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Cambridge City Council

Services, Climate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: Tuesday, 7 October 2025

Time: 5.30 pm

Venue: Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Market Square, Cambridge, CB2 3QJ [access the building via Peashill entrance]

Contact: democratic.services@cambridge.gov.uk, tel:01223 457000

Agenda supplement

Services, Climate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Members: Young (Chair), Gardiner-Smith (Vice-Chair), Divkovic, Glasberg, Griffin, Hauk, Payne, Pounds and Swift

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SERVICES, CLIMATE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 July 2025

5.30 - 7.14 pm

Present: Councillors Young (Chair), Gardiner-Smith (Vice-Chair), Baigent, Divkovic, Glasberg, Griffin, Hauk, Pounds and Swift

In attendance: Councillors Bick, Nestor and Wade

Officers: Robert Pollock (Chief Executive), Jody Etherington (Chief Finance Officer), Frances Alderton (Communities Group), Claire Tunnicliffe (Committee Manager), Matthew Stickley (Interim Committee Manager)

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

2x/1/SC&C Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Cheney Payne, for whom Councillor Anthony Martinelli attended as a substitute.

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Iva Divkovic, who arrived at 17:49.

2x/2/SC&C Declarations of Interest

Councillors Baigent and Glasberg declared membership of the Cambridge Cycling Campaign Group.

Councillors Gardiner-Smith and Young declared that they had attended the Cambridge Folk Festival.

2x/3/SC&C Minutes

The unapproved minutes of meetings of previously constituted Overview and Scrutiny Committees were presented. The Chair noted that because the remits of the two newly established Overview and Scrutiny Committees did not exactly mirror the previously constituted committees, the minutes were to be presented to the first meetings of both of the newly established Overview and Scrutiny Committees for approval.

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record subject to a spelling correction in the 25 March 2025 minutes of the Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee.

2x/4/SC&C Public Questions

There were no public questions.

2x/5/SC&C The Role of Overview and Scrutiny in Local Authorities

The Committee received a report on the role of Overview and Scrutiny in local government.

The Chair emphasised that this first meeting of the newly constituted committee was focused on setting priorities and work programming.

In discussion, members noted:

- The committee should provide both a "sounding board" and "constructive challenge" for Cabinet, providing both pre-decision and post-decision scrutiny.
- Opportunities for deep dives into specific issues should be built into future agendas and work programming.
- The importance of flexibility in the forward plan and openness to suggestions for items to be submitted outside formal meetings, channelling such requests through the Chair of the committee.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the guidance and discussion on the role of Overview and Scrutiny.
2. To invite members to submit suggestions for future agenda items to the Chair and Vice-Chair outside formal meetings.

2x/6/SC&C Update on Folk Festival

The Chief Executive provided an update on the work of the Communities Group on behalf of the Director of Communities.

In response to questions, officers clarified:

- There were ongoing and worsening challenges in keeping the festival cost neutral, with increasing infrastructure costs, economic conditions, line-up quality, competing events, and accommodation costs all leading to the costs of running the festival increasing with the continuity of affordable tickets increasing the budget gap.
- Officers' recommended course of action was in the process of being finalised and would be submitted to an upcoming meeting of Cabinet.
- Consultation was ongoing with the Folk Festival community, and officers were exploring additional options for investing in the local music scene.
- Data would be collected from 2024 and 2025 events to inform the sustainability plan for 2026.

The committee discussed:

- Whether the festival should prioritise folk music over other genres and the importance of maintaining inclusivity.
- The potential role of fringe events to support the local cultural scene.
- The need for clearer detail on costs and Cabinet decision-making.
- The submission of the report to Cabinet once the officer's' recommendations were finalised.
- Concerns about the lack of written papers provided in advance of the meeting, the timing of a previous decision to postpone the 2025 festival, and the requirement of officers to balance commercial sensitivity against the public interest.

RESOLVED: To note the verbal update and ongoing review of the Folk Festival.

2x/7/SC&C Work of the Environment, Economy and Climate Department

The item was not considered due to the officer scheduled to present being unable to attend for personal reasons. It was agreed that a separate member briefing would be arranged.

2x/8/SC&C Overview and Scrutiny Annual Business: Work Programme and Forward Plan

The Committee considered the forward plan and discussed potential priorities for its work programme.

The committee discussed:

- The need for the work programme to align with new performance management frameworks and risk registers, which were still being developed.
- The possibility of including items such as the Retrofit Programme, Climate Change Strategy update, Leisure Management Contract, Heat Networks, and Community Wealth Building Strategy.
- The role of Task and Finish groups for in-depth scrutiny.

RESOLVED: To note the arrangements through which the two Overview and Scrutiny Committees will determine their business through the municipal year.

The meeting ended at 7.14 pm

CHAIR

REPORT TITLE: Community engagement and democratic involvement

To: Services, Climate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report by:

Vicky Haywood, Strategic Enabling Communities Lead

Sam Scharf, Director of Communities

1.	**Recommendations**
1.	It is for Scrutiny to discuss and provide recommendations in response to the proposed approaches in: 1) Adopting a new approach to local engagement and democratic involvement; facilitating active participation in decision making at a neighbourhood level as well as a focus on key non-geographical communities. 2) Prototype participatory budgeting mechanisms where localised budgets and small funding is available at a neighbourhood level.
2.	**Purpose and reason for the report**
2.	To align with the council's vision, where *Democratic accountability is genuine and accessible,* an updated model of local engagement and democratic involvement has been developing and piloted. This report outlines the emerging model for engagement and democratic involvement following the pause and then stopping of Area Committees and following learning developed from a number of engagement pilots that have taken place throughout 2024-25. The model draws from previous recommendations made by The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny in 2022, New Local's report on 'Democratic Engagement in Cambridge' in 2024, and the report to Civic Affairs in July 2024 that set out the basis of an approach based on New Local's recommendations.
3.	**Alternative options considered**
	A) Improve and re-instate Area Committees: Re-instating Area Committees would go

	against already supported reports and reviews; this does not bring us the widened engagement and democratic involvement we seek. It does not align with the Council's vision. B) <u>Focus on improving and increasing use of online engagement tools</u>: Online engagement proved popular during the pandemic, and systems have been updated to enable hybrid options where possible. Online platforms can be a successful mechanism to engage certain cohorts, however, other cohorts are left behind where digital exclusion and language barriers exist. Moreover, online engagement can often lead to binary options rather than allow for the broad conversational pieces that build consensus, understanding and community power. Online engagement should be '*as well as*', not '*instead of*' face to face engagement. C) <u>Develop a structured model that is the same in every ward</u>: We know our wards have very different needs, unique characteristics, assets and strengths. Where possible, the council should seek to enable communities to take the lead, where they have structures in place and capacity to do so. This aids the building of social capital and is in line with our Community Wealth Building approach. Some areas of the City and some communities will require more officer time and support than others in order to create engagement opportunities, for example with seldom heard communities. A flexible approach allows for officers and Members to respond to neighbourhoods and non-geographical communities in ways that will meet their needs and interests and be responsive if required. This also allows greater resources to be focused in areas of high need.
4.	**Background and key issues** The principles developed will support an approach to promote Community Wealth Building. In working differently to engage and involve residents and tenants across the City, we seek to develop social capital and community power as part of this.
4.1	**Background and historical context** *Community Wealth Building Strategy*

The proposed model for democratic engagement supports ambitions of the Community Wealth Building Strategy, especially by:

- creating opportunities for communities to develop their own solutions to the issues they face
- looking at how our money, staff and connections can strengthen the city's local communities

It does so by promoting community power and strengthening social capital.

Review of Area Committees and approach to local engagement arrangements

The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny review in 2022 found widespread support that "Area Committees need a complete overhaul – that they are no longer fit for purpose…Area Committees should integrate better with existing community engagement activities and the Council should give consideration as to whether they need to be formal committees." In October 2023, the GRG reiterated the need for change from Area Committees as they had lost direction and purpose, were poorly attended, and did not make good use of officer or councillor time and resources. The desire to hear from communities more effectively, and to hear different voices, was a key theme for Members.

New Local was commissioned to identify alternative options for local democratic arrangements. They interviewed a number of City Councillors and a number of officers and community representatives. New Local also reviewed approaches to local democratic engagement in other councils.

New Local's report on democratic engagement reported back to the governance reference group in March 2023. It reiterated that *"While the importance of visible opportunities for councillors to meet with residents and play an active role in the community was strongly reaffirmed, there was wide agreement that the format [of Area Committees] was not working effectively."* It recommended that the focus going forward should be on hearing resident voices through a variety of means

that make it as easy as possible for residents to engage by building on existing successful structures.

New Local identified that a number of local authorities are also modernising their engagement techniques in an attempt to widen participation and build trust between decision-makers and local communities.

In response to New Local's recommendations, the report to Civic Affairs in July 2024 recommended 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, which are set out in this report.

Following the governance review that was implemented in May 2025, Area Committees no longer form a part of the constitution and as such, the Councils governance structure.

External Drivers for change

There are a number of wider, external drivers to widening and modernising our approach to engagement and involvement with newly emerging opportunities. Criteria published in the government's devolution white paper highlights the need for councils to *"enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment."* The NHS 10 year plan and neighbourhood health guidelines also point to closer working with local government, connecting people to health, care and services within their local neighbourhoods and taking a place-based approach. Furthermore, the structural considerations following devolution will inevitably establish different structures for engagement and will require flexibility in how we achieve this.

Building on existing structures

In relation to engagement with our council housing tenants, part of the new measures instated by the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 requires us to demonstrate we have sought out and considered ways to improve resident

4.2

involvement and tailored engagement for local circumstances. There are a number of existing structures for tenant and leaseholder engagement across the council and the plan is to build on these. Tenant and leaseholder forums, resident involvement publications and initiatives such as our Resident Inspector scheme ensure we are meeting our statutory duty as a landlord, providing regular contact points for tenants and leaseholders as well as building relationships within our estates.

Community forums in areas of strategic growth play an important role in bringing together communities, developers, officers and members for consultations, open dialog and building consensus. They will continue to play an important role as the city continues to expand.

There are wider existing structures outside the council that are also important avenues for engagement such as the police forums and PCN patient voice forums, providing opportunities for residents and Members to influence local priorities across the public sector.

Areas of influence

The approach creates flexible and relevant opportunities for residents and Councillors to take ownership and influence decisions. Examples include:

- Structured input into the use of Section 106 contributions to support local investment priorities, ensuring that spending reflects the needs of growing and changing neighborhoods. This could include further engagement following work on the implementation of a CIL, which is already in place in Peterborough, Huntingdonshire and East Cambridgeshire.
- Existing statutory powers such as Assets of Community Value (ACVs), and emerging responsibilities under Community Right to Buy, which provide a route for communities to protect and steward valued local assets.
- Emerging funding opportunities such put communities at the heart of decision making on setting local priorities and developing cases for investment

4.3

- Resident, stakeholder and community leader involvement in shaping council services and priorities, including matters such as antisocial behaviour, environmental improvements, and community safety.
- Tenant involvement in shaping housing services.
- Input into planning and development processes, with greater emphasis on involving communities earlier in the process to shape proposals and mitigate impact. For example, through the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Youth Engagement Service.
- Participatory budgeting trials, enabling local people to help allocate small capital or community funding in a transparent, inclusive way.

New approach based on 5 core principles

Throughout 2023-24, pilots have been running to explore ways to engage our communities in things that matter to them and a new set of principles have been established. These principles align to the council's vision of being more accessible and accountable to the communities we serve.

1. Take a "mixed methods approach" to member-resident engagement, focusing resources on functions that are currently missing, ones where we will have a higher impact or where we have higher concentration of Council activity. The development of this mixed methods approach was a direct recommendation of New Local in 2023.
2. Move away from traditional structures to more flexible activities distributed across different levels of council working, that build on existing community-led structures and activities wherever possible, and support community-led activities proactively.
3. Increase and better signpost opportunities for residents to meaningfully influence decision-making, noting successful examples like the Tenant and Leaseholder Reps and structures for engagement already in place.
4. Explore participatory budgeting and wider involvement in funding, given resident interest, tangible impact, and a clear link to the principle of resident-voice.

4.4	5. Ensure new arrangements align with the Council's wider ambitions around community power, community wealth building, and revised governance arrangements.
	The approach includes 4 types of engagement: I. **Develop Cambridge Conversations**; bringing a universal, listening approach across all wards, building on the success of the Leader of the Council conversations and bringing together communities, anchor organisations and council services and members. II. **Adopt the Shaping Neighbourhoods approach**; an in-depth engagement approach where there is proposed significant change, investment or growth, enabling communities and decision makers across a range of stakeholders to work closer together earlier on than traditional engagement methods.
4.5	III. We will use an evidence-led and inclusive practice to **facilitate conversations with communities whose voices are seldom heard** within neighbourhoods and across the city. Communities of identity and/or those that experience greater disadvantages require more nuanced and bespoke engagement approaches in order to enable participation and involvement. Where we do not already have a trusted relationship with communities of identity, experience or need, we will work with VCS, trusted community leaders and advocates to help us build trust and engagement. IV. **Provide appropriate tools, data and insights for members and officers**; better enabling members and staff to be active community champions. This will include greater involvement in participatory budgeting, exploring technology to capture feedback from case work, and training and coaching on engagement skills to create engagement with constituents on a wider range of topics of importance to them. **Wider Local Authority examples**

	Authority	Practice	Relevance to Cambridge
4.6	Oxford	*Quadrant-based model* with locality teams, councillor ward budgets, and cross-cutting themes like inequality	Demonstrates how flexible, officer-supported structures can align members with local priorities without fixed Area Committees
	Test Valley	*Community Councillor model* backed by rolling officer-led meetings, supported by training and bespoke engagement when needed	Shows the value of embedding engagement into councillor identity, not events
	Barking & Dagenham	*Citizen Alliance Network* and *Participatory NCIL Grantmaking* with councillor facilitation	Illustrates participatory budgeting and ward-level engagement being embedded in routine community life
	Worthing	*The Big Listen* town-wide drop-ins with informal deckchair-based chats; councillors part of team presence	Reframes democratic engagement as relational and non-hierarchical
	Bolton	*Community Alliances* replacing formal Area Forums; informal networks facilitated by officers	Highlights how moving away from formality can increase participation and agility

Approach

Appendix 1 looks to set out a potential approach to how officers, Councillors and the public can expect to engage with the approach.

6.	**Council Vision**
	This approach directly enhances and responds to the Council's vision of ensuring that *democratic accountability is genuine and accessible* by embedding a more dynamic, responsive, and inclusive model of community engagement. Moving beyond fixed structures, the model offers councillors clear and practical routes to connect with residents in ways that reflect the diversity of Cambridge's communities, issues, and opportunities. By introducing trigger points and a portfolio of engagement methods including Cambridge Conversations, Shaping Neighbourhoods, and participatory budgeting the Council is enabling greater community voice, strengthening local relationships, and supporting the development of community power. This approach complements the Council's commitments to *community wealth building*, *social capital*, and *neighbourhood-based working*, and ensures that both councillors and residents are better able to influence

	decisions that affect their lives.
7.	**Consultation, engagement and communication**
	Detailed interviews took place with a selection of members, officers, regular attendees and community organisations as part of the New Local report.

Interviews with VCS partners through the work of building community power research and developing the new equalities objectives have sense-checked and tested the approach.

Engagement took place with anchor organisations and key strategic VCS partners through the Leaders conversation event in November 2024.

Pilots of the Shaping Abbey, Shaping Coleridge and the engagement as part of the North Cambridge Framework have provided a useful test bed for engaging directly with residents in a variety of communities to help inform new models of engagement.

Pilot of Youth Assembly has demonstrated a new partnership led approach in engaging a community who often are not engaged in political life or within their local communities. |
| 7. | **Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact** |
| | Following the implementation of the proposals, we will be better able to evidence the council's impact on residents by increasing opportunities for communities to provide feedback on our impact. There will likely be wider benefits relating to the promoting of community power, especially from perspective that this intends to increase social capital and therefore resilience of communities.

Through **Shaping Abbey**, we've seen sustained and improved engagement, a reduction in concerns raised and positive discussions taking place about local leadership and belonging. Small troubleshooting alongside colleagues in health and the police take place with ease and relationships across public sector organisations has improved.

Youth assembly pilot. A pilot testing engagement model with a seldom heard group who are often under-represented and missing from engagement. 16 education institutions were engaged. 75 young leaders were trained and supported. 400 conversations were captured. 4 x action working groups have been established to ensure that action carries on beyond the assembly itself. |

	New impact measurements will be established through the new group re-design as teams become more familiar with impact measurement compared to output measurement.
9.	**Appendices**
9.1	Appendix 1: Approach to delivering the framework
	Appendix 2: New Local Report

Engagement Mechanism	Purpose	Suggested Trigger Criteria	Suggested role of Councillor	What you can expect
Cambridge Conversations	Universal, light-touch community listening and relationship-building	- No engagement in the ward in last 12 months - Recent high-profile issue raised by public (e.g. petition, protest, multiple casework) - New councillor elected	- Chair / advocate role Attendance and co-design of event with officers	- Officer-led drop-in event within 8 weeks - Pre-event pack with local data - Post-event feedback loop
Shaping Neighbourhoods	In-depth engagement for areas undergoing major change, growth, or investment	- New development over X units - Major infrastructure project-Displacement or regeneration risk - Designated focus in a strategy (e.g. North Cambridge Framework)	- Councillor co-chair or community advocate role	Embedded timeline and governance structure- Officer engagement and planning meeting Post-event feedback
Seldom Heard Engagement	Targeted engagement with communities of	- Demographic under-representation in consultation	- Invitation to join sessions / events	- Report on barriers and enablers

Appendix 1 – Engagement Mechanism

Engagement Mechanism	Purpose	Suggested Trigger Criteria	Suggested role of Councillor	What you can expect
	identity or experience	responses - Poor outcomes shown in JSNA or equalities impact reviews- Councillor, VCS, or officer request via form	Role as champion / advocate based on experience/skills or interest	
Participatory Budgeting	Enable residents to directly influence small budgets at a neighbourhood level	- Budget available (e.g. ward pot or grant programme) - Local group(s) express interest in co-producing ideas and supported by 2 x ward councillors	Support outreach and selection of awarded projects Decision panel	- Clear timeline and rules for process- Evaluation and community feedback shared
Section 106 & Public Art Planning *Subject to changes post-transformation*	Ensure local voices shape infrastructure investment	- Triggered by planning decision or s106 agreement	- Supported local engagement process (drop-in, youth input, etc.)	Notification of fund available

Appendix 1 – Engagement Mechanism

Engagement Mechanism	Purpose	Suggested Trigger Criteria	Suggested role of Councillor	What you can expect
Ward / Issue-Based Forums (e.g. Local Listen)	Ward-level dialogue, relationship building, promoting engagement routes	- No recent (6–12 month) councillor led open session- Notable increase in local ASB, complaints or social media interest - Known planning or policy issue upcoming	- opportunity to co-design	Light-touch drop-in with officer support- - Follow-up summary to all attendees and ward members

Appendix 1 – Engagement Mechanism

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Local Democratic Engagement in Cambridge

Contents

1. Project overview and summary recommendations
2. Context: National trends
3. Possible functions of local democratic forums
4. Reporting back on interview outcomes
5. Learning from elsewhere
6. Governance Reference Group discussion notes
7. Recommendations

Project Overview and Summary Conclusions

Project Overview: Local Democratic Engagement in Cambridge

Project objectives:

- <u>Support reflection</u> on existing local democratic arrangements and consider future options for Cambridge

- <u>Share insight and good practice</u> from elsewhere

Project Activities

1. Research on key relevant local policies and national good practice
2. 10 interviews:
   - 5 x Officers
   - 6 x Councillors (Labour, Lib Dem, Green)
   - 4 VCS / resident representatives
3. Mapped potential priorities & functions
4. Selected contrasting good practice from around the country
5. Presentation to Governance Reference Group to inform final report
6. Preparation of recommendations and implementation options

Summary Conclusions

- Across 10 interviews, diverse stakeholders reflected on the strengths and weaknesses of Area Committees. While the importance of visible opportunities for councillors to meet with residents and play an active role in the community was strongly reaffirmed, there was wide agreement that the format was not working effectively.

- Interviews suggest that there is a wide range of potential desirable objectives for any new activities. We recommend that the objectives of any activity are well-focused and explicit to ensure that they meet resident expectations.

- Our research suggests that experiences in Cambridge are consistent with wider trends in both council area-working structures, and democratic engagement in general.

- Councils are broadly responding in one of two ways: re-committing to traditional structures with specific innovations to tackle the problems, or moving to more flexible activities distributed across different levels of council working.

- Based on the interviews we conducted and the preferences of the Governance Reference Group, we recommend the latter approach. In-depth recommendations are presented on the next slide, along with a potential formats for implementation (end of report).

Recommendations

1. Take a "portfolio approach" to member-resident engagement rather than returning to the Area Committee structure. This will allow limited resources to be focused on those functions which are currently missing and/or higher impact. This will require that the (already wide) range of opportunities for engagement and for meeting other objectives are clearly signposted to both members and residents.

2. Any new activities should explicitly prioritise **open-ended resident voice and relationship-building in dynamic, informal settings** (in contrast to consultation on specific council activities). This will also encourage a spirit of early consultation and input. Given diverse community preferences, these functions are likely to lend themselves more to a series of decentralised activities. This is likely to require a degree of experimentation and ongoing review. Members might benefit from additional training and support to execute this role.

3. Wherever possible, additional member-resident engagement activities should build on **existing community-led structures and activities**. Where possible, **community-led activities should be proactively supported** to support this kind of engagement.

4. As part of the review of the wider engagement portfolio, consider opportunities to increase / better signpost the **number and impact of opportunities for residents to meaningfully influence decision-making,** noting existing successful examples in Cambridge (e.g. Tenant Residents' Group).

5. In particular, consider the opportunity of the grants review to explore **participatory budgeting,** given the strong stated resident interest, tangibility of impact, clear link to the principle of resident-voice, and positive track record in other places.

Context: National Trends

Wider National Context: Recent Trends

Our interviews in Cambridge and wider work across the country suggest that several national trends are also relevant in Cambridge. They provide useful context to understand both the status quo and choices about the way forward.

Diversification of info & engagement mechanisms

There is rapid **proliferation of how communities receive information** (e.g. offline / online), coupled with a **decline in the reach of mainstream media** resulting in fewer shared sources of information.

There is **diversification of communities' abilities, preferences and habits** in engaging with authorities and each other.

Wider democratic challenges

National / international trends are often also undermining local working (polarisation over specific issues; misinformation e.g. about council schemes; general institutional distrust).

NB: Local government remains more trusted than national government

Covid effect

The **impact of the pandemic** is still evolving, but seems to be affecting trends in engagement: e.g. proliferation of informal activity; some traditional engagement routes apparently struggling (e.g. formal volunteering).

Diverging choices for councils

In response to both these trends and local circumstances, we see diverging responses:

- **Some councils abandoning traditional local coordination structures** in favour of cross-area, community-driven activities;

- **Some re-committing** by improving traditional models with additional resources / new methods

Possible Functions of Local Democratic Forums

Developing a clear focus

- Local democratic forums can be used to achieve a **very wide range of objectives** – overleaf are those which came up as desirable in Cambridge.

- While several of these are interlinked and mutually reinforcing, it's **very difficult to achieve all objectives to a high quality** without significant complexity and resource investment.

- Having clear and publicly shared objectives will ensure that residents, officers and members have **shared expectations** about what their involvement will and won't achieve. This is important to building trust for any additional activities.

- We therefore **recommend being explicit about the purpose** of different activities, while signposting to other opportunities and activities across the council. This will allow residents to make informed and meaningful choices about where and how they engage.

Deliberative problem-solving

Involvement in council decision making

Participatory budgeting

Council-led Information and Consultation

Supporting community leadership

Possible functions of Local Democratic Forums

Hearing resident voice

Service improvement

Accountability

Civic education / knowledge building

Strengthening relationships (councillors, officers or intra-community)

Reporting Back on Interviews

Summary of Interview Outcomes

1. **Current format not working:** There was strong consensus that Area Committees have not been functioning as an effective democratic engagement mechanism, or a good use of time /resources. While many interviewees were appreciative of the original intent, common problems have included poor, unrepresentative attendance, an unclear / mismatched remit, and an unengaging format.

2. **Successful engagement elsewhere:** There was awareness and appreciation of a wide range of other successful community engagement activity, including council-led, community-led and partnerships between the two.

3. **Ambitions for the future – Function:** The top stated objectives for any new activities were
   - Hearing resident voices more widely / openly
   - Strengthening of relationships
   - Participatory budgeting (if possible)

4. **Ambitions for the future – Format:** Top stated priorities for the format for any new activities were:
   - Informal / dynamic
   - Inclusive
   - Coordinated with existing (community) activity

Experiences of Area Committees: Appreciation & Bright Spots

Appreciation of Key Elements / Intent

- Good to listen to & **build relationships** with councillors / officers / residents in person

- Good to **involve residents in decision-making**

- Useful opportunity for **officer-councillor working**

When it worked….

- **Contentious issues** drove high attendance

- Some success when focused on **planning**

- **Experimentations** with format (North Area pilot 2011/2012)

Experiences of Area Committees: Challenges

Lack of clear & compelling purpose

- Unclear what the purpose was, and who the committee was supposed to be useful for
- "Talking shop"; no meaningful ability to hold power to account (particularly after transition online)

Experiences often neutral / negative

- Felt bureaucratic and uninspiring
- Discussion often dominated by concerns that didn't motivate wider audience
- For some: Felt like a political platform for attending councillors

Attendance: Limited and unrepresentative

- Attendance overall was often very poor
- Of those attending, poorly representative of wider Cambridge population
- Limited awareness in wider community; poorly advertised

Mismatched remit

- Geographic remit not matching resident experiences of issues – often not relevant
- Mismatched expectations because of confusion re levels of government

Issues with format

- Generated significant officer workload for little obvious effect
- Timing inconvenient for many

What Activities, Channels and Groups *Are* Succeeding in Securing Engagement from Cambridge Communities?

Council-led

- Tenant Panel
- Growth Community Forums
- Environmental Improvement Programme
- Community engagement team activities: volunteering; litter-picking / community clean-up days
- Pop-up consultations e.g. housing redevelopment
- Ward walkabouts
- Some individual councillor engagement

Collaborations

- Food Poverty Alliance
- Piggy-backing / bolting on to existing activities e.g. food-hub & warm-hub connection
- Pop-ups: Ukraine, cost-of-living.
- Community groups Whatsapp group
- Fairs & events e.g. volunteer fair.

Community-led

- Residents' Associations (variable)
- Community groups e.g. Abbey People, Queen Edith's Forum
- Mobilisation around one-off concerns
  - But doesn't sustain
- Civic education classes
- Faith groups

Aspirations for the Future: Function

Leading priorities

Clarity of objective
Considered important regardless of what it is

Resident voice (on their own terms) being heard by councillors and officers

Participatory budgeting

Strengthening relationships (particularly councillors, also officers)

Several mentions

Involvement in council decision making

Early-stage consultation & input into council decisions

Also mentioned

Civic education / knowledge building

Deliberative problem-solving

Service improvement

Aspirations for the Future: Form

Leading priorities

Informality / Dynamism

Inclusivity

Piggy-backing / coordinated with existing activities

Several mentions

Agenda set by residents

In-person

Welcoming setting

Agenda, advertising, follow-up

Hyper-local

Also mentioned

"Managing out the politics"

Also online

Managing expectations

Balance of council sharing info & reacting to info

Key tension: Routine & regular vs. occasional

Existing Engagement Activity

- There is already a **wide range of existing council-led engagement activity** occurring (see next slide). Coordinating well with existing activities / giving members the opportunity to engage in these activities will both allow an efficient use of resources / minimise duplication and streamline residents' ability to engage effectively.

- A sample of potential **existing activities to further strengthen / align with is** shown below.

Aspirations

Existing Activity / Opportunities

Voice and decision-making	*Using existing opportunities & networks*	*Accessible & inclusive formats*
Grant programme review	*Youth Assembly*	*Abbey Ward Pilot*
Residents' Panel on Housing Scrutiny	*VCS whatsapp*	*Appreciative Enquiry*
Growth Community Forums		

Community Engagement WhatsApp group

New Community Steering groups

Petition Scheme

Community Centre User Groups

Development Control Forum

Online consultations and engagement

Greater Cambridge Youth Engagement Service

Youth Advisory Board

Formal Committee meetings

Tenant reps meeting

Tenants' survey

Leaseholder Forum

Existing Council-led Engagement Activity

Ward Walk-abouts

Network Lunches

Residents Panel

Community Clean Up Days

Growth Community Forums

Housing Scrutiny Committee elections

Volunteer recruitment and training support

Residents meetings

Ward Walk-abouts

Community Right to Bid

Grants

Appreciative Enquiry

Resident association Grants

Resident inspectors meeting

Community Safety Partnership

Governance Reference Group Discussion Notes

Headline notes from Governance Reference Group Meeting 15/4/2024

- The group shared their own experiences of **challenges** of Local Area Committees, and agreed that the format wasn't working effectively

- The group agreed with wider interviewees that **hearing resident voices** on their own terms, and hearing from a **wider cross-section of people**, should be a priority of the revised arrangements

- It was noted that it's important to allow for **significant diversity between and within wards** – uniform arrangements are unlikely to be successful

- It was noted that there was a **particular benefit to reinstating some form of in-person contact** / opportunity for relationship-building, while noting that some residents prefer / require online opportunities.

- It was acknowledged that any arrangements should be **consistent with / complementary** to the Council's wider ambitions around **community power, community wealth building and revised governance arrangements**

- The group therefore encouraged the **exploration of more innovative models** from around the country to meet specific Cambridge circumstances.

Learning from Elsewhere

Contents:
- Different approaches to consider
- 3x Thematic Spotlights
- 5x Geographic Deep Dives

Scope / Footprint of Engagement Activities

Councils' engagement activities – whether member or officer-led - might be organised around a range of potential scopes / footprints. The examples we include consider a range of options.

Council-wide activities / programme

Scope

Responsive to community issues & identities

Around administrative boundaries e.g. wards

e.g. Cam Area Committees

Three Categories of Case Studies

There are 2 broad approaches to structuring democratic engagement arrangements: those councils continuing with / deepening their locality-focused structures around administrative boundaries, and those taking a more mixed portfolio approach (separate functions are distributed across different footprints i.e. ward-level; issue/ community-specific; council-wide). There are also councils experimenting with novel engagement formats in general, although these are not always focused on regular councillor activities. As requested, we have focused research on portfolio approaches and innovative formats (including one innovative locality-focused option).

Iterations on locality-focused structures
1x Deep Dive (DD)

- Durham
- Stevenage
- Bolton (DD)
- Sheffield

Portfolio approach
4x Deep Dive (DD)

- Oxford (DD)
- Barking & Dagenham (DD)
- Test Valley (DD)
- Norwich
- Adur & Worthing (DD)

Innovating away from traditional formats
3 x Thematic spotlights

- Hearing Resident Voices
- Engagement via Partnerships
- Engaging Formats

Pros: Easy-to-understand; lend themselves to some formal decision-making.
Cons: Common problems with attendance & inclusivity; often resource-intensive to do well.

Pros: Offers greater flexibility to appropriately engage with diverse issues and communities
Cons: Greater complexity; some residents prefer traditional format

Pros: Novel formats are showing early success in improving inclusion and engagement
Cons: Approaches are emergent and require more development / adjustment

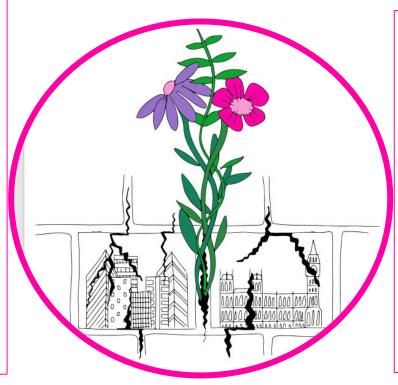# Spotlight on: Hearing Resident Voice

NEW LOCAL

Southwark

- Proactive outreach in a specific neighbourhood to build social capital, connection and problem-solving capacity around specific issue (food inequality), with target of speaking to 80% of the neighbourhood
- Mixed stakeholder working groups hosted seven mass engagement events and on-street 1:1 conversations.

Useful links:
- Case Study

Wakefield

- Wakefield Council had a Big Conversation with residents, training 100 'conversationalists' (including councillors and officers) to have over 1,300 face-to-face conversations with people across the district to find out what they like about their area and what would make things better.

Useful links:
- Case Study

Worthing

- Emergent approach, rooted in becoming a listening 'council for the community'.
- Kicked off via new participation activities including a "Big Listen" campaign to understand how to deliver this agenda, with teams (including councillors) popping up around the town with big red deck chairs.

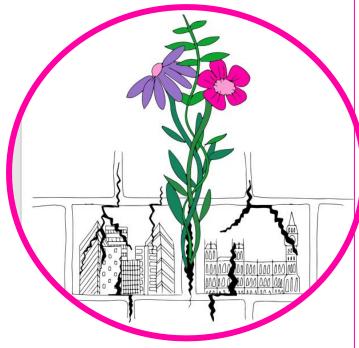- **Useful Links:** The Big Listen; *(Also features in Deep Dive)*

Spotlight on: Engagement Via Partnerships

NEW LOCAL

Barking and Dagenham

Several cross-borough initiatives heavily focused on mobilising and partnering with community groups, through which programmes are delivered. Councillor role in building and maintaining key relationships:

- Citizens' Alliance Network to coordinate resident voice and action at neighbourhood level
- BD Collective to foster VCSE network & collaboration

(Also features in Deep Dive)

Test Valley (Romsey)

- Members are supported by officers to engage in rolling meetings with local groups and residents, with a particular focus on the role of the "community councillor"
- To tackle a contentious town centre development process, Test Valley ran a Citizens' Assembly to build a vision from a deliberative, citizen-led starting point. The Assembly provided the starting point for a wider partnership to support ongoing collaborative working

Useful links:

- Romsey Future & Podcast

(Also features in Deep Dive)

Bolton

- New approach in development creating informal networks of local residents, voluntary groups and businesses (also seen as a replacement for area forums).
- Supporting residents to connect better with each other and build on existing approaches.
- **Useful links:** Community Alliances; *(Also features in Deep Dive)*

Spotlight on: Engaging Formats

Hounslow

- Hounslow Council is running a Citizens' Jury to explore how residents can get more involved in council decision-making

Useful links:
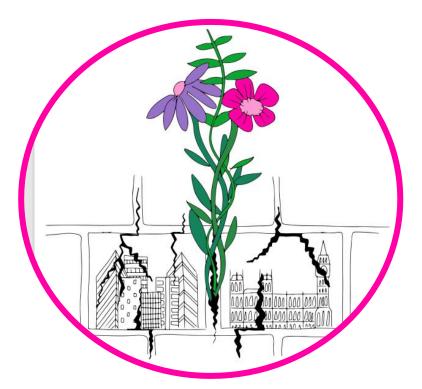- [Citizens' Jury](#)

World Café Method

- A method making use of an informal cafe setting for participants to explore an issue by discussing it in small table groups.

Useful links:
- [World Café](#)

Manchester

- Greater Manchester Combined Authority co-created the Greater Manchester Homelessness Prevention Strategy via a "Legislative Theatre" approach
- 35 residents came together to create original plays based on their experiences of homelessness services. These plays, performed to decision-makers were used to explore and drive decision-making.

Useful links:
- [Case Study](#)

Surrey

- Surrey County Council wanted to better engage residents they didn't normally hear from. They ran an event series called "Let's Talk Surrey", focused on creating safe spaces for residents to talk to the council in an engaging and innovative way.
- One particularly successful activity involved an "escape room" consultation, which reached young people who had not previously been engaged.

Useful links: [Case Study](#)

NEW LOCAL

Deep Dive: Test Valley

Overview: Portfolio approach which prioritises building members' role as "community councillor", and investing ad hoc in specific in-depth engagement and deliberative processes when needed; no formal neighbourhood forums

Where, when, what:
- In order to maximise the democratic involvement of all councillors, the council outlines distinct functions according to role (i.e. executive / backbencher), with an explicit development of the "community councillor" as a key part of the council's approach
- Community Development Team supports councillors to build relationships and meet informally with a wide range of residents and groups around particular local priorities
- Training for councillors in how to play this role well, with ongoing support from officers to focus their energies on key issues, and how to navigate to particular parts of the council
- A cross-party group with leadership representation works together on an ongoing basis to continue to build and develop the role of councillors in council working
- Occasional heavy investment in both engagement processes (e.g. around council plan) and deliberative decision-making processes (e.g. around development). Resource: Podcast

Strengths & limitations:
- ✓ Agile, flexible approach enables engagement with a wide range of residents, while limiting constraints posed by bureaucratic structures
- ✓ Balances investment in localised relationships with the ability to invest more significant resources into structured issue- or community-specific activities when needed
- ~ No formal regular space for localised decision-making
- ~ Relies on individual councillors to engage positively with the approach

Impact
- The team credit the approach with improving the democratic legitimacy of the councillors' roles in the eyes of residents

Role of councillors:
- Meeting informally with residents / groups as needed, in response to the needs and circumstances of their ward; supported by Community Development Team in identifying contacts and issues
- Councillors have small discretionary budget for distribution in ward, associated with wider dialogue / work with CDT

Resourcing:
- Community Development Team of c. 8-10 with some level of local focus
- Small budgets (low £000s) for individual councillors

Governance and control:
- No formal decision-making power via local structures
- Significant use of deliberative processes for other key decisions

Deep Dive: Oxford

Overview: Portfolio approach to engagement (i.e. some local, some issue-specific, some council-wide) with local focus via 4 Quadrants

Where, when, what:
- *Ward-level:* Traditional case work; Ward level budgets available to councillors
- *Quadrant-level:* Officer-led Locality teams x 4 working on coordinating local Thriving Communities work with focus on tackling inequalities, including signposting and coordinating partners to provide support; officers support councillor engagement in a locally tailored way; officers support access to centralised grants programme; Fortnightly learning sessions with guest speakers.
- *Cross-council / issue-based:* Several issue-specific partnerships e.g. health and wellbeing partnerships, youth partnerships operating across whatever footprint makes sense to that issue; Some specific engagement projects e.g. Community Champions programme (focused on health, based in anchor organisations and driving community-led approaches - DLUHC funded); Barton Health New Town (NHS funded); Community Insight Profile grants to support community-led activity,

Strengths & limitations:
- ✓ Quadrants are based on recognisable community identities rather than administrative boundaries; creates structure for a range of council activities
- ~ Officer resource can be spread quite thin; dependent on individual councillor engagement & responsiveness

Impact & insights
- Portfolio / Quadrant approach allows council to target resources to particularly needed issues / communities, while taking advantage of the benefits of some locality-based working for all areas

Role of councillors:
- Work with Quadrant Manager to build relevant local relationships and identify / respond to local needs
- Small budget available for localised expenditure

Resourcing:
- 4 Quadrant Managers with senior coordinating responsibility, matrix management approach to incorporating both community development team and colleagues from other services – c. 10-12 people in each wider Quadrant team
- Ward budgets: (£1000/councillor + top-ups where available from the Community Infrastructure Levy)

Governance and control:
- No formalised local decision-making structure

Deep Dive: Barking and Dagenham

Overview: Portfolio approach with particular focus on supporting community leadership & community networks; *some* light-touch neighbourhood focus.

Where, when, what: Range of activities operating over different footprints.
- Citizens' Alliance Network to coordinate resident voice and action at neighbourhood level x7; online collation of opportunities / activities; also acts as consultation hub
- BD Collective "network of networks" to foster VCSE collaboration in order to work with council on Borough Manifesto aims; run by external partner via tendered contract
- Participatory grant-making via NCIL , allowing residents to direct resources to community groups (£300k/year; outreach via sortition; aims to connect resources from from regeneration to activities where residents have voice / experience tangible benefit)
- CAN DO Fund: £250 grants to support community-led events to bring people together
- Some issues/community specific projects (with resources) e.g. Your Estate Your Call to generate community-led ideas for funded improvements; voted on by community

Strengths & limitations:
- ✓ Broad range of opportunities for residents to get involved supports diverse participation
- ✓ Strong relationships with VCS community underpins other activities
- ✓ Participatory budgeting is well established and involves a high degree of resident voice
- ~ Elements of approach have not been sustainable financially e.g. Participatory City
- ~ Neighbourhood level activity limited to online coordination
- ~ The iterative process meant that some projects were undermined by newer ones

Impact
- Culture of participation core to council's way of operating
- The team credit the approach with enabling their quick and effective covid response, as community networks were already engaged and mobilised
- Once people engage via NCIL, they tend to go on to other engagement opportunities

Role of councillors:
- No formal, regular LAC-type structure
- Particular focus on councillors playing stronger relationship-building role and supporting participatory processes
- During key projects (e.g. Borough Manifesto) councillors drop into key community venues / activities in order to seek input

Resourcing:
- Citizens' Alliance Network has officer team of 2
- BD Collective core £100k/year contract; 2FTE
- NCIL is key to delivering the participatory budgeting activity

Governance and control:
- Variable by activity as outlined

Deep Dive: Bolton

Overview: "**Community Alliance** model – innovation on traditional locality structure – Informal network of local residents, voluntary groups and businesses

Where, when, what:
- Recent move away from Area Forums, new approach called "Community Alliances" currently being rolled out, with initial activity in 7 areas
- Significant focus on communities leading activities according to their own preferences about issues tackled, and format, frequency and location of activities
- Officers support the Alliances by making connections between groups and people to collectively tackle local issues. Their aim is to discover individuals and groups who might want to be involved, connect them to each other and support them to mobilise themselves to deliver solutions.

Rationale:
- Build on existing locality-focused structures and identities, but move towards a more flexible, community-leadership focused approach within those activities

Strengths & limitations:
- ✓ Highly responsive to community preferences
- ~ Risk of approach preferencing communities with greater existing social capital and resources; equitable access likely to require proactive and ongoing community development activity via the Area Working Coordinator

Impact & insights
- Approach still being rolled out

Role of councillors:
- Supported by Area Working Coordinator to play an active role in the Community Alliances
- *NB: Still emergent*

Resourcing:
- 5 x Area Working Coordinators, each with responsibility for 4 wards
- £15,000 per wards, of which £7,500 per ward to be allocated to community group projects to generate and increase social action for the benefit of residents in the ward

Governance and control:
- No formal governance structures or decision-making responsibility

Deep Dive: Adur & Worthing

Overview: Portfolio approach with particular focus on listening and community participation; investing ad hoc in specific in-depth engagement processes when needed; no formal neighbourhood forums

Where, when, what:
NB: Some similarities with Test Valley approach; here spotlighting distinct elements
- Ongoing experimentation being used to develop approaches
- Kicked off via town-wide The Big Listen
- Localised projects: Use of a participatory process to build consensus around the future of Lancing; Start of the process was members identifying key data points (e.g. about economy; data points used to open up wider conversations with wider groups; members and community groups then reflected on these stories to identify priorities for the future.
- Similar approach taken to project where community was frustrated about development delay; members supported a process to overcome delays by bringing together developers and community to co-design development

Rationale:
- Key principle to "make the place the client" with cross-party action to engage community

Strengths & limitations:
- ✓ Experimentation with new formats in small areas then builds competence and confidence
- ~ No formal regular space for localised decision-making

Impact & insights
- Approach still in development but indicating early successes in building new and effective councillor roles

Role of councillors:
- Supporting and convening engagement activities as "learning spaces"
- "Community connectors", connecting residents to council projects, and to each other

Resourcing:
- Officer resourcing not known
- Local funding as below

Governance and control:
- As determined by requirements of projects
- NCIL Fund distributed via panels where members and community representatives engage on equal footing; distributed via "CIL areas" or clusters of wards

Recommendations & Implementation Options

Recommendations

The following 5 recommendations respond to the shared priority that councillors play an active, visible and effective role in supporting Cambridge's diverse communities to engage with the issues, changes and choices which affect their lives and the city's future.

1. Take a "portfolio approach" to member-resident engagement rather than returning to the Area Committee structure. This will allow limited resources to be focused on those functions which are currently missing and/or higher impact. This will require that the (already wide) range of opportunities for engagement and for meeting other objectives are clearly signposted to both members and residents.

2. New activities should explicitly prioritise **open-ended resident voice and relationship-building in dynamic, informal settings** (in contrast to consultation on specific council activities). This will also encourage a spirit of early consultation and input. Given diverse community preferences, these functions are likely to lend themselves more to a series of decentralised activities. This is likely to require a degree of experimentation and ongoing review. Members might benefit from additional training and support to execute this role.

Recommendations

3. Wherever possible, additional member-resident engagement activities should build on **existing community-led structures and activities**. Where possible, **community-led activities should be proactively supported** to support this kind of engagement.

4. As part of the review of the wider engagement portfolio, consider opportunities to increase / better signpost the **number and impact of opportunities for residents to meaningfully influence decision-making,** noting existing successful examples in Cambridge (e.g. Tenant Residents' Group).

5. In particular, consider the opportunity of the grants review to explore **participatory budgeting,** given
the strong stated resident interest, tangibility of impact, clear link to the principle of resident-voice, and
positive track record in other places.

Key Questions to Consider Regarding Implementation

- What are the **priorities** for practical implementation?

- What **resources** are available to implement the different elements of these recommendations?

- What **additional training and support** might be required for councillors and/or officers to focus on these priorities? How can an innovative, decentralised approach be **best supported**?

- How can **existing activities and opportunities** be better signposted or amplified, both to councillors and residents?

Illustrative Implementation Options: Core Activities

Responsive: Issue / Community-Specific Engagement & Decision-making opportunities

Bespoke activities according to specific community need / challenge / opportunity e.g. Shaping Abbey Pilot, Tenants' Resident Group

Anchor Activity: Annual Event – The Local Listen

- Informal & fluid drop-in event
- Ward / Area Committee boundaries depending on resource
- Focus: Build relationships; encourage questions; hear resident voice; promote engagement opportunities.

Ongoing Satellite Meetings Via Community Organisations

- Format flexible according to needs of group
- Light-touch conversations focused on establishing regular agenda-free dialogue
- Flexes up / down according to Member capacity
- Officer support to set-up / coordinate meetings

Optional: Cross-City Participatory Budgeting

- Can include ward level focuses set via Local Listens / Satellite Events

Illustrative Implementation Options: Training and Support

New Resource for Councillors: Resident Engagement Guide

- Outline of different activities
- Articulation of approaches (including light-touch skills building)
- Key methods and templates for activities
- Signposting of other resident engagement & support opportunities

Training & Support

- Opportunity for councillor training in engagement & listening
- Engagement Innovation Group: Action Learning Set (or similar) for engaged councillors to trial and develop new approaches, for circulation to wider group

More Details on Individual Options

Activity	Rationale	Councillor Role	Other considerations
Issue / Community-Specific opportunities (responsive)	Ensuring that council activities are well tailored to the diverse range of places, communities and issues in Cambridge; flexibility to respond	Engaging with affected / interested residents, tailored to issue / community in question	Councillors & officers would work together to identify which issues require additional in-depth engagement
Anchor Activity: Annual Event – The Local Listen	Offer a baseline, open-access, community-wide opportunity to engage informally with local councillors	Meet with / hear from residents without fixed agenda; signpost to relevant activities / opportunities (with officer support)	Events can be more or less ambitious according to resource available
Ongoing Satellite Meetings Via Community Organisations	By engaging in light-touch meetings which are both more proactive and informal than Area Committees, councillors can hear a wide range of voices	Meeting with key groups to build council's knowledge, insight and ability to respond	Officer resource would be key to supporting councillors effectively; capacity needs to be considered / planned
Cross-City Participatory Budgeting	Strong resident interest, clear / compelling link to high-impact decision-making	Encourage & build cross community support for applications	*Remit for this sits with Grants team; review of activities ongoing*
New Resource for Councillors: Resident Engagement Guide	Ensure all councillors have clear overview of activities and their role, with support for implementation	Resource would ideally be co-created together with a group of councillors	Resource would need to be regularly updated
Training & Support incl. cross-party innovation group	Ensure all councillors feel confident in listening / convening approaches; encourage those with particular interest to lead the development of new approaches	All to engage with training opportunities; most engaged to champion ongoing experimentation and development	Training in "community champion" role increasingly common; resource implications.

Services, Climate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Items and dates are provisional and will be confirmed on the agenda for each meeting.

Business previously considered by the Services, Climate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee can be found on the council's website:

[Committee details - Services, Climate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Cambridge Council](#)

Name of Item	Description of Item	Suggested Meeting Date	Service Area	Lead Officer
Local Communities and Democratic Engagement	To discuss report issued to council from New Local and make recommendations on	7 October 2025	Communities	Vicky Haywood, Strategic Enabling Communities Lead
Herbicide Free Weed Management Work Programme	To receive an update on the programme which has been implemented across the City: https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/news/2025/03/24/new-herbicide-free-weed-management-work-programme-approved-for-cambridge	7 October 2025	City Services	Alistair Wilson, Assistant Director of Public Realm and Environment
TBC: Equalities Strategy	To scrutinise the current strategy and reasons for proposed redrafting.	**TBC:** 2 December 2025 3 February 2026	Economy and Place	Keryn Jalli, Strategic Resettlement and Community Equity Lead
Community Wealth Building Strategy	Post-scrutiny of impact of agreement of strategy approx. 18 months prior	2 December 2025	TBC	TBC
Impact of changes to fees and charges	Post-scrutiny on the impact of changes to fees and charges on use of council services.	2 December 2025	TBC	TBC

Name of Item	Description of Item	Suggested Meeting Date	Service Area	Lead Officer
Homelessness Strategy	To consider the recommendations from the initial review and to provide input into the actions and strategy.	3 February 2026	TBC	TBC
Update on the Climate Change Strategy	The council's current climate change strategy runs to 2026 and therefore we are beginning work to update it. We expect to go to Cabinet for approval to consult in autumn 2025 on a draft. The period of the next strategy ends in 2030 which is the target date for achieving net zero in our operations.	3 February 2026	Economy and Place	Jemma Little, Head of Economy, Energy & Climate
City Centre Heat Network	Pre-scrutiny ahead of report to Cabinet on 10 February 2026. Issue details - City Centre Heat Network - Cambridge Council	3 February 2026	Economy and Place	Ben Binns, Assistant Director of Development
Culture Strategy	TBC	**TBC:** Post-Festival 2026	TBC	TBC
Folk Festival	Review of 2026 edition and changes agreed 2025.	**TBC:** Post-Festival 2026	TBC	TBC

Watching brief/potential items:

- Bereavement Services
- Reorganisation of City Services
- Recyling contract

The following items are within the remit of the Performance OSC, so would only feature on a Services OSC agenda as it related to Services remit specifically

- Local Growth Plan
- Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority
- Corporate Plan

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