



Council 28 November 2024

Meeting recording: [\(1\) Cambridge City Council - YouTube](#)

Decisions

Agenda item 4. Recommendations of the Executive

Agenda item 4a. Treasury Management Half Yearly Update Report 2024/2025 (Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources)

- i. Approved the Council's estimated Prudential and Treasury Indicators for 2024/25 to 2027/28 (Appendix A).

Agenda item 4b. Civic Quarter Project Update (Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources)

- i. Noted the indicative capital cost budget of £55m as set out in 8.3 and approved an allocation of £3m from the existing Civic Quarter reserve for stage 3 design costs and associated on-costs.

Agenda item 6. Motions

Agenda item 6a. Support for an Essentials Guarantee

The Council notes:

- The City Council was one of the founding members of the Food Justice Alliance (formerly Food Poverty Alliance), formed in 2017.
- As a result of this partnership work, the Labour-led council funds and facilitates work to deal with the demand for affordable food and campaign for food justice and has passed a motion declaring Cambridge a right to food city.

- Most recently, partnership work with Cambridge Sustainable Food and the City Council resulted in Cambridge achieving a 'Gold Sustainable Food City' accreditation. This signals that local work is 'at the forefront of national and international initiatives, instigating transformative change within local food systems'.
- The significant increase in need for emergency food in Cambridge, with Cambridge City Foodbank providing more than 17,000 emergency food parcels in the last 12 months, a 74% increase on the same period in 2020/21.
- That for the first time in its history, the majority of people Cambridge City Foodbank supports with emergency food will be repeat rather than one-off visitors, with approximately 80% visiting less than 4 times, demonstrating that a higher proportion of people who experience food security in Cambridge now continue to experiencing hunger and hardship on an ongoing basis.
- That as a result of austerity policies by the previous government around 5 in 6 low-income households on Universal Credit are going without at least one essential like food, a warm home or toiletries,¹ which shows that the social security system inherited by the Labour government has not been providing people with enough to afford the essentials.
- As a result of the 'Essentials Guarantee' campaign by national organisations including the Trussell Trust and Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the Labour government took positive steps to address the issues raised in their Autumn Budget. The Trussell Trust noted following the budget that 'it's a welcome relief to see the UK government make a first step towards a more supportive social security system, introducing what it's calling a Fair Repayment Rate in Universal Credit'. This is a significant change, capping debt repayments to 15% (previously 25%) to allow more households to keep more of their financial support.
- This has been welcomed by national organisations as an important step towards the Essentials Guarantee, alongside various other commitments for social security including increasing the Carer's Allowance threshold, additional funding for the Household Support Fund and an increase in the minimum wage to make it a 'genuine living wage'. The Trussell Trust have additionally pointed to other positive measures brought in by the Labour government to turn the tide on poverty and inequality, including long-term investment in social housing and reforms to Right to Buy.

¹ Joseph Rowntree Foundation: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/social-security/guarantee-our-essentials-reforming-universal-credit-to-ensure-we-can-all-afford-the>

- That Cambridge MP, Daniel Zeichner has welcomed the steps the Labour Government is taking to address this issue, stating that ‘The previous Government’s decisions, such as the damaging mini-budget of September 2022, significantly worsened the situation, harming the most vulnerable in our society, and I want to see an end to widespread reliance on emergency food parcels’, while highlighting that the steps outlined in the recent budget ‘will help transform people’s lives for the better.’
- That 9.3 million people in the UK face hunger and hardship, meaning their household is more than 25% below the Social Metrics Commission poverty line. This represents one in seven people in the UK, and one in five children. Without action, a further 425,000 people are projected to face hunger and hardship by 2026/27.²

The Council resolves:

- To support the Labour party with their commitment to review Universal Credit, tackle poverty and ‘end mass dependence on emergency food parcels which is a moral scar on society’, as well as their work to improve social security in line with the issues raised by the Essentials Guarantee campaign.
- To continue to support the transition of food hubs in the City to Social Supermarkets, a more sustainable model which is based on the principle of dignity and choice to users; complimenting and supporting the local emergency food banks.
- To continue to support the Food Justice Alliance, which this council helped to fund, to continue to tackle food poverty with local organisations and our statutory partners.
- To convene a food justice conference in February 2025, to explore how food can drive real change in building stronger communities and tackling poverty; building on years of collaborative efforts with Cambridge Sustainable Food and other partners, that the Labour-led council both fund and have supported since 2015.
- To instruct the Leader of the Council alongside the Labour MP for Cambridge, Daniel Zeichner, to write to the Chancellor and Secretary to the Department for Work and Pensions to support the steps already taken by the Labour Government in line with the Essentials Guarantee and outline the Council’s support of the Essentials Guarantee.

² *The Cost of Hunger and Hardship*, Trussell, 2024: <https://www.trussell.org.uk/news-and-research/publications/report/the-cost-of-hunger-and-hardship>

Motion 6b. Street Lighting on Kings Hedges parks and open spaces.

Council notes:

- a. The Council manages 37 lights on King's Hedges Recreational Ground (including the Pulley Park area) and 11 lights on Nuns Way Recreational Ground, making 48 lights in total.
- b. There is no known evidence that there are widespread community concerns about lighting. During the past 11 months since January 2024 there has been 1 report of anti-social behaviour (ASB) at the Pulley Park and 1 report on Nuns Way, making 2 reports of ASB in total.
- c. The alleged arson attack on the new Pulley play area is not pertinent to this motion as this tragic event occurred during daylight hours.
- d. Office for National Statistics data shows that four out of five women and two out of five men feel unsafe walking alone after dark in a park or other open space.
- e. This Council has recently funded a research project by Women in Sport to look at girls' perceptions and experiences of parks and open spaces in the city. The report highlighted barriers to accessing parks, including feelings related to safety.
- f. Research has not identified a consistent correlation between higher light levels on pedestrian paths and greater public confidence in using said paths.
- g. A review of evidence by the College of Policing found that improved street lighting reduced violent crime and property crime by 21% on average

Council calls for:

- a. A feasibility review to explore the installation of various possible lighting treatments on all or part of Nuns Way Recreation Ground and the Pulley Park area and for this review to be reported back to councillors.

Notes:

BBC News, 'Arson investigation under way after play park fire', 1 October 2024, [link](#)

Office for National Statistics, 'Perceptions of personal safety and experiences of harassment, Great Britain: 2 to 27 June 2021', [link](#)

Cambridge City Council, 'Women in Sport', 'Access to Nature for Teenage Girls in Cambridge', Insight Report, October 2024

Fotios, S. and Castleton, C., (2016), 'Specifying Enough Light to Feel Reassured on Pedestrian Footpaths', Leukos, 12(4), [link](#)

College of Policing, 'Street Lighting', [link](#)

Motion 6c. Cambridge Post Office

Council notes that

1. The Post Office has proposed to close 115 branches in the UK, including Cambridge's city centre "Crown Office" on St. Andrew's Street;
2. That a local Labour-led campaign in October 2018 condemning proposals to move Cambridge's main Post Office into WH Smith including representations from Labour MP Daniel Zeichner, trade unions and labour councillors succeeded in securing a withdrawal of such proposal;
3. The current Post Office located in a prominent and accessible high street location close to public transport, is routinely busy and widely used by residents across the city as well as by its many visitors;
4. The Post Office is a wholly-owned government corporation, representing the nature of the public service that it provides and the social impact it makes.
5. That the Communications Workers Union (CWU) has condemned the closure plans which will put about 2,000 jobs at risk, stating that 'CWU members are victims of the Horizon scandal and for them to now fear for their jobs ahead of Christmas is yet another cruel attack.' Additionally, Labour MPs have expressed concern about the proposed closure of the branches and called for the Post Office to preserve its community presence.
6. Cambridge's Labour MP Daniel Zeichner has continued to be outspoken to support the local Cambridge branch, stating that 'News of its potential closure raises concerns about service continuity, accessibility on their plans and urging them to prioritise the needs of our community in their decision-making.'

7. Daniel Zeichner has been in touch directly with the Post Office who have confirmed that no decisions have yet been made regarding its Directly Managed Branches and agreeing to a meeting where he will continue to advocate for the interests of Cambridge residents and businesses.

Council believes that:

1. It is a legitimate expectation that a growing city such as Cambridge, which includes a large tourist sector, continues to maintain a standalone Crown Office in its centre to complement the network of franchised postmasters serving neighbourhood areas and sparsely populated areas, who combine their service with other businesses;
2. That the alternative, as proposed in the previous exercise, to integrate the main post office as a subordinate activity of a corporate retailer, will not be acceptable on grounds of visibility, accessibility or trusted public service ethos;
3. The withdrawal of this public service provider operating in its own right from the city centre would be a regrettable erosion of diversity on the high street, removing an important ingredient of many people's wider purpose in going there.

Council resolves to make representations against the proposed closure in Cambridge and authorises the Chief Executive to communicate these within the appropriate Post Office consultative channels, alongside local Cambridge MP Daniel Zeichner in his ongoing conversations with the Post Office and government.

Motion 6d. Further action on Pollution

Council notes:

- That the River Cam at Sheep's Green received Bathing Water Designation in May 2024, following a Labour motion at Full Council in July 2023.
- That a main goal of the application was to provide information on pollution levels to help swimmers to swim safely and to create a 'Driver' to increase efforts by Anglian Water and the Environment Agency to improve water quality.
- Serious concern over the Environment Agency's monitoring during the 2024 bathing season (15 May to 30 September 2024) has

recorded E. coli levels ranging from 980-6400 colonies/100ml at Sheep's Green and that this gives a strong indication the water classification will be "Poor".

- That once the Environment Agency's classification is available, the City Council will display a notice at Sheep's Green showing the classification.
- That if, as anticipated, the classification is 'Poor', notice will include advice against bathing.
- That Anglian Water has allocated £4.6m for a study and subsequent upgrades to Haslingfield Water Treatment Works under its 2025-2030 AMP8 business plan, subject to receiving Bathing Water Designation and subsequent approval by Ofwat (link: <https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/siteassets/household/about-us/pr24/anh01-our-plan-2025-2030.pdf>).

Council resolves:

- To write to the Environment Agency and Anglian Water once the bathing water assessment is made available, welcoming the increased availability of information about the quality of water and its suitability for bathing.
- If the result of the assessment is 'poor', to use that letter to express concern at the indications of unacceptable levels of faecal pollution revealed by the monitoring and to highlight the risk this poses to the health of swimmers and other recreational water users on the river Cam.
- At the same time as expressing concern, the letter should demand that agencies involved take urgent action to investigate and address the causes of pollution, as required by the Bathing Water Act 2013, and that they keep this Council informed on progress with a report to the Chief Executive every six months.

The Council should request that their investigations must include:

- The adequacy of the performance of Haslingfield Water Treatment Works and Foxton Water Treatment Works, and the unacceptable frequency of storm overflows.
- The frequency and impact of overflows from sewage pumping stations in Harston, Hauxton, Haslingfield and Grantchester.
- The frequency and impact of bursts in the Rising Mains connecting Haslingfield, Harston, Hauxton and Grantchester to Haslingfield Water Treatment Works.

- Potential misconnections into surface water drains flowing into Hobsons Conduit, Vicars Brook and Paradise Local Nature Reserve, which then flow into the River Cam just upstream of Sheep's Green.
- The murky (turbid) water in the River Cam, and whether this may be impeding the natural action of sunlight which would otherwise help by degrading faecal bacteria released upstream.

Background

The 2024 bathing water season, with weekly monitoring by the Environment Agency at Sheep's Green, has now finished for the year. The resulting classification won't be released until sometime in November, but from the results already available online it's obvious that, as expected, the classification will be "Poor".

This classification is what we all expected, and it triggers an obligation on the Environment Agency and Anglian Water to investigate and then fix the causes. In expectation of this, Anglian Water has put around £5M in the budget for the Apportionment study and subsequent upgrades to Haslingfield Water Treatment Works (a.k.a the Sewage works)

The official Apportionment Study won't start until next financial year, but the EA and AW are already undertaking preliminary investigations. Cam Valley Forum is providing local expertise and additional testing.

Following a "Poor" classification the city council will be required to display a notice about the Poor water quality, with the addition that "bathing is not advised".

Environment Agency Test Results available here

<https://environment.data.gov.uk/bwq/profiles/profile.html?site=ukh1201-09801>

Bathing Water Regulations

2013 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2013/1675/regulation/13/made>

Motion 6e. Improving Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) in Cambridge

Council notes:

- That private rented sector housing is generally considered the worst quality housing in the UK.
- In relation to licensable HMOs:
 - That houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) provide an important, positive first step for many Cambridge residents to move into and find work and start their journey on the housing ladder;
 - That dwellings being converted to HMOs for over 6 people must obtain planning permission for change of use to HMO usage (a sui generis use) and that HMOs for five or more persons not forming a single household must obtain a licence from the City Council, enabling conditions to be inspected and enforced, along with building control approval;
 - That a list of all HMOs licensed by the council is publicly listed on the council's website, to enable tenants to check whether their landlord holds a suitable licence. Renters can access support from the Council's Environmental Health team regarding private sector renting and support with poor conditions in their housing. As a result of this licensing work, the Council has identified several landlords with unlicensed properties, and used its enforcement powers to issue penalty notices, including financial penalties totalling more than £8,000 in 2023.
- In relation to unlicenseable HMOs:
 - That smaller dwellings, with three or four persons forming two or more households, count as an HMO but do not require a license to operate or planning permission (as they fall under Permitted Development), however these may require building control approval;
 - That all private sector landlords are required to meet legal standards, even if they are not renting licensed HMOs. However, it is clear that conditions in some HMOs are not acceptable
 - That the council's Environmental Health team already works hard to identify smaller HMOs in poor condition, but without a central register of such properties, this can be challenging;
 - That currently, many tenants are afraid to complain about poor conditions for fear that they may then be evicted and

lose a reference for a future rental, though we note that the proposed reforms to evictions would assist in strengthening tenants' rights in this area, which is very welcome;

- That because demand for HMOs exceeds supply, there is a risk that more poor quality HMO provision will be available and that the government's proposal to make the Decent Homes standard apply to the private rented sector is therefore very welcome.

Council Believes:

- That huge progress will be made in terms of private sector housing and strengthening renters' rights if the Renters' Rights Bill 2024 is enacted by the Labour government. This includes the ending of Section 21 'no-fault eviction' notices, streamlined mechanisms to challenge unfair rent increases, and the provision of a national register of landlords and properties being let, which the council would particularly welcome.
- That efforts are being made within the emerging local plan to ensure that all HMOs that require planning permission meet minimum space standards, including seeking to retain the measures already in place in Policy 48 regarding positive HMO development and Policy 50 regarding residential space standards, subject to proper consideration through the current plan making process.
- That increased council intervention in the standards of planning and operation of HMOs is appropriate, particularly so long as Cambridge is experiencing an overall shortage of housing, and that the council must optimise and apply the range of power that it has, and may gain in the future, across its services in order to secure a fairer deal for tenants.

Council Resolves:

- To ask officers to prepare a report on the case for and feasibility of one or more Article 4 directions within the city boundaries, which would remove Permitted Development rights for smaller HMOs (currently Use Class C4) and instead require planning permission for all new builds and for change of use for existing housing stock to be used as HMOs for more than two people and to report back to a suitable member meeting by the summer of 2025.

- To ask the Chief Executive to write to Cambridge Labour MP Daniel Zeichner to inform him of this Council's support for the provisions in the Renters' Rights Bill relating to the many positive outcomes this will entail, including ending of Section 21 eviction notices and a Private Rented Sector Database and that such provision is in line with the motion on 'Private Rented Sector in Cambridge' passed by the Council in October 2022.

Motion 6f. Butterfly friendly motion

This council notes;

- Wildlife charity Butterfly Conservation has declared a national 'Butterfly Emergency', with results of this summer's Big Butterfly Count showing a marked and hugely concerning decline in numbers.
- Overall, participants spotted just seven butterflies on average per 15-minute Count, a reduction of almost 50% on last year's average of 12, and the lowest in the 14-year history of the Big Butterfly Count. The majority of species (81%) showed declines in the number seen this year compared with 2023.
- Butterflies are increasingly being recognised as valuable environmental indicators, both for their rapid and sensitive responses to subtle habitat or climatic changes and as representatives for the diversity and responses of other wildlife.
- Insects are the largest proportion of terrestrial wildlife (more than 50% of species), so it is crucial that we assess the fate of insect groups to monitor the overall state of biodiversity. Being typical insects, the responses seen in butterflies are more likely to reflect changes amongst other insect groups, and thus the majority of biodiversity, than established indicators such as those based on birds.
- The UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world (ranked 189 out of
- 218) and Cambridgeshire is one of the most nature depleted counties in the UK. Almost 15% of all species in the UK are at risk from extinction.
- The Council declared a Biodiversity Emergency in 2019.
- The Cambridge [Biodiversity Strategy](#) and associated [Park Biodiversity Tool Kit](#) contain many actions that benefit butterflies, moths and other invertebrates in formal and informal parks and

open spaces. Different species have diverse lifestyles and habitat requirements, and it is important to consider all of these, not solely nectar sources, when promoting their conservation.

- The Cambridge City Herbicide Reduction Plan has discontinued herbicide use on all our soft surfaces across all council owned sites, including parks, car parks and housing areas.
- The use of butterfly and bee killing neonicotinoid pesticides were repeatedly approved for emergency use under the previous government, so this council welcomes the new government's pledge to ban them in the Countryside Protection Plan and thanks the Cambridge MP Daniel Zeichner for his vital work on this.

This council will;

- Review the council's Biodiversity Strategy in 2025 aligning with the emerging Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- Work with our partners on the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy steering group to ensure the maps and priorities align with the existing Cambridge Nature Network.
- Create Butterfly friendly Areas by providing a range of butterfly food sources and habitats in our open spaces, with planting and leaving areas uncut or with reduced cutting.
- Establish The Cambridge Butterfly Trail, by signposting to the Butterfly Areas and register these 'Wild Places' on the Butterfly Conservation Wild Spaces website [Let's Create Wild Spaces - Wild Spaces](#) , aligning with the Cambridge Nature Network.
- Invite Cambridge residents to join the Butterfly Conservation Wild Spaces network with their own Butterfly friendly Areas, which can be as small as a flowerpot or window ledge.

[Butterfly Square — Biophilic Cities](#)
[Butterfly Emergency | Butterfly Conservation](#)
[Butterfly as indicators | UKBMS](#)

Motion 6g. UN International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

Background

- On Thursday 23 May 2024, Cambridge City Council unanimously approved a motion on Palestine and Israel. This followed three separate statements made by the Mayor and personal statements from the three political group leaders.
- In addition, the city council has posted links to the main charities providing support for Gaza here <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/support-for-gaza>
- As part of this motion, the council wrote to the then government calling upon them to:
 - a. Press for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, Israel and the rest of Palestine and to make every effort to resume the peace process.
 - b. Work to ensure that international humanitarian law is upheld and that civilians are protected in accordance with those laws.
 - c. Work to ensure that civilians have access to humanitarian support, including unfettered access of medical supplies, food, fuel and water.
 - d. To immediately revoke all licences for arms exports to Israel and suspend arms sales to Israel.

Active Motion

- This council notes that currently 73 countries are subject to a non-financial sanction under the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018. It notes that 38 of these include a direct arms embargo. Israel is not one of the countries subject to a UK sanction.
- The council notes that since the recent change in government a new country, Belarus, has been included in the list of countries subject to a UK arms embargo on 31 October 2024. Israel has not been added to that list.
- The council notes that the government has changed since it wrote its original letter and resolves to write again to the new secretary of state for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, the Rt Hon David Lammy to repeat its requests.
- That the council commemorated United Nations Day on 24 October 2024 by flying the United Nations Flag, as per the Council's Flag Flying policy which is outlined [here](#).
- This council also notes that the United Nations International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is commemorated annually

on November 29. The council therefore resolves to mark this solemn occasion by flying the United Nations flag at the Guildhall at the first convenient date.

Notes

- The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is observed by the United Nations on or around 29 November each year, in accordance with General Assembly mandates contained in resolutions [32/40 B](#) of 2 December 1977, [34/65 D](#) of 12 December 1979, and subsequent resolutions adopted under agenda item “Question of Palestine.”
- On that day in 1947, the General Assembly adopted [resolution 181 \(II\)](#), which came to be known as the Partition Resolution. That resolution provided for the establishment in Palestine of a “Jewish State” and an “Arab State”. Of the two States to be created under this resolution, only one, Israel, has so far come into being.
- The Palestinian people, who now number over eight million, include those living in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, such as the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem; within Israel; in neighbouring Arab states; in refugee camps across the region; and in exile in various countries around the world.
- The International Day of Solidarity is an opportunity for the international community to focus its attention on the fact that the question of Palestine remains unresolved and that the Palestinian people have yet to attain their inalienable rights as defined by the General Assembly, namely, the right to self-determination without external interference, the right to national independence and sovereignty, and the right to return to their homes and property, from which they have been displaced.
- In response to the call of the United Nations, various activities are undertaken annually by Governments and civil society in observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. These activities include the issuance of special messages of solidarity with the Palestinian people.

Agenda item 7. Written Questions

Written Questions and Answers were published on the meeting webpage. [Agenda for Council on Thursday, 28th November, 2024, 6.00 pm - Cambridge Council](#)

Agenda item 8. Future of Local Government: Public Engagement

- i. Agreed that the Leader discuss the findings with the Leaders of other relevant authorities and other public services such as health, including the potential scope for more effective place based and joint working and that officers follow-up on opportunities;
- ii. Agreed that the Leader and officers engage Ministers and civil servants in relation to the findings of the public engagement, and, develop insights into the potential costs-benefits and models of provision for adults and children's social care; and,
- iii. Agreed that following those discussions and early evidence gathering, the Leader reports to the relevant committee about appropriate next steps in summer 2025, or earlier depending on proposals in the English Devolution White Paper.

Agenda item 9: Notification of appointment of Director of Economy and Place

- i. Members noted the appointment of Lynne Miles as the Director of Economy and Place with effect from 13 January 2025

For more information please contact Democratic Services:

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