

CABINET

15 July 2025
5.00 - 7.48 pm

Present: Councillors Holloway (Chair), Wade (Vice-Chair), Bird, Moore, Nestor, Smart, A. Smith, S. Smith, Thornburrow and Todd-Jones

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

2025/9/Cab Apologies

There were no apologies for absence.

2025/10/Cab Declarations of Interest

A non-pecuniary declaration of interest was made by Councillor Martin Smart in respect of item 13 as a bank employee of Addenbrooke's Hospital.

2025/11/Cab Minutes

There were no minutes.

2025/12/Cab Public Questions

The Chair noted that a public question had been received but that the questioner was not present. The Chair invited Councillor Nestor, Cabinet Member for Culture, Economy and Skills, to address the substance of the question during Item 11.

2025/13/Cab Shared Services Partnership Agreement

Councillor Simon Smith, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, presented the report.

In response to questions, officers clarified:

- The partnership had been established in 2015 and extended through 2020.
- Extending arrangements until 2030 would provide stability, with an exit clause in the event of local government reorganisation.

- The service had received awards, with particular success at Darwin Green, and had achieved improvements against key performance indicators.

The Cabinet discussed:

- The rationale for a further extension.
- The need to retain flexibility and oversight.

The Chair of the Performance, Assets and Strategy Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Katie Porrer, noted that while the matter had not been formally scrutinised, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would maintain oversight.

RESOLVED: To approve the partnership renewal agreement for 3C Shared Services (ICT, Building Control and Legal).

2025/14/Cab Stock Condition Survey Strategy

Councillor Gerri Bird, Executive Councillor for Housing, presented the report.

In response to questions, officers clarified:

- The Council managed 7,600 houses, around one in every seven homes in the city.
- The Council remained compliant with the Decent Homes Standard.
- Surveys would be undertaken on a rolling five-year cycle (around 1,500 per year).
- Oversight of the stock condition of council-owned properties would be improved through contract managers.

The Cabinet discussed:

- The new social housing regulations requiring higher standards and more accurate data.
- The importance of committing to stronger oversight on council-owned stock.
- The role of contract managers in overseeing council property standards.

Councillor Bird offered an apology for issues identified in maintaining council-owned stock, noting her own experience as a social housing tenant.

RESOLVED:

1. To approve the procurement and delivery of stock condition surveys to support long-term strategic asset management, and delegate authority to the Director of City Services to:
 1. Issue tenders and, following evaluation, award contract(s) to suitable contractor(s).
 2. Finalise procurement and contractual arrangements to implement the Phased Delivery Model.
 3. Approve necessary expenditure.
 4. Develop governance and reporting arrangements.
2. To approve the adoption of the Phased Delivery Model comprising:
 1. Phase 1 (Year 1): An externally resourced programme to eliminate the current backlog of approximately 3,000 stock condition surveys.
 2. Phase 2 (Year 2 onwards): A rolling stock condition survey programme operating on a five-year cycle, designed to provide robust assurance that the Council remains compliant with its statutory obligation to survey every home at least once every five years. This programme also ensures continued adherence to the Decent Homes Standard, supporting the Council's commitment to keeping tenants' homes well-maintained, dry, and safe.

2025/15/Cab Disposal of Grafton East (top two levels)

The non-exempt papers served to frame the decision and outline proposals.

- Cllr Simon Smith verbally introduced the proposed disposal strategy
- Cllr Simon Smith introduced detailed financial, risk, and commercial considerations.
- Members discussed valuation, market sensitivity, use of the site, and contractual safeguards.

RESOLVED:

1. To approve the disposal of the council's long leasehold interest in levels 8A/10A Grafton East Multistorey Car Park (MSCP) for [EXEMPT INFORMATION].
2. To delegate authority to the Director of Economy and Place or Acting Chief Property Surveyor to finalise the method of leasehold disposal.

2025/16/Cab Public Health Contract for Tier 1 & 2 Services

Councillor Mike Todd-Jones, Executive Councillor for Communities, presented the report.

Cabinet discussed the extent to which the contract would strengthen the Council's contribution to addressing poverty and inequality.

RESOLVED: To delegate authority to the Director of Communities, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet member, to enter into a contract with Cambridgeshire County Council for the delivery of the Healthy Behaviours Change Service for the City, should the City Council's bid be successful and subject to final due diligence.

2025/17/Cab Budget Outturn 2024-25

Councillor Simon Smith, Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources, presented the report.

In response to questions, officers clarified:

- Additional interest income had been received unexpectedly; this had been managed prudently and was not expected to recur at the same level.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the 2024/25 outturn report, including the final net underspend on the General Fund of £3.762 million which will be transferred to the Civic Quarter reserve as agreed by full Council in February 2025.
2. Recommend to full Council:-
 1. The approval of the carry forward of General Fund capital budgets totalling £55.172 million as set out in detail at Appendix A(iv), together with the carry forward of £2.145 million of associated General Fund revenue funding.
 2. The approval of the carry forward of £280,000 of Housing Revenue Account revenue budget allocated for transformation purposes (see paragraph 5.8).
 3. The approval of the carry forward of Housing Revenue Account capital budgets totalling £50.941 million as set out in detail at Appendix B(iv).

2025/18/Cab Budget Setting Context 2026-27

Councillor Simon Smith, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, presented the report.

In response to questions, officers clarified:

- The Government's Fair Funding Review was underway, with the second consultation expected later in the year.
- The Council could commit £1.9m to revenue by Year 5, but the cumulative effect of the changes would be a £1.5m reduction over two years.
- Reserves remained under pressure but were sufficient for planning assumptions.

RESOLVED:

1. To accept the proposed updated savings targets for the General Fund for the next five years, as set out at paragraph 4.1, and a new headline target to save £1.5 million per year over the next two years.
2. To endorse the proposal to undertake a detailed review of the 30 Year Business Plan for the Housing Revenue Account over the summer, using external advice where appropriate.
3. To agree the high-level approach to budget setting for 2026/27 set out in section 4.
4. To agree the high-level approach to public consultation set out in section 6.

2025/19/Cab Folk Festival

Councillor Antoinette Nestor, Executive Councillor for Culture, presented the report.

In response to questions, officers clarified:

- Options considered included: revised greenfield model at Cherry Hinton Hall; a multi-venue citywide model (recommended by officers); outsourcing festival delivery to an external partner; and permanent closure.
- The recommended approach was a scaled-down, two-day festival centred at Cherry Hinton Hall, supported by local folk clubs and artists.
- Costs and income would be closely monitored, with lessons taken from the consultants' report on financial management of the festival in previous years.

The Cabinet discussed:

- The financial deficit from previous festivals and the importance of preventing escalation thereof.
- The wider context of over 150 other festivals closing nationally.
- The cultural value of the event for the city.

RESOLVED:

1. To approve the relaunch of the Cambridge Folk Festival from 2026 as a city-wide multi-venue, multi-day festival as described at para 3.1.
2. To endorse the principle that Cherry Hinton Hall, the spiritual home of the festival, should remain the anchor venue.
3. To approve in principle a contingency budget of up to £215,000 to be used if necessary to fund the risk of income loss in the first year as the new format establishes itself; and an additional investment of £60,000 to enhance marketing, infrastructure, local audience and artist development; subject to a budget bid to full council as part of the 2026/27 budget setting process.
4. To note the importance of maintaining the festival's identity, community links, and programming quality, including through ongoing engagement with Folk Clubs, artists, and cultural stakeholders.
5. To delegate authority to the Director of Communities to finalise a business plan and implement delivery, in consultation with the Cabinet Lead; and,
6. To note that officers would like to encourage the Chair of O&S (Services, Climate and Communities) to consider a review of progress to deliver the refreshed festival format at its meeting in February 2026.

2025/20/Cab Annual Customer Feedback Report

Councillor Cameron Holloway, Leader of the Council, presented the report.

Cabinet discussed and noted:

- Overall performance in customer satisfaction remained strong, with improvements on a number of measures.
- No Local Government and Housing Ombudsman complaints had been upheld.
- Opportunities existed to use tenant representatives to support officers in gaining access for inspections.
- Sector trends, with Cambridge performing well against comparators.
- That complaints received were taken seriously and used to improve services.

RESOLVED:

1. To approve publication of the Customer Feedback reports online.
2. To approve the findings of the self-assessment process documented in appendix two, Housing Complaints and Self-Assessment Report.

2025/21/Cab Housing Performance 2024-25

Councillor Gerri Bird, Executive Councillor for Housing, introduced the report.

Cabinet discussed and noted:

- Fire safety and compliance by tenants.
- Suggestions were made to allow tenant representatives to accompany officers when access was difficult. Fire safety compliance by tenants was also discussed.
- The Chair of the Performance, Assets and Strategy Overview and Scrutiny Committee advised Cabinet that a Task and Finish Group would be established to review housing services, including consideration of out-of-hours coverage.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the Housing Service's year-end performance results in operational delivery, health and safety, customer satisfaction and engagement.
2. To note the report on damp, condensation and mould as at June 2025, and the measures being put in place to help combat DCM in tenants' homes.
3. To note the results of the 2024-25 Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM's), from customer perception (Tenant Satisfaction Survey) and management data.

12c New Build Update

Officers reported that the 1,000-homes milestone had been reached, with 1,145 homes delivered. Cabinet noted the acknowledgement of delays in completing repair works, noting that repairs work would resume in August, with an update to be provided in September 2025.

The Cabinet welcomed the 1,000-home milestone and discussed lessons learned on repairs and contract management.

RESOLVED: To note the report.

2025/22/Cab The Cambridge South East Transport Order

The Cabinet discussed the importance of future-proofing infrastructure in the same way as the guided busway.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the progress on resolving the outstanding matters raised by the Council for further work/dialogue with the applicant.

2. To delegate authority to the Joint Director of Planning in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member for Planning and Transport to finalise and submit the Statement of Case based on the report within Appendix 1.

2025/23/Cab S106 Projects for Sports, Communities and Open Spaces

Mike Todd-Jones, Cabinet Member for Safety, Wellbeing and Tackling Homelessness, presented the report.

RESOLVED:

1. Approves the use of Generic and Specific S106 contributions for the following capital projects:
 2. Chesterton Indoor Bowls Club: Changing Room & Toilet Facilities Upgrades - £80,000
 3. Kelsey Kerridge Sports Centre: Creation of new Studio - £60,000.
 4. Guildhall Main and Small Halls: AV kit and equipment - £7,000.

Prior to closing the meeting, the Leader recorded the Cabinet's thanks for Councillor John Hipkin's many years of public service, noting his 29 years as a councillor. The Cabinet extended condolences to his wife and family. Councillor Bird confirmed that a card would be sent on behalf of the Cabinet.

The meeting ended at 7.48 pm

CHAIR

Public Questions Cabinet 25 September:

1.

Guild Hall – Great Hall, Small Hall, Council Chamber

Having attended a number of open sessions with the architects and officers directing the Civic Quarter project, and participating in a session with one of the architects and Cllr Richard Swift about plans (termed ‘proposals’) for the Council Chamber, I am extremely concerned that little attention is being paid to refurbishment of the Great and Small Halls, all focus being on turning the Council Chamber into a tacky, architecturally deficient, and ahistoric ‘space’ that ignores the significant place of the Guild Hall in Cambridge City, and of the Chamber as a famous and celebrated assembly room serving and showcasing the centre of this City’s democratic heritage.

Will the Cabinet assure Cambridge residents and business that:

(1) The Great Hall and Small Hall are set as a specific responsibility for the Civic Quarter Project architects/designers so that each is refurbished to a standard ensuring that instead of the woeful track record of 40 events per year, focus is directed towards these important facilities providing full and proper scope for multifunctional use for a proper events programme recognising that a year comprises 52 weeks and 365 days, not 40.

(2) The Council Chamber not be turned into a tacky, tasteless and uncouth shadow of itself but be retained in perpetuity in its role as the seat of democracy, recognising that the configuration provides for access promoting functions complementing its assembly role – attracting use by national bodies, schools, Anglia Ruskin University, local community groups, NGOs (non-government organisations) and others with the wit to exercise their imagination to attract not only residents but the many people who visit Cambridge to enjoy and participate in its remarkable place in the history of the United Kingdom.

2.

Cambridge market traders have consistently asked for, right from the start of the redevelopment project for “traditional market stalls”, by which we mean open, versatile, high standard stalls that remain in situ.

In the trader meetings the civic quarter team have repeatedly stated that if footfall doesn’t increase then market rents will be reviewed and potentially reduced. The “high street” as we know it is in decline, with many large retailers going out of business, and in Cambridge the Grafton centre being unable to be commercially viable as a shopping centre. In this current commercial climate it is increasingly hard to attract the public into the city centre to shop, stay and spend money. If this trend continues then the council will not be able to justify the huge rent increase for market traders over the next five years (on average 35% but for some traders up to 100%). If, by the councils

own plans, footfall does not increase and therefore rents aren't increased in line with the business plan then there quite quickly become a deficit, caused in a large part, by the financial liabilities incurred by the erecting and dismantling of the gazebos.

The current plan for the Gazebos also bring a huge logistical nightmare. As with any high street business market traders need a constant location for their stall. Customers need to know where to find them, as well as, the consistency which makes set up and display easier and better. With the current plan to have an area that shrinks and grows to "demand" this means that only the amount of gazebos will be set up for that amount of traders that day. This makes this consistency for all traders (to my mind) impossible. What happens if a trader is on holiday? Will everyone have to move up to fill the gap? What about if someone does an extra, casual day, how will their location be allocated? How will hot food traders be kept separate from traders with delicate products that could be damaged by the grease? In 1-2-1s we have asked to have a seven day a week gazebo but we're told due to the plans it would be impossible for this to be in one spot.

The current plan for the gazebos is complete folly, financially and logistically and a death knell for market business that rely on a constant pitch to allow them to operate. The many 3-5 day a week retail and non retail sellers, the traders that don't do enough days to be eligible for a kiosk, include books, coffee, fruit and veg, clothing and fish. These are the retail heart of the market and the stalls that bring many Cambridge locals into the city centre.

Would the council consider installing a section of open, well designed, traditional market stalls to help support the heart of Cambridge market and preserve it for the future?

Given all of the many serious concerns outlined in detail by market traders, how can the council say the current proposals will fulfill the project brief and support a thriving seven day a week market rather than hinder it?

3.

The report recommends proceeding to planning applications without first resolving key interdependencies and potential conflicts between them.

There are overarching issues that absolutely need to be resolved before it would be in any way sensible to submit individual planning applications.

Most important of the overarching issues include:

- 1) Every proposal for the revitalisation of the Market has failed in trying to find a solution for decanting the traders. The proposals before you now have not yet solved this crucial challenge.
- 2) The Cabinet papers don't show how ALL potentially concurrent Civic Quarter construction activities, plus existing servicing (e.g. Arts Theatre) can be accommodated together, and within the limited space available. (e.g. How will

scaffolding, construction, and site compound for the Guildhall works affect the public realm and the Market decant?)

Appendix 7 (draft Market and Public Realm design and access statement) covers some of these issues, but completely inadequately, and is seriously flawed in its approach. This proposal is not the product of any recent public consultation.

Issues include:

- 3) Treating the west side of Market Square as part of Peas Hill, and not the Market, which is just mad in terms of retaining a thriving market.. Once again, trying to cram too much into an already very busy and small space... Totally misconceived!
- 4) Incomplete and misleading plans showing adjacent uses – of the ground floors only, not upper floors in different or no use (KIng's and Caius student accommodation; Radcliffe Court residential; no 5 Market Hill - listed Grade I, 3-4 Market Hill - Grade II, upper floors used for storage only) and
- 5) Misleading claim to be increasing cycle parking by 10% - when up to 60 cycle spaces will be lost (not shown) from the racks and railings on the Market side of Great St Mary's!

So of the 4 options being presented, option 4 (capital budget of £4.4M. Submit a separate planning application for each of the 3 proposals; continue to develop technical design for approval in Autumn 2026) seems preferable because it doesn't give Carte Blanche, BUT

6) There's still no report, let alone a clear strategy, covering potential cultural, conference, and other events within the Guildhall Large and Small Halls, Corn Exchange, and Market Square - and their needs in terms of facilities and servicing.

This page is intentionally left blank

PRESENT: Councillors Katie Porrer (Chair), Jenny Gawthrope Wood (Vice Chair), Jamie Dalzell, Dinah Pounds, Tim Griffin, Hugh Clough, Patrick Sheil

Officers: Matthew Stickley, Sarah Michael, Ben Binns, Tom Conlon, Lynne Miles, Sean Cleary, Jane Whiteman-Turl, Jody Etherington

Other: William Rooke, Julian Russell, Esther Warboys (all consultants for item 6 - Civic Quarter)

In attendance: Councillors Cameron Holloway, Martin Smart, Karen Young, Tim Bick, Rachel Wade, Rosy Moore, Richard Swift

The Chair welcomed those present, giving particular welcome to Councillor Dinah Pounds, newly appointed member of the committee. The Chair thanked Councillor Dave Baigent, previous member of the committee, for his service to the committee.

The Chair advised the committee that she would reorder the agenda to take item 7 - Work Programme - prior to item 6 - Civic Quarter.

Apologies

There were no apologies for absence.

Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 June 2025 were agreed as an accurate record.

Public Questions

There were no public questions.

Budget-setting consultation

Councillor Simon Smith, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, introduced the report.

Officers explained that the draft consultation was still being finalised but would be circulated to members before publication. Members expressed concern that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had not yet seen the draft questions, though reassurance was given that any proposals requiring further consultation would be subject to additional scrutiny in due course.

The Committee noted that:

- The Council was ahead of its savings targets, having achieved £4.9m against a two-year requirement of £6m.
- Updated government proposals on the fair funding review, reflecting population growth and changes in the balance of funding streams, placed the Council in a stronger financial position than previously anticipated.
- The consultation would be high-level, accessible and strategic, with scope for bespoke consultations to follow if required.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the progress towards the Council's medium-term savings targets.
2. To request that Cabinet ensure Overview and Scrutiny Committee members are consulted on draft consultation questions at an earlier stage.
3. To recommend that Cabinet draw upon lessons from last year's consultation process to inform this year's design.
4. To recommend that Cabinet provide assurance that any budget bids requiring additional consultation will be subject to further scrutiny.

5a Procurement at Cambridge City Council

Jane Whiteman-Turl, Chief Procurement Officer, gave a presentation.

The Committee noted:

- More notices would now be required at certain thresholds (7–12 compared with 3 previously).
- Publication of a procurement pipeline was a requirement of the new procurement regime.
- The new regime increased administrative requirements and oversight, while in some instances EU law obligations remained.
- Around 200 contracts had been let in the previous year.

Members discussed the usefulness of:

- An overview to be available to councillors on the Council's procurement activity.
- Training and development opportunities for members on procurement processes.

The Chair noted that the Services, Climate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee might consider the subject of Community Wealthbuilding in the future, and noted that this may include reference to the council's intentions to secure social value through its procurement processes.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the update on the new procurement regime.
2. To request that officers provide councillors with an overview of procurement activity.
3. To recommend that Cabinet consider member training opportunities on procurement and contract oversight, including for non-Cabinet members.

5b Cabinet: Strategic Procurement Pipeline for Repairs, Maintenance, and Compliance Contracts

Sean Cleary, Strategic Delivery Manager, presented the report.

Officers explained that an internal procurement dashboard was in place and that a KPI reporting process was being developed.

In discussion, the Committee raised:

- The need for clarity on success criteria and measurable metrics.
- The importance of customer experience in service delivery.
- The ability of the Council to amend or terminate contracts where performance was unsatisfactory. Officers confirmed that termination clauses were included in all contracts.
- That KPI models and parameters should be shared with members. Officers confirmed that a workshop on the subject would be provided in the autumn with members being able to shape the design of the performance management dashboard.
- That wider sharing of KPI data (for example with the Housing Board) would be valuable.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the report and broadly support the proposed procurement pipeline.
2. To recommend that Cabinet ensure that:
 - Clear and measurable KPIs are established and shared with members, with models and parameters circulated at the earliest opportunity.
 - Customer experience outcomes are given appropriate weight in monitoring performance.
 - Contract provisions remain flexible to allow amendment or termination in cases of underperformance or new requirements.
3. To request that officers explore options for wider sharing of KPI data (for example, with the Housing Board).

The meeting was adjourned from 19:02 - 19:15. Councillor Dinah Pounds left the meeting at 19:27.

6 Cabinet: Civic Quarter

Councillor Simon Smith (Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources), Jody Etherington (Chief Finance Officer - Section 151 Officer), and Ben Binns (Assistant Director of Development) presented the report supported by external consultants.

Open Session

The Committee discussed:

- The importance of full consultation with Camcycle cycling charity and Living Streets Cambridge pedestrian charity.
- Ensuring that bus services were rerouted appropriately and that Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) provided for traders, taxi access and disabled users.

- Strong support for a circular horseshoe chamber with tiered seating, and full accessibility.
- The need for demountable stalls in the market to be fit for purpose; confirmation was provided that there remained time to refine designs after planning permission.
- Broad support for submitting the scheme to planning, which could unlock grant funding.
- Opportunities for the Guildhall to better showcase the city's history, including potential partnership with the Museum of Cambridge.
- The need for improved ventilation in the Guildhall's chamber and meeting rooms.
- That the "Do Nothing" option would still require expenditure of around £60m while delivering fewer returns.

The Committee noted that the consultants considered their cost estimates and project viability to be strong and felt the information provided to the committee was robust.

Closed Session

The Committee resolved to exclude the press and public under paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 in order to consider exempt financial information.

The Committee considered detailed financial modelling and business cases. Officers confirmed that borrowing would not affect service provision.

In discussion:

- A majority of members supported Option 4 as the preferred approach.
- Members emphasised the importance of the Guildhall as the civic heart of the city, particularly in the context of potential local government reorganisation.
It was noted that the project represented an investment rather than a cost, with opportunities for revenue from the Corn Exchange and from high-quality office accommodation.
- There was majority support for the use of the Guildhall as the heart of any future local authority following local government reorganisation, and members supported ensuring flexibility of design and use to accommodate a future unitary chamber.

RESOLVED:

1. To support the principle of proceeding to the planning stage of the Civic Quarter project, recognising that this may unlock future funding opportunities.
2. To recommend that Cabinet:
 - Ensure full consultation with Camcycle, Living Streets and other key stakeholders.
 - Safeguard bus service provision in Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) and provide for adequate wayfinding and space in the market area.
 - Confirm that demountable stalls are fit for purpose and that their design can be refined post-planning.
 - Retain the chamber in a horseshoe layout with tiered seating, ensuring it remains accessible and central to the city's civic life.
 - Deliver improved ventilation and accessibility within the Guildhall.

- Develop opportunities for celebrating the civic history of the Guildhall, including potential collaboration with the Museum of Cambridge.
- 3. To note that while some reservations were expressed about aspects of the scheme, the majority of members supported Option 4, recognising the proposals as financially resilient even in the context of local government reorganisation.

7 Work Programme

The Committee reviewed the work programme. Members agreed to:

- Note that Peter Freeman, Chair of the Cambridge Growth Company, had accepted an invitation to the committee's 4 November 2025 meeting.
- Consider the Local Plan at either the 4 November 2025 meeting or a meeting close to that date, subject to confirmation of the dates the Local Plan would be presented to the Cabinets of both Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils.
- Hold a Member workshop on KPIs in October, with formal review in the new year.
- Establish a Task and Finish group on Housing in due course.
- Note that a review of the 3CICT improvement plan would be scheduled for March 2026.

RESOLVED:

1. To agree the updated Work Programme as set out above.

The meeting ended at 21:05.

This page is intentionally left blank