the following modifications:”

(i) II5222 – City Services increased income

Further increase additional income from City Services, through both variation of fees to organisers of commercial events on council open spaces and of the number of such events so long as within existing policy, without impacting community-led initiatives.

(£30k) recurring

(ii) RI5223 – Reduced income – City Services

Reduce the City Services reductions in income provided for from the market and crematorium. Actions have been referred to in order to turn round these two services from

the succession of annual income reductions, but no organised plan has been shared. The cancellation of a part of the reduced budget for income is designed to intensify and accelerate the actions.

(£30k) recurring

(ii) **S5205 – Central provision review**

Further reduce Central budget provision.

(£30k) recurring

(iii) **NEW – Expansion of Community Action Days**

Doubling the current year City Services programme of 16 Community Action Days, which prompt voluntary neighbourhood clear-ups through the deposit of unwanted materials that are unsuitable for weekly collections - further expanding an acceptable alternative to fly-tipping. The additional budget provision provides for a part-time Band 4 officer in the community engagement team to support planning, co-ordination and staffing of events, enabling full use of the existing unspent budget, as well as meeting costs of the additional events. The expanded programme to explore a mix of increased frequency and new locations across the city and opportunities to increase re-use and recycling.

£18k pa recurring

(iv) **NEW – Additional Public Realm Enforcement Officers**

The creation of two new Public Realm Enforcement Officer positions to increase the capacity of the existing team, which was reduced in last year's budget. The new officers to integrate into all aspects of the patrolling and investigative work of the team, addressing the range of nuisance behaviours including littering and fly tipping and enabling consideration of the council acquiring wider enforcement powers over prohibited vehicles on public open spaces.

£102k pa recurring

(v) **NEW – Prohibition of unauthorised vehicles on council public open spaces**

The City Council to explicitly communicate prohibition of mopeds and motorbikes (however powered) on its public open spaces as well as those e-scooters which are not authorised for use off private land. The bid provides for signage for all the relevant open spaces across the city. (Funded from the General Fund reserve).

£6k one-off

(vi) **NEW Acoustic monitoring cameras**

Funding of two acoustic monitoring cameras to enable joint working with the Police, Highways Authority and the Vision Zero partnership to deter and penalise those breaching the peace on Cambridge roads with anti-social driving and noisy vehicles. This takes forward the motion passed by the city council in November 2021 to take further action with partners on the nuisance which is widely experienced in the city. It is anticipated that the equipment would be operated by the Highways Authority and that penalty income would cover the cost of data management and penalty administration. (Funded from the General Fund reserve.)

£50k one-off

(vii) **NEW – Feasibility study for project to replace public toilets on Jesus Green**

Upgrading or replacement of the Rouse Ball Pavilion has been an agreed need for some years, as the antiquated facilities lack capacity and accessibility to match demand on Jesus Green. They continue to act as a magnet and a driver for anti-social behaviour. This is underlined by the closure of nearest neighbouring public toilets on Chesterton Road and Park Street and restricted opening of those on Midsummer Common. Funding to provide for work with stakeholders to develop actionable designs for inclusion in the council's capital programme or any other identified and available funding source. (Funded from the General Fund reserve.)

£25k one-off

(viii) **NEW – Annual allocation from Fixed Penalty Notice income**

Contribution from fixed penalty income to costs of proposed additional enforcement clear-up activity, which are legally authorised uses. The council has increased fixed penalties following an increase in the permitted ceiling by national government. Income flows to an earmarked reserve.

(£30k) recurring

B: On page 243, after (o) insert:

“(p) Transformation Programme

Increase efforts to accelerate the council's transformation programme to ensure its targets are met, and to avoid poorly evidenced erosion of valued services and short-term use of reserves to support ongoing services.

(q) Future Plans for Major Council Assets

Conduct a critical appraisal of future steps with the crematorium and of plans and options for recruitment of stall holders in the market square – both facilities showing a trend of reduced income – and report for member scrutiny with options before mid-year.

(r) Income generation from council services through provision to third parties

Investigate the model by which some councils provide a number of their services for other organisations on a commercial basis, generating income to contribute to the funding of their own services, and evaluate its potential application to Cambridge, bringing options to a meeting of the Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Committee before mid-year.

(s) Budget Consultation

Revisit the annual public consultation process on the budget, noting in particular the recommendation in the recent independent review of the council's budget process: s4.15 - https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/documents/s59728/FINAL_Cambridge_City_Budget_Setting_Process49215.pdf

Summary of budget amendments

£'000	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Bids and savings						
II5222 - City Services increased income		(30)	(30)	(30)	(30)	(30)
RI5223 - City Services reduced income		(30)	(30)	(30)	(30)	(30)
S5205 - Central provision review		(30)	(30)	(30)	(30)	(30)
NEW - Expansion of Community Action Days		18	18	18	18	18
NEW - Additional Public Realm Enforcement Officers		102	102	102	102	102
Total bids and savings		30	30	30	30	30
Allocation from earmarked reserve						
NEW - Annual allocation from Fixed Penalty Notice income		(30)	(30)	(30)	(30)	(30)
Total use of earmarked reserves		(30)	(30)	(30)	(30)	(30)
Use of GF reserve						
NEW - Prohibition of unauthorised vehicles on council public spaces		6				
NEW - Feasibility study for project to replace public toilets on Jesus Green		25				
NEW - Acoustic monitoring cameras (capital)		50				
Total use of GF reserve		81				
Impact on GF reserve		81	0	0	0	0

Impact of Liberal Democrat Group budget amendment on general fund reserves after final settlement adjustments

GF reserve £'000	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Balance at 1 April (b/fwd)	(28,061)	(22,987)	668	1,718	1,768	1,818
Contingency funding for adults with multiple disadvantages programme - BSR 2023/23	60	60				
WREN solar project - approved MTFS 2022 and BSR 2023/24	1,470	130				
Budgeted contribution to reserves per approved 2023/24 budget	(932)					
2022/23 Carry forwards	1,568					
2023/24 Funding approved at outturn – Greater Cambridge Impact (£200k)/Place Group Programme Delivery (£218k)/Climate Change Reserve (£80k)	498					
Funding approved at MTFS for 2023/24 pay award above 3% assumption in 2023/24 BSR	651					
Funding approved at MTFS to complete Our Cambridge transformation programme	700					
Restructuring arising from Phase 1 of City Services Review	548					
Application of previously approved funding in service budgets for capital projects	511					
Transfer to Civic Quarter Development Reserve		20,000				
Transfer to Climate Change Fund		750				
Contribution to balance 2024/25 budget		1,634				
Liberal Democrat Group amendment		81	0	0	0	0
<i>Indicative funding for further restructuring arising from future phases of Our Cambridge</i>		1,000	1,000			
<i>Indicative funding for the Climate Change Fund (CCF)</i>			50	50	50	50
Balance at 31 March before business rates growth (c/fwd)	(22,987)	668	1,718	1,768	1,818	1,868
Business rates growth – indicative growth element (at risk)	(7,400)	(5,313)	(5,414)	(3,762)	(4,389)	(5,053)
Use of business rates growth to fund services	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
Balance at 31 March including business rates growth	(28,887)	(9,045)	(11,909)	(14,121)	(16,960)	(20,463)

Climate change, equality and anti-poverty implications of the Liberal Democrat Group Amendment to the General Fund Budget

Expansion of community action days

Climate Change impacts – Medium positive impact – because it is likely that doubling the number of Community Action days would lead to an increase in recycling of waste and an associated reduction in carbon emissions.

Equality impacts – Helping to reduce fly-tipping may have a positive benefit in reducing hazards within neighbourhoods. This could have a positive impact around disability in improving access to spaces and reducing likelihood of injury caused by obstructions.

Poverty impacts – Low positive impact – because the increased number of Community Action days would provide increased opportunities for low-income residents to dispose of bulky waste free of charge.

Additional public realm enforcement officers

Climate Change impacts – Nil – because there would be no impact on carbon emissions

Equality impacts – Increasing the number of Public Realm Enforcement Officers to prevent littering and fly-tipping could have a positive benefit around disability by removing hazards, improving access to spaces and reducing likelihood of injury caused by obstructions. A greater presence of Enforcement Officers in open spaces could also help reduce anti-social behaviour, including hate crime. Greater enforcement over prohibited vehicles on public open spaces might reduce the risk of injury to members of the public, which could lead to disability.

Poverty impacts – No impact because does not impact on people's income.

Prohibition of unauthorised vehicles on council public open spaces

Climate Change impacts – Nil – because there would be no impact on carbon emissions

Equality Impacts – Raising awareness that mopeds and e-scooters are not allowed on council public spaces might have a positive impact for improving safety of pedestrians and cyclists on public open spaces, preventing injury that might cause disability.

Poverty impacts – No impact because does not impact on people's income.

Acoustic monitoring cameras

Climate Change impacts – Nil – because there would be no impact on carbon emissions

Equality Impacts - If the acoustic monitoring cameras deter anti-social driving, this could increase public safety and reduce risks of injury that might lead to disability.

Poverty impacts – No impact because does not impact on people’s income.

Feasibility study for project to replace public toilets on Jesus Green

Climate Change impacts – Nil – because there would be no impact on carbon emissions

Equality impacts – The feasibility study itself will not directly have any equality impacts but if recommendations are implemented there will be equality impacts that would need to be subject to an equality impact assessment.

Poverty impacts – No impact because does not impact on people’s income.

Increase in additional income target from city services

Climate Change impacts – Nil – because there would be no impact on carbon emissions

Equality impacts – No impacts have been identified specific to this amendment.

Poverty impacts – No impact because does not impact on people’s income.

Reduced decrease in income target from city services

Climate Change impacts – Nil – because there would be no impact on carbon emissions

Equality impacts – No impacts have been identified specific to this amendment.

Poverty impacts – No impact because does not impact on people’s income.

Further reduction in central budget provision

Climate Change impacts – Nil – because there would be no impact on carbon emissions

Equality impacts – No impacts have been identified specific to this amendment.

Poverty impacts – No impact because does not impact on people’s income

Annual allocation from fixed penalty notice income

Climate Change impacts – Nil – because there would be no impact on carbon emissions

Equality impacts – No impacts have been identified specific to this amendment.

Poverty impacts – No impact because does not impact on people’s income.

Section 25 report

These budget amendments would not require any substantive changes to the existing Section 8 – Section 25 Report. **[Page 285 refers]**

There are two types of amendment:

- General Fund (GF) recurring revenue amendments – increases in spending are balanced by improvements in income and annual allocations from an earmarked reserve. As a result, there are no changes to savings requirements as a result of these amendments. However, there is a risk that the use of £30k p.a. from the Fixed Penalty Notice reserve exceeds the surpluses credited to the reserve, and that income improvements may not be achievable or sustainable.
- One-off revenue and capital amendments - funded by the use of £81k from the general reserve. However, estimates show that the GF reserve remains above the prudent minimum level as assessed in MTFS 2023.

I therefore consider, in relation to the budget resulting from the application of these amendments, the estimates for the financial year 2024/25 to be sufficiently robust and the financial reserves up to 31 March 2025 to be adequate.

Caroline Ryba

Chief Finance Officer

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Full Council

Thursday 15 February 2024 6pm

A General Budget Commentary by the Green Group

Cllr Naomi Bennett Green Finance Spokes/ Leader

Cllr Jean Glasberg, Green Environment Spokes

Cllr Elliot Tong, Green Alternate Finance Spokes

1 Overview

The Green Group's focus continues to be:

- protecting residents from the cost of living crisis
- protecting residents from the climate emergency
- ensuring that residents voices are heard.

There is not a neat dividing line between these issues. They are closely connected.

Our budget commentary reflects the financial crisis facing the council. Money is short. So we have focussed on those areas where a small amount of money can have a big impact. We have also chosen ideas which have already been considered by other cities so that we can benefit from their experiences.

However, in a time of crisis, it's also important to consider the future we face as well as dealing with present challenges. With Michael Gove's supersize Cambridge proposals attracting so much attention, it is more important than ever to set out our own visions for our city.

2 Access all areas -a more inclusive Cambridge

Why a more inclusive city environment will help future proof shops and services for local residents.

2.1 The problem

Cambridge is a very challenging urban environment for residents and visitors with disabilities and their carers. It is important to understand that this is not just about physical disabilities.

There is a widespread attitude that we have a lot of historic buildings and it's just too difficult to make the public realm more inclusive.

2.2 Is a better public realm possible?

Yet, Chester, an even more historic city than Cambridge, a city with Roman and mediaeval buildings, is the only UK city to win the prestigious EU Access City Award.

Perhaps it isn't our buildings we need to change in Cambridge but our minds?

2.3 Why should we encourage change?

Our hostile public realm does not just exclude residents but it also means that they are more likely to spend their money elsewhere. At a time when hospitality and retail closures are at a 6 year high, the purple pound is more important than ever.

<https://wearepurple.org.uk/the-purple-pound-infographic/> shows how much businesses are missing out if they cannot cater for disabled families and their carers.

This extra income can help businesses survive the cost of living crisis. It's very noticeable when touring Chester, that the high street and hospitality businesses have held up far better than those of its neighbours.

2.4 Tourism

Purple tourism could be particularly important for Cambridge. Visit Britain notes that **a fifth** of all domestic overnight stays

and day trips are made by travellers that include at least one person with an impairment in their party.

<https://www.visitbritain.org/business-advice/make-your-business-accessible-and-inclusive/discover-value-purple-pound>

2.5 A long term project, not a quick fix

How can we work towards a more inclusive Cambridge?

Chester City Council have emphasised the importance of a holistic and thoughtful approach. They are very clear that this is a long term project not a quick fix. Many of the individual steps are small and inexpensive but they all need to fit together to work. Even today, 8 years after winning the EU award, they and their local partners continue to improve their access offer.

<https://towntoolkit.scot/case-studies/disability-and-accessibility-chester>

2.6 Next steps

We ask for senior officers to lead a study of the Chester model and bring back an initial report to Strategy and Resources in January 2025.

We also recommend the following early stage steps. These are:

- Training for councillors. (see our motion)
- Using the access work already done by the city's own property team to build a case study library for businesses
- Partnership working with business groups to encourage them to embrace change
- To approach BID about officers' proposals for better signage of public toilets
- A pause on any further public toilet closures

3 Access all areas -tackling travel troubles

Cost effective ways to remove barriers to active travel.

Councillors will already be aware that while key investments in cycleways has been made, cycling rates have actually declined.

In this section, we explore some suggestions to make active travel more popular and reverse that trend.

3.1 Fix our mobile speed cameras

We know that slower speeds on the roads make active travel safer and more pleasant for all of us. UK Transport Research Laboratory has stated that every 1% drop in urban speed limits means a 6% fall in road casualties. Over the years, councillors have diligently applied for 20 mile limits and mobile speed cameras to encourage drivers to respect those 20 speed limits. This cost the city council £13,000 in contributions to shared costs.

Today, not one of these 13 speed cameras is in working order and the county council has no plans to repair them.

We ask the city council to write to the county council and ask them to either get these 13 mobile speed cameras repaired (or replaced if this is not possible or more cost effective) and state a date by which they will do so. We understand that the problem is a financial one rather than an engineering one.

3.2 Ultra secure cycle parking

We know that another invisible barrier to bicycle use is theft. We welcome that the police have made this a special focus area and have achieved a substantial reduction. However, cycle theft is still a major deterrent to wider bicycle use in Cambridge, particularly for residents on lower incomes.

If the stolen bicycle is specially adapted for disabled use, any replacement has to be built to order and will cost thousands of

pounds, so the impact of theft on cyclists with disabilities is particularly severe.

Residents visiting the Netherlands have praised the fully enclosed cycle cages and other storage provided for a small parking charge or free in Amsterdam, Maastricht and Utrecht. We call upon the council to investigate similar provision in Cambridge

3.3 Potholes, parking and pollution

Another deterrent to active travel comes from potholes. We recognise that potholes are the responsibility of the county council not the city council. However, there is something that we can do to prevent our potholes getting worse.

Not all cars cause the same levels of damage to the highways. We ask that the city council follows the lead shown by Paris and introduces higher parking charges for heavier lifestyle choice cars such as SUVs.

Heavier cars also have higher emissions so encouraging drivers to leave SUVs at home or at the Park and Ride would also protect air quality. More importantly, SUVs involved in a road traffic accident are twice as likely to kill pedestrians as other cars.

3.4 Bat friendly solar lighting on offroad cycle and footpaths

Less confident cyclists particularly enjoy the ability to cycle away from car traffic on off road routes. However, in winter, it gets dark by the time people leave school or work. This forces people back on to busy roads at the second most dangerous time of day. In some cases, this means that they will not commute by bicycle at all.

Some popular cycleways benefit from small areas of bat friendly solar studs such as Midsummer Common. Solar powered motion sensitive lighting can provide additional safety with minimal biodiversity impact. We call upon the city council to confer with partner councils and agree a biodiversity friendly lighting standard for key off road bridleways and cycle routes and institute a rolling lighting installation programme for its parks.

3.5 Encouraging effective off road policing

The Chisholm trail has been a huge success story and has seen increased numbers on our off-road cycleways and bridleways. However, there has also been an uptake in drug related activity particularly at bridges and other intersections.

Resident groups say that they feel less safe in our green spaces and have begun to curtail their visits. This means that the active travel and health benefits of the £21million Chisholm Trail are reduced.

The purchase of 6 electric bicycles for long term loan to the police would cost under £10,000 and allow an effective second plain clothes patrol to operate over the very large area of green spaces, cycle paths and bridleways in our city.

Although PCC office has expressed enthusiasm for the proposal, they are not permitted to fund operational expenses by statute. A further application has been submitted for police funds. However, because the potential benefit to residents is so great and the cost so small, we ask the city council to consider funding the capital cost themselves should the police be unable to secure funding.

3.6 Be kind signage on parks and green spaces

Councillors will be well aware of resident complaints that walking and active travel in our green spaces has become unpleasant and unsafe because of fast travel by some

motorcycle and high speed hybrid cycles. Residents are also concerned about the impact on the Cambridge cattle.

We ask the council to agree and publish a recommended maximum speed guideline for our parks and green spaces

With the increased numbers expected from the greenways and the extended Chisholm Trail, there is a need to encourage more thoughtful and considerate behaviour.

Although there is no national legal speed limit in parks and green spaces, individual parks elsewhere in the UK have limits. It is still possible to use advisory signage to encourage more considerate behaviour. Some parks do have speed limits although these are generally those with roads going through them.

University of East Anglia studies show a positive impact from well designed advisory signage.

Closer to home, we have also seen the positive impact of the citizens' switch off campaign in Great Shelford against engine idling.

We ask for clear signage asking people to consider the impact on animals and other humans and cycle slowly through our green spaces.

All in all, we recommend these measures as a cost effective combination to remove barriers to active travel and so increase health benefits, tackle anti social behaviour and make Cambridge a better place to live and visit.

4 Preventing financial hardship to residents

In an ideal world, we would be making proposals for a local Universal Basic Income trial. This is not that world. Instead, we present proposals to use the council's spending more effectively to tackle the continued cost of living crisis.

4.1 Support for private tenants

HRA has an excellent financial advice and inclusion service for council tenants. The service is very busy and runs at full stretch. Officers are keen to use podcasts and other social messaging to get their message out to other officers, councillors and tenants and do as much good as possible with their time.

Not only would this create a valuable resource for council tenants, but the materials could be used by housing association and private tenants too.

The cost of living crisis is entering a new year and shows no sign of ending. Helping residents in this way would not reduce the quality and quantity of the service provided to council tenants.

It also helps prevent other residents from falling into debt and homelessness and needing the services of the HRA.

4.2 Fixed Penalty Notices / Volunteering

In October 2023, the council increased the levels of its Fixed Penalty Notices for environmental crimes. The stated aim of this policy was to provide a more effective deterrent.

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/news/2023/10/10/council-to-increase-fixed-penalty-notice-for-some-environmental-crimes>

We hope that this is the case in practice.

The problem is in getting the level of the fine right. A Fixed amount can't be right for everyone, particularly in the UK's most unequal city. What is an unpleasant hiccup for a wealthier resident is a financial catastrophe for our poorest residents.

There is no affordability check done before an FPN is issued. Even when the resident's address suggests that they are on a low income. Even when the FPN is issued just before xmas, when financial pressures are increased.

A £500 fine at short notice is enough to cause poorer residents to fall out of creditor payment arrangements or take out a pay day loan. This creates problems both for the resident's family and can increase pressure on council services.

The answer is not to lower the fines and make the deterrent less effective.

It is not to introduce a means test or a sliding scale of fines. This would make the FPN system too slow and too expensive as well as being invasive for residents.

(Studies show that if a penalty is set too low for the culprit, it can actually increase the problem behaviour it is designed to curb.(Source Gneezy and Rustichini experiment <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0022103114000675>))

We propose that offenders be given the option of doing community service volunteer work, preferably related to the offence. A typical FPN of £500 would equate to 33 hours litter picking at a notional exchange rate of £15 per hour. A reduction could be agreed for residents who complete their service quickly. In the short term, we propose that the FPN enquiry form be amended to include a prompt to include financial hardship details if desired.

5 Comments on the Budget process

As is the tradition for the Green group, we include comments on the budget and MTFS process.

5.1 Budget presentation

We are pleased to see more use of charts and graphics, but would like to see:

- Bar charts rather than pie charts (easier to interpret)
- Limiting reliance on colour (it gets copied in b&w)
- More labelling/ use of keys (clarity)
- No print smaller than 12 point (inclusion)

5.2 Budget content

Because of the s151 rules, a council must present a legal budget, even if that budget does not address all of the city's anticipated current and future needs.

We would like to see some simple information about some of the most important of those unmet needs.

In the past, the Housing Revenue account has included information on costs of retrofitting its social housing stock. We would like to see this extended to the city's general fund property portfolio and updated each year.

We also would like to see the council publish more of its high level risk assessment and horizon scanning along with the budget and MTFS papers.

A short and simple statement listing key risks, threats and associated costs would help councillors and officers to assess whether the budget and MTFS are fit for the future.

5.3 Basis of audit

We want to query the audit assumptions which include an assertion that the climate emergency has no significant impact

on the city council's finances. Can that assertion still be justified?

5.4 A robust reserves policy

We have a duty of care not just to current residents but to future ones. We should have a robust policy on how we use reserves rather than disbursing them on an ad hoc basis.

Put simply, we should be spending on needs to have, not nice to haves. and have a process in place that ensures we do so.

We take this opportunity to thank officers for their help in researching this report.

5.5 Technical note

This report is a commentary, not an amendment proposal. This reflects normal practice outside Cambridge City Council. Because we have chosen to focus on projects that do not require large sums of funding, if the ruling group chooses to take them up, all of them can be funded through existing budgets or using the virement procedure. A formal amendment is not required.

6 Closing remarks

The voices of our residents, their questions and our case work are the foundation of this report. We also wish to thank officers for their help and advice.

Cllr Naomi Bennett

Cllr Jean Glasberg

Cllr Elliot Tong

5 February 2024

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Present: Councillors McPherson (Chair), Davey (Vice-Chair), Bennett, Robertson (online), Sheil and Young (Online)

FOR ADOPTION BY THE COUNCIL

Pay Policy Statement

The Committee received a report from the Head of People. The report set out a draft pay policy statement as required under the Localism Act. The Localism Act requires the Council to have considered, approved and published a pay policy statement for each financial year. This must be approved by Full Council and be in place by 31st March each year.

Resolved (unanimously) to recommend to Council to:

- f. Approve the change in delegation for fixed term non-leadership team Director level roles and to amend the Constitution in accordance with paragraph 6.3 of the report.
- g. Approve the draft Pay Policy Statement 2023/2024 attached to the officer's report as Appendix 1.

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1.Cllr Payne	Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control, and Infrastructure	Do you think a Development Corporation for Cambridge is a good idea?
2.Cllr McPherson	Executive Councillor for Community Wealth Building and Community Safety	Can the Exec Cllr for Community Wealth Building and Community Safety update the Council on the work of the Cambridge BID?
3.Cllr Pounds	Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources	Can the Executive Councillor explain how the Government's confirmed Local Government Finance Settlement impacts our Council and residents
4.Cllr Ashton	Leader	Can you update Council regarding progress on Cambridge 2040?
5.Cllr Divkovic	Executive Councillor for Housing & Homelessness	In August 2023, the Council was reaccredited by the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance. What does the accreditation signify.

6.Cllr Nestor	Executive Councillor for Communities	In 2023, the Cambridge Folk Festival was awarded Greener Festival Outstanding Certification. As work is going into promoting and arranging the 2024 festival, could the Executive Councillor for communities let us know what work is the Council doing to build on this certification?
7.Cllr Lee	Leader	In light of a recent Housing Scrutiny Committee where the Executive Councillor not only failed to answer a member of the public's supplementary question, but instead answered someone else's question, how can the Leader of the Council ensure that when the public asks the Council questions, the public are listened to, respected and have their questions answered in a coherent way?
8.Cllr Todd-Jones	Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure	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?
9.Cllr Varkey	Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services	Could the Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services explain whether (and if so, how) the County Council's recent decision to reinstate herbicide spraying will affect our ambition not to use herbicides in our regular operations
10.Cllr Nethsingha	Leader	It is now just over 4 years since the UK left the European Union, following undoubtedly the most destructive and divisive political campaign of my life-time. Does the Leader of the Council agree with me that Brexit has been an unmitigated disaster for the UK, and for this City in particular? The damage to the opportunities of our world renown scientists, musicians, artists, our small businesses and young people from all walks of life has been deep and the consequences for our national debate and democracy if anything even worse.

11.Cllr Howard	Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services	Unauthorised tree felling and sapling vandalism is extremely distressing for residents. What steps is the council taking to investigate these acts?
12.Cllr Bick	Executive Councillor for Housing & Homelessness	Do the terms of the council's agreements with leaseholders of council-owned accommodation allow them to be used for holiday lets such as Airbnb?
13.Cllr A Smith	Executive Councillor for Community Wealth Building and Community Safety	Could the Exec Cllr for Community Wealth Building and Community Safety update the council on the ongoing progress of the Green Business Grants programme
14.Cllr Robertson	Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure	How is the supply of a sustainable water supply affecting the timetable for the emerging Local Plan
15.Cllr Blackburn-Horgan	Executive Councillor Housing and Homelessness	How, after the council set up the private renters forum, does the Executive Councillor believe the council can influence the exorbitant costs of renting a single room, now reaching £1350 per month in Queen Edith's Ward?

16.Cllr Holloway	Executive Councillor for Communities	Can the Executive Councillor for Communities give an update on the Council's pledge to introduce a youth strategy for the city at a previous council meeting last year?
17.Cllr Hossain	Leader / Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources	As we witness the rapid transition of council services online due to COVID-19, it's becoming evident that vulnerable residents, particularly the elderly, are facing significant hurdles in accessing essential support. Many of these individuals, who have made substantial contributions to our society throughout their lives, now find themselves isolated and struggling to navigate the digital landscape. Given the invaluable contributions of our elderly population to our community, how will the council consider the accessibility needs of all residents, particularly the elderly, and implement measures to address the current challenges they face in accessing essential council services?
18.Cllr Swift	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?
19.Cllr Porrer	Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services	Could the Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services please update members on progress on our policy, as agreed at Council in October 2021, to remove single use plastics from events on Council owned land.
20.Cllr Hauk	Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services	Can the Executive Councillor for Open Spaces please explain the reasons behind the Council's continued objections to allow traders onto Hobson Square despite widespread support from local residents and Councillors?

21.Cllr Flaubert	Executive Councillor for Communities	The stop and search targeted at the black and brown community impacts negatively on the whole community and the trust in the police force. In Cambridge the issue still persists. Could the Executive Councillor update Council on when we last received an update from the Police and Crime panel on stop and search statistics locally
22.Cllr Tong	Executive Councillor for Housing	Are you aware of the complaints made by residents over antisocial use of the Council's garage stock? Will the Executive Councillor commit to tightening up the terms of the garage rental agreements to prohibit their use for activities that are a nuisance or hazardous to other residents?
23.Cllr 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 as a Council to reduce our own emissions and how is it going?
24.Cllr Griffin	Leader	Could the Leader give an update on the plans in relation to a unitary council?
25.Cllr Sheil	Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services	Can the Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services give an update on the Play Strategy and discussions about inclusive play from the October Full Council meeting?
26. Cllr Glasberg	Executive Councillor Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure	What steps is the planning service and the Council's commercial property service taking to make better use of grey water? We are aware of the statutory ban on using grey water for domestic use which is why our question relates to non-domestic uses.

27. Cllr Young	Executive Councillor for Housing / Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources	Could the Executive Councillor please confirm that a Community Centre will be built and opened in the new GB2 site at Newbury Farm
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Secondary

1.	Cllr Hossain	I am deeply concerned about the closure of public toilets in Cambridge, including those in playgrounds and on Mill Road. The closure of these facilities not only affects the general population but also has a significant impact on children who frequent playgrounds and residents and visitors who rely on facilities on Mill Road. With public toilets closed in these areas, children may become accustomed to using open spaces as alternatives, which can have long-term implications on their habits, behaviours, and overall well-being. Therefore, I would like to ask what steps the council, particularly the leader of the council, is taking to address the closure of public toilets in Cambridge, especially in playgrounds and on Mill Road, and ensure the well-being and dignity of all residents, especially those who are most vulnerable.
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Officer briefing on care experience motion

What does “care experience” mean?

"Care experience" refers to the experiences of individuals who spent part of their childhood in the care system. The term "Care experience" is a description of a definition in law, it includes anyone that had the state as its corporate parent by virtue of a care order in accordance with the Children Act 1989 and amendments.

Individuals with care experience can face both direct and indirect discrimination throughout their lives. Care experience can also have long-term effects and challenges on individuals' lives. This could include mental health issues, social stigmas, lack of trust and social networks, financial struggles, and education, employment and housing challenges.

What would treating care experience as a protected characteristic mean?

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 sets out the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This duty requires public authorities to consider how their policies, practices, and decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act.

There are 9 protected characteristics under the Equality Act. Treating care experience as an additional protected characteristic would mean considering how the Councils policies, practice and decisions affect people who have care experience.

To help it comply with the PSED, the Council carries out Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs). EqIAs are a tool to systematically assess impacts on people who have protected characteristics. Officers could add care experience as an additional characteristic to its EqIA template so that officers and Councillors give due consideration.

What would be the implications of treating care as a protected characteristic mean?

Officers in Human Resources, Benefits, Housing, Community Development, Community Safety and Environmental Health have provided advice on the implications of the motion.

Some teams are already required to make provisions or give consideration to people with care experience. For example, within the housing benefit regulations, care leavers are excluded from being subject to shared rate of Local Housing Allowance rules if they are under 25. The Council has also added a question to its Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) application form, asking if household members are care leavers. Whilst this would not automatically grant a DHP, it will

inform the team to offer more support and understand that some options available to other households would not be appropriate for a care leaver. For instance, support from family.

The motion would require other teams to incorporate considerations relating to people with care experience into existing processes. For example:

- We would need to add care leavers to the list of protected characteristics in EqIAs and all Council officers developing new policies or projects would have to consider any potential impacts on care leavers. It may be necessary to provide staff with additional guidance and training to help them to assess these impacts.
- Human Resources would be happy to incorporate care leavers into the Council's recruitment processes to satisfy the requirements of the motion.
- Under the law the Council must pay due regard to equalities and the protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010 when making enforcement related decisions to ensure enforcement action is proportionate. The motion would mean amending the current Public Sector Equality Duty documents to include care leavers and any potential impact of enforcement action on care leavers. It may be necessary to provide staff with additional guidance and training to help them to assess these impacts.

Implications of the motion for homelessness support

Under the law, the following groups are already classed as being in priority need for support if they are homeless:

- a person under 21 who was (but is no longer) looked after, accommodated or fostered between the ages of 16 and 18 (except a person who is a 'relevant student');
- a person aged 21 or more who is vulnerable as a result of having been looked after, accommodated or fostered (except a person who is a 'relevant student')

The test of vulnerability, referenced above, is not straight forward. In practice, as evidenced by homelessness case law, the threshold is high. The Homelessness Code of Guidance states:

It is a matter of evaluative judgement whether the applicant's circumstances make them vulnerable. When determining whether an applicant is vulnerable, the housing authority should determine whether, if homeless, the applicant would be significantly more vulnerable than an ordinary person would be if they became homeless. The assessment must be a qualitative composite one taking into account all of the relevant facts and circumstances, and involves a consideration of the impact of homelessness on the applicant when compared to an ordinary person if made homeless. The housing authority should consider whether the applicant would suffer or be at risk of suffering harm or detriment which the ordinary person would not suffer or be at risk of suffering, such that the harm or

detriment would make a noticeable difference to their ability to deal with the consequences of homelessness.

Additionally:

Housing authorities must be mindful of the Equality Act 2010 and their public sector equality duties towards people who have a protected characteristic. If the applicant has a disability (or another relevant protected characteristic) the authority should assess the extent of such disability and the likely effect of the disability, when taken together with any other features, on the applicant if and when homeless. They will then need to decide whether the impact of this makes the applicant significantly more vulnerable as a result.

So, the motion could not change priority need and the test of vulnerability. It would mean that in carrying out vulnerability assessments, and being mindful of the Equality Act, consideration would need to be given, if relevant, to the fact that someone was a care leaver.

Lastly, when considering vulnerability as a result of having been looked after, accommodated or fostered, the code says that factors that a housing authority may wish to consider include:

- a. the length of time that the applicant was looked after, accommodated or fostered;*
- b. the reasons why they were looked after, accommodated or fostered;*
- c. the length of time since the applicant left care, and whether they have been able to obtain and maintain accommodation during any of that period;*
- d. whether the applicant has any existing support networks, particularly including family, friends or a mentor.*

Housing authorities should take particular care in assessing whether a care leaver aged 21 or over is vulnerable, and should take into account whether, if homeless, they would be at particular risk of exploitation, abuse or involvement in offending behaviour as a result

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Council 15 February 2024 Written Questions and Answers

1. Councillor Hossain

To Councillor Thornburrow the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure

Why has the Cambridge City Council not addressed the misleading signage designating certain parking spaces along Campkin Road & Mill Road for EV recharging only, when there is no power connected to facilitate such charging? This situation has led to confusion and frustration among electric vehicle owners and non-EV owners who receive fines despite complying with the signage. Additionally, it adversely impacts revenue and customer service. It's important to note that this issue was brought to the council's attention six months ago, yet remains unresolved. Will the council take immediate action to either connect power to the designated spaces or update the signage to accurately reflect the current situation?

Response:

Thank you for raising your concerns regarding the misleading signage designating certain parking spaces along Campkin Road car park & Gwydir Street car park in Mill Road for EV recharging.

We understand the frustration and confusion this has caused among electric vehicle owners and non-EV owners alike.

Officers have advised that enforcement on EV bays ceased on the 8th of January 2024 and they and our supplier acknowledge the urgency of this matter and are actively working to resolve it.

Our supplier is in the process of electrifying both sites.

As of now, Gwydir Street car park is undergoing earthing upgrades and will be ready for commissioning once completed. Similarly, Campkin Road car park is in the process of negotiations between the Council and the legal teams of the Distribution Network Operator (DNO) to agree on the terms of use.

In the interim, to prevent further confusion and inconvenience, Officers have arranged for the signage to be temporarily removed.

2. Councillor Hossain

To Councillor Gilderdale the Executive Councillor for Community Wealth Building and Community Safety

Several life-threatening incidents and antisocial behaviours have occurred in Nuns Way Recreation Ground, along with ongoing safety concerns, particularly regarding the lack of adequate lighting along the footpath. This area is also in proximity to the Omar Farooq Mosque and Kirkwood Road Retail Park. Would the council be willing to take urgent action to address this issue and ensure the safety of residents, especially women and children, who frequently use this route? Additionally, would the council consider installing CCTV cameras in the area as part of these safety measures?

Response:

Last year, the Community Safety team worked alongside the Police, Streets and Open Spaces, Sports and Recreation and North Cambridge Community Partnership (based at Nun's Way Pavilion) to improve safety in Nuns Way and on the Recreation Ground.

This included patrols by the local Police Community Support Officer (PCSO), removal of graffiti, weeds and litter and a remote CCTV camera which has been in place on the recreation ground for the last 6 months. We review the need for remote CCTV every three months, this review is based on the number of police reports or reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB) to the city council in the area the CCTV is deployed. We have not received any recent reports about ASB on the recreation ground, but given the concerns raised by Cllr Hossain we will keep the camera in place for a further 3 months after which we'll do another review.

The Council are also working with Women in Sport to conduct a research project called Make Space for Girls about women and girls' feelings of safety and participation in sport in local parks. As part of this proposal Nun's Way Recreation Ground has been put forward as one of the project locations and we hope to use this engagement with residents to improve feelings of safety on the recreation ground.

A member of the ASB team will also contact Cllr Hossain to find out more information about the reports he's received from residents and the steps that can be taken to address the issue.

3. Councillor Howard

To Councillor Gilderdale the Executive Councillor for Community Wealth Building and Community Safety

The London Metropolitan Police has noted an increase in hate crime following the Israel / Gaza conflict. It states that "Between 1 October and 18 October, we saw 218 antisemitic offences compared to 15 in the same period last year. Similarly, we saw an increase in Islamophobic offences from 42, to 101. These represent percentage rises of 1,353 per cent and 140 per cent respectively. "Can the city council confirm whether officers have seen any increase in racially motivated incidents , such as staff harassment, graffiti, neighbour disputes and ASB since 7 October 2023.

Response:

From March 2023 to February 2024 Cambridge City Council's Racial Harassment Service has received 8 reports from resident requesting support regarding racial hatred. 4 of those reports were received between March to 7th October 2023 and 4 from 7th October 2023 to February 2024.

The Council has proactively reached out to a range of community groups since the start of the Israel / Gaza conflict reassuring them of our commitment to address hate in any form, promote community cohesion and promote positive relations among the diverse cultures that peacefully coexist in Cambridge.

4. Cllr Jean Glasberg

To Councillor Thornburrow the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure and/or Councillor Carling the Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services

Zurich Insurance reports a 26% increase in overall subsidence claim volumes in 2022 and a 40% increase in the first half of 2023. Much of our city sits on clay soil which is particularly vulnerable to subsidence. Other insurers report similar outcomes and general concerns as to the impact of more volatile weather have been raised. Trees are often blamed for subsidence and are routinely felled on a just in case basis although the Association of British Insurers figures suggest that only 60 % of subsidence cases are tree related.

What steps do the relevant Executive Councillors consider should be taken, firstly to ensure new buildings are subsidence proof and secondly, that the planting of the new street trees we need for the city are managed to minimise their future loss to subsidence claims?

Response:

In comparison to the number of trees and buildings found in urban areas the actual incidence of subsidence is small. The relative risk of tree related subsidence, as stated, is increasing but the absolute risk is likely to remain low. That is not to disregard the significant impacts subsidence can have both on property owners affected and the environment.

The council will continue to demand robust levels of evidence to be provided in tree related subsidence cases it has to decide on. It will also continue to balance its duties to its neighbours and the environment when decision making and take prompt action when necessary.

Regarding its own stock, the council practices planting 'the right tree for the right place' which takes into consideration the relationship between trees and their surroundings. This approach is based on an increasing understanding of arboriculture that was not available to our predecessors.

Any planning applications that require building control, such as for new builds or extensions, are required to demonstrate that any new/replacement foundations comply with the building regulations.

This includes depth, ground conditions and proximity of trees. The foundation design will need to satisfy the Building Control body that they will be built in compliance with the appropriate regulations, ensuring that they are resistant to subsidence. This is generally achieved through checking plans, structural information, test results and site inspections.

5. Cllr Elliot Tong

To Councillor Wade the Executive Councillor for Communities

What steps has the council taken to investigate the adoption of a Leeds style negotiated stopping places <https://www.negotiatedstopping.co.uk/> for the GRT communities?

Response:

To follow

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