



Council 18 July 2024

Meeting recording: [Council - Thursday, 18th July, 2024 6.00 pm \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com)

Decisions

Agenda item 5. Recommendations of the Executive

Agenda item 5a. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Outturn Report

2023/24 (Executive Councillor for Housing)

- i. Approved carry forward requests of £12,507,000 in HRA and General Fund Housing capital budgets and associated resources from 2023/24 into 2024/25 and beyond to fund re-phased net capital spending, as detailed in Appendix D and the associated notes to the appendix in the officer's report.
- ii. Approved a revised capital financing structure for 2023/24, utilising £8 million of capital reserves set-aside for either debt redemption or re-investment, in place of borrowing and direct revenue financing of capital. This recognises the current high interest rates for borrowing and the need to maintain a prudent level of revenue reserves following the requirement to allow for payment of rent refunds arising from the rent regulation error.

Agenda item 5b. Annual Treasury Management Outturn Report 2023/24
(Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources)

- i. Approved the report, including Council's actual Prudential and Treasury Indicators for 2023/24.

Agenda item 5c. 2023/24 General Fund Revenue and Capital Outturn, Carry Forwards and Significant Variances (Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources)

- i. Approved carry forward requests totalling £2,959,740 of revenue funding from 2023/24 to 2024/25, as detailed in Appendix C of the Officer's report. These are carry forward requests in excess of £50k. Requests up to and including £50k which total £153,720 are approved via delegated authority to the Chief Financial Officer.
- ii. Approved carry forward requests of £19,855,000 of capital resources from 2023/24 to 2024/25 to fund rephased net capital spending, as detailed in Appendix D of the Officer's report.

Agenda item 6. Recommendations of Committees

Agenda item 6a. Employment (Senior Officer) Committee - Potential Termination Costs of Chief Executive's Office & Corporate Group Design

- i. Approved termination costs over £100k arising from the Chief Executive's Office and Corporate Group Design due to contractual severance.

Agenda item 6b. Civic Affairs Committee - Update on alternative options to Area Committees

- i. Approved that Area Committees be paused for the remainder of the municipal year, 2024/25, while pilot work on alternatives continue and while more detailed proposals are developed for implementation from the start of the municipal year 2025/26.

Agenda item 8a. Motion – Hope for Private Renters

Background to motion

It is now nearly 5 years since the last government made a commitment to reform the private rental market and protect people from “no fault” evictions.

These evictions were introduced by s21 Housing Act 1988. They have created a climate of fear for private renters, which can inhibit them from asking for much needed repairs.

After much delay a Renters (Reform) Bill 2024 was drafted which would have reduced the scope of “no fault” evictions, but was halted by the announcement of the July 4 2024 General Election.

Since the announcement of the proposed reform, rates of s21 “no fault” evictions have risen sharply, with 900 s21 “no fault” evictions per week recorded in the UK. The true figure is likely to be higher because not all these evictions are recorded.

Active Motion

This Council notes:

According to the 2021 Census, 31% of Cambridge households were in private rental accommodation. The welfare of these residents is of great importance to our city.

In October 2022, the Council passed a motion (<https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=29659>) resolving to, among other things, set up a private renters’ forum, to re-consider the need for a Selective Landlord Licensing Scheme, and to ensure that all HMOs in the city are inspected, improved if needed, and licensed. The Council is taking a proactive approach to private tenant engagement, with a presence in supermarkets and at events such as ARU Property Fair and the Big Lunch, as well as monthly drop-in sessions.

The Council has an HMO licensing scheme, and rogue landlords can be reported to the Council.

When residents are made homeless, there can also be an obligation placed on the council (“homelessness duty”). A rise in private tenants made homeless is likely to increase the strain on council resources.

Re-introduction of the Renters (Reform) Bill to Parliament or a similar bill would protect private renters from unfair treatment and improve their quality of life.

Any delay in re-introducing this bill or a similar one leaves tenants exposed to s21 eviction.

It is accordingly important that this bill (or a similar bill) is made law at the earliest possible date.

The Labour Party's 2024 manifesto states: 'We will immediately abolish Section 21 'no fault' evictions, prevent private renters being exploited and discriminated against, empower them to challenge unreasonable rent increases, and take steps to decisively raise standards, including extending 'Awaab's Law' to the private sector.' (<https://labour.org.uk/change/break-down-barriers-to-opportunity/>)

This Council resolves:

To welcome the Labour Party's commitment to immediately abolishing Section 21 evictions and to introducing other measures to support private renters, including setting up a National Landlords Register.

To keep under review how the Council can use and work within the framework of any new national legislation to further support private renters.

Useful Links (not part of active motion)

We have included some background papers that we found useful.

<https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/housing-and-land/improving-private-rented-sector/reforming-private-renting-london>

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10004/>

<https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/housing-and-land/improving-private-rented-sector/advice-renters>

We have also drawn upon the 2021 Census figures and the council's own Housing Facts.

Agenda item 8b. Motion – Sewage Pollution in our water

Council notes the public outrage displayed in the general election about the pollution of rivers, waterways and beaches by sewage – an outrage which is shared locally in relation to the River Cam.

Council further notes that change has begun, as seen in the inclusion of the Water (Special Measures) Bill in the King's Speech, a bill which will

- ensure water bosses face personal criminal liability for lawbreaking.

- give the water regulator powers to ban the payment of bonuses when environmental standards are not met.
- introduce a ‘code of conduct’ for water companies, so customers can summon board members and hold executives to account.
- and require water companies to install real-time monitors at every sewage outlet with data independently scrutinised by the water regulators.

Council therefore requests the Chief Executive write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Steven Reed, welcoming the inclusion of legislation in the very first King’s Speech.

Agenda item 8c. Motion – Our voting system

The Council welcomes the result of the recent general election which delivered a Labour Government for the first time since 2010. However, low turnout remains a persistent issue in national and local government elections with participation reducing again at the most recent City Council elections in May 2024. Political engagement is perceived to be particularly low among those aged under 30 and that the lack of engagement from young people is something which should be of concern for all political parties.

This Council believes that electoral reform can help to improve both engagement and tackle polarisation within our political system and will therefore:

- Ask the Chief Executive to write to the Government asking it to re-introduce proportional voting systems for the elections for Police and Crime Commissioners and Directly Elected Mayors during this parliament, at the same time expressing regret that the single transferrable voting system was removed from these elections in the first place.
- Ask the relevant Officers at the City Council to develop a plan, working with partners at the County Council (who passed a similar motion earlier in the year) to encourage greater understanding of the role of the different tiers of local government here in Cambridge, and in particular to bring forward proposals about how we can work to better engage with younger people in Cambridgeshire to increase participation in local elections.

Agenda item 8d. Motion – Declaration of a Water Emergency

This Council notes with concern the rapidly accelerating water crisis that we are facing and it further notes that, following the declarations of a climate emergency and a biodiversity emergency in 2019, actions have been taken across the Council in relation to this issue, many in partnership with South Cambridgeshire District Council as part of our Shared Planning service, including:

- Responding to public questions with the Water Crisis Forum 2019
- An Integrated Water Management Study - the Stantec Report 2020
- The Greater Cambridge Chalk Streams Report 2020
- A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2021
- The Council Rivers, Safe Swimming and Sewage Motion 2022
- The Council Stop Dumping Sewage in our River and Chalk Streams Motion 2023
- A Water awareness campaign in 2022
- A Biodiversity Strategy 2022 – 2030
- Appointment of Chalk Stream Officer 2023
- A Designated Bathing Water area of the Cam 2024

And work to ensure that our emerging shared local plan has the highest proposed standards of water sustainability measures, including drainage, grey and rain water reuse.

Council resolves to continue to provide support for the ongoing work of the Water Scarcity Group in both its focus on new supply side measures to ensure timely progress with new pipelines and reservoirs for new sustainable developments, and also to ensure that future measures for water credits, grey and rain water recycling and retrofitting linked to new and existing developments in and around the Greater Cambridge area are robust and evidenced.

Council also resolves to hold Cambridge Water and Anglian Water to their commitment to a public information/education programme that will help residents and businesses use less water.

Council believes that, within the powers available to us, we are responding to the water emergency that faces us, working to ensure the sustainable development of thriving communities in Cambridge.

Council therefore resolves to continue to do so, confident that the newly elected Labour government will provide legislative, practical and

financial support for local authorities as we deal with these pressing issues.

Agenda item 8e. Motion – Cambridge: Our Vision

Council notes:

- Cambridge is a vitally important city both to the region and to the country's regeneration. There has always been government interest and investment in the Cambridge area, from Harold Wilson to Gordon Brown and more recently former Secretary of State Michael Gove's 2050 proposals.
- The City Council has and will continue to play an essential role in the running of the city, providing important democratic governance and local decision making.
- With renewed interest in the city, including from the new Labour government, it is important that the Council establishes its own vision for Cambridge's future, one which is led by residents, workers and businesses here.
- The Council's current vision was written and adopted in 2014/15, following Labour taking over control of the Council. Since then, the city has seen significant change, as it has continued to grow rapidly, and become more diverse.
- Cambridge and the council have lived through Brexit, Covid, cost of living crises and the impacts of conflict around the world.
- This vision has been informed by conversations with residents about what matters most to them now and in the future; by councillors in their roles as community champions; and by our staff and partners. This includes the 'Rich Picture', 'State of the City' and the 'Cambridge Conversations' led by Executive Councillors.
- The vision is high-level and accessible. Many council strategies, delivery plans and targets fall out of the vision and will be further developed and refined, ideally with partners and communities, to help shape a new corporate plan from 2025-2030.

Council believes:

- This vision reflects the values, aspirations and needs of our local communities based on these conversations and ongoing collaborations.

- This vision will help the council in conversations about the future of Cambridge. It will enable us to represent the views of our citizens and to assert the city's future needs in discussions we have with our partners and our recently elected Labour government.

Council resolves:

- To adopt the Vision statement which positions the Council as a place maker, convenor and community facilitator as well as playing a core role in providing public services.
- To promote our vision and ambition for the future of Cambridge, building on our vision for One Cambridge, Fair for All, to underpin and direct the work of the council and our partnerships including the emerging Local Plan and Cambridge 2050.

Cambridge: Our Vision

One Cambridge, Fair for All

Where:

- **Residents enjoy a high quality of life and exemplar public services.** Cambridge is a place of high employment where everyone has a warm, safe, and affordable home, and beautiful open spaces to enjoy. Communities are thriving and empowered, supported by well-run public services, and drawing on shared prosperity with greater equality in health and educational outcomes.
- **Decarbonisation and sustainability are central to prosperity.** Cambridge is a net zero carbon city, where people and nature enjoy a clean river, clean air, and biodiverse green spaces. Strong nature networks are coordinated between relevant bodies to combat the impacts of social and climate injustice.
- **Innovation benefits people and planet.** Cambridge champions pioneering discoveries which shape a better future for people and planet. There is a lifelong citywide commitment to learning which enables every resident to develop their skills and fulfil their potential. Businesses are key to the success of a thriving local economy which benefits residents and workers.
- **Development is sustainable and inclusive.** High-quality social housing, sustainable public transport alongside key infrastructure is prioritised to ensure Cambridge is a vibrant and caring city.

Cambridge's beautiful architecture and public realm, with well-used community spaces, promote pride and wellbeing and is accessible to all.

- **Arts, sports, and culture are thriving.** Cambridge celebrates the city's diversity through a vibrant arts and cultural scene, including music, festivals, sports, and food and drink. Accessible arts, sports and culture provide spaces for people of all ages to come together to enjoy the city, both during the day and at night.

- **Democratic accountability is genuine and accessible.**

Residents actively participate in democratic life and transparent decisions are made by and for the people of Cambridge. There is genuine partnership between academic, business, and civic communities to enhance residents' prosperity. Local control, devolution, and community empowerment are championed through transparent and simplified local government.

Agenda item 8f. Motion – TUC Volunteer Charter: Strengthening Relations Between Paid Staff and Volunteers

This Council Notes:

1. The key role volunteering plays both locally and nationally.¹
2. Our gratitude to the many thousands of volunteers that do so much to enhance our city and, particularly, to support the most vulnerable. Our equal gratitude to our staff, who work so tirelessly for our council and our city.
3. The impact that the economic downturn and the cost-of-living crisis have had on our paid and voluntary sectors².
4. The importance of sound core principles in enhancing relations between paid staff and volunteers.
5. That volunteering helps build social capital and community cohesion and plays an important role in the delivery of key public services. But that volunteers should not be a substitute for paid staff.

This Council Resolves to:

¹ According to Support Cambridgeshire's 2023 State of the Sector Survey, approximately 2,100 charities operate in Cambridgeshire. These charities employ an estimated 5,300 people, with over 30,000 volunteers and nearly 11,000 trustees recorded with the Charity Commission. This does not include the many more people who give of their time through mutual aid.

² Support Cambridge's 2023 State of the Sector Survey highlighted issues in the local voluntary sector. Increasingly, the voluntary sector is struggling to both recruit volunteers, trustees and staff. Lack of funding was the biggest issue raised.

1. Affirm and adopt the TUC Volunteer charter principles as set out below.
2. Use these principles as a guide to review our more detailed policies and procedures, which reflect our local needs and circumstances. To do this in discussion with local union representatives and volunteering managers.
3. Encourage partner organisations to do the same, to make sure paid staff are protected and volunteers supported.

TUC Volunteer Charter³

Preamble

This Charter sets out the key principles on which volunteering is organised and how good relations between paid staff and volunteers are built. It has been developed jointly by Volunteering England (VE) and the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and has been endorsed by the wider volunteering and trade union movements.

Its starting point is that volunteering plays an essential role in the economic and social fabric of the UK. It is estimated that some 22 million people volunteer each year, contributing around £23 billion to the economy. Volunteering helps build social capital and community cohesion and plays an important role in the delivery of key public services. Volunteering is also good for the volunteer: it helps improve health and wellbeing and provides opportunities for individuals to acquire skills and knowledge that can enhance career development or employment prospects.

This Charter demonstrates the value and importance that both organisations place on voluntary activity and the time, skills and commitment given by volunteers.

This Charter recognises that voluntary action and trade unionism share common values. Both are founded on the principles of mutuality and reciprocity, leading to positive changes in the workplace and community. The trade union movement itself is built on the involvement and engagement of volunteers.

³ Source, <https://www.tuc.org.uk/research-analysis/reports/charter-strengthening-relations-between-paid-staff-and-volunteers> (2009)

Volunteering England and the TUC acknowledge that on the whole, relations between paid staff and volunteers are harmonious and mutually rewarding. They can, however, be enhanced by good procedures, clarity of respective roles, mutual trust and support. This Charter sets out the key principles to help underpin good relations in the workplace.

These principles should be used as a guide by individual organisations to develop more detailed policies and procedures, which reflect local needs and circumstances. This should be done, wherever possible, between local union representatives, employers and volunteering managers.

Paid work is any activity that is undertaken at the direction of an employer and is financially compensable.

Volunteering is freely undertaken and not for financial gain; it involves the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community.

Charter Principles

1. All volunteering is undertaken by choice, and all individuals should have their right to volunteer, or indeed not to volunteer;
2. While volunteers should not normally receive or expect financial rewards for their activities, they should receive reasonable out of pocket expenses;
3. The involvement of volunteers should complement and supplement the work of paid staff, and should not be used to displace paid staff or undercut their pay and conditions of service;
4. The added value of volunteers should be highlighted as part of commissioning or grantmaking process but their involvement should not be used to reduce contract costs;
5. Effective structures should be put in place to support and develop volunteers and the activities they undertake, and these should be fully considered and costed when services are planned and developed;
6. Volunteers and paid staff should be provided with opportunities to contribute to the development of volunteering policies and procedures;
7. Volunteers, like paid staff, should be able to carry out their duties in safe, secure and healthy environments that are free from harassment, intimidation, bullying, violence and discrimination;

8. All paid workers and volunteers should have access to appropriate training and development;
9. There should be recognised machinery for the resolution of any problems between organisations and volunteers or between paid staff and volunteers;
10. In the interests of harmonious relations between volunteers and paid staff, volunteers should not be used to undertake the work of paid staff during industrial disputes.

This Charter stands between Volunteering England and the TUC as a statement of principles and good practice. It is also a model for use by individual unions, volunteer involving organisations in the public, third and private sectors and other bodies in discussions around the use of volunteers.

Agenda item 9. Written Questions

No written questions were received.

Agenda item 10. Record of Urgent Officer Decision

Agenda item 10a. Appointment of Councillor representatives to the Conservators of the River Cam.

The decision was noted.

Agenda item 11. Notification of Appointment of s151 Officer.

The appointment was noted.

For more information please contact Democratic Services:

- democratic.services@cambridge.gov.uk