

CABINET

25 September 2025

5.00 - 8.00 pm

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

Also present (virtually): Councillors A Smith, Todd-Jones

Other Councillors present:

Councillors Bennett, Bick, Baigent, Porrer, Pounds, Swift, Young

Officers Present:

Chief Executive: Robert Pollock

Director of Economy & Place: Lynne Miles

Assist Director & Head of Legal Services: Tom Lewis

Head of Economy, Energy and Climate: Jemma Little

Chief Financial Officer: Jody Etherington

Democratic Services Manager: Dan Kalley

Meeting Producer: James Goddard

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

25/24/Cab Apologies

No apologies were received for this meeting.

25/25/Cab Declarations of Interest

A non-pecuniary declaration of interest was made by Councillor Nestor in respect of item 25/29/Cab, as a Trustee of the Museum of Cambridge.

25/26/Cab Minutes of the Meeting Held on 24 June 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

25/27/Cab Minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2025

The minutes of the meetings held on 15 July 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

25/28/Cab Public Questions

Question 1

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.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resource responded with the following:

- i. The key objective of the scheme was to make the small and large halls of the Guildhall fit for purpose.
- ii. The goal was to enhance the ventilation, acoustics, and overall décor of the Halls, including the kitchen, cloakrooms, and bar facilities. These improvements were expected to increase usage from the current forty-two days per year to a projected thirty-two to sixty-four conference days annually, with an increase in revenue from £125,000 to £400,000 by year five.
- iii. The primary aim of the Guildhall scheme for the Council Chamber was to preserve its role as the seat of local democracy. To achieve this, the

existing layout and seating arrangements must be reconfigured to enhance accessibility, promote inclusion, and accommodate the needs of a larger unitary council.

- iv. The Performance, Assets and Strategy Overview and Scrutiny Committee, held on 9 September 2025, sent the following advice to this Cabinet meeting:

To retain the Chamber in a horseshoe layout with tiered seating, ensuring it remains accessible and central to the city's civic life; such a proposal was already included in the planning submission documents. The consultants have advised that the goal of maximising community use of the Chamber would require a leveled access floor. This would enable the Council to attract bookings for all three spaces, the Chamber, the large and small halls. Members would be consulted during the technical design stages on the design options. In any event, the refurbishment works to the chamber to make it fit for purpose would respect the grandeur of this space.

Supplementary

- i. It was unfortunate that they were not permitted to read their question.
- ii. Whenever concerns were raised about Guildhall's suitability for hosting conferences, the response often pointed to the superior facilities available at universities and colleges.
- iii. However, the current proposal, arguably a philistine one in relation to the Council Chamber, seemed intent on removing the one distinctive feature of the Guildhall that wasn't replicated in those academic institutions. It's precisely this unique character that sets the Guildhall apart and made it a valuable civic space.
- iv. Questioned if anyone consulted with the County Council who previously hosted citizenship ceremonies in their building Shire Hall, before moving out, a space like the Council Chamber.
- v. Asked if the Council would consider redeploying all the money that was going to be spent on the destruction of the Chamber to the Large and Small Hall so they could be properly refurbished.
- vi. Recommend a committee be set up that would undertake proper research into the possible usage of the Chamber, to determine how this space could be used in the current configuration.
- vii. Believe the current layout perfectly accessible in the way that it is built.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resource said:

- i. The plans and budget included the full refurbishment of the small and large halls.

- ii. Briefings would be held during the technical design stage for consultation to discuss the various design options.
- iii. Some Members had expressed a preference for retaining the tiered seating. This option would be considered alongside others when the full range of options and supporting evidence was presented.
- iv. Decisions would be made objectively, based on the evidence provided.

Question 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 council's own plans, footfall does not increase and therefore rents aren't increased in line with the business plan then they will 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 brings 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?

The Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Environment responded:

- i. The ongoing consultation with market traders proved extremely valuable, as reflected in the way the designs had evolved over time in response to their feedback.
- ii. Initially the project was to be full demountable stalls but due to the multiple requests from traders, the plan was now to have just half of these stalls. Each of these new permanent stalls would be for a single trader.
- iii. Following further feedback, the designs have been updated with built in storage; traders could share a permanent stall, trading on different days.
- iv. Fully understood by both the design team and others involved, the traders had been discontented with the design. However, they valued the sturdiness of the structures and the fact that their positions remained fixed.
- v. One key aspect of the project was to create a flexible civic space in the heart of the city by freeing up the Market Square when the market is not in operation. This space would not only be available for evening use but also during quieter market days when the market is condensed, allowing for a more versatile and inclusive public area.
- vi. Agreed that shopping habits had changed significantly in recent years and were likely to continue evolving. Considering this, it was essential for both the future of the market and the Civic Quarter project to create a flexible and adaptable space that could respond to these changing needs.
- vii. There are still several logistical details to be confirmed, including the design of the demountable stalls and arrangements for where traders will operate as the market expands and contracts throughout the week.
- viii. Markets all around the world were able to function using demountable stalls, including some of those designs that traders had highlighted which were excellent examples which the design team were investigating.
- ix. The design team would be running more trials of the demountable stalls.
- x. Regarding the comments about footfall and potential rent increases if footfall did not increase, it was important to clarify that this was in

response to queries raised by traders. The overarching aim of the project is to increase footfall crucial for the market and the Civic Quarter Project.

Supplementary

- i. Concerns were raised about the proposal for forty-four kiosks designated for traders committing to a minimum of five trading days per week. There was apprehension that the market could appear shuttered, particularly on Mondays and Tuesdays. It was felt that this block might represent an overdevelopment of the area, prompting the question: was this truly the best approach to supporting a seven-day-a-week market?
- ii. Recommended that more work was undertaken regarding the rents; a baseline of the premium pitch was problematic. Cheaper options should be available to encourage business.
- iii. Further investigation was required on the design and use of the gazebos.
- iv. £150,000 a year ongoing in perpetuity was a cost that required further research; this was a huge cost to the market
- v. Look into providing fixed stalls in situ that provided traders with what they required.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Environment responded:

- i. The design team continued to have one to one with traders which included the kiosks.
- ii. The minimum of five trading days per week allowed the pitches to be shared, allowing the kiosks to be used seven days a week.
- iii. The area which the kiosks would sit would be closed off at night to prevent anti-social behaviour.
- iv. The kiosks were being designed based on feedback from traders and members of the public requesting permanent stalls.
- v. Cheaper options on rent were available on quieter days managed through the council's market team which would continue through the new business plan.
- vi. Work was still to be done on the market when it was in its decanted location.
- vii. There was work still required on the demountable stalls, planning permission was needed for these stalls.
- viii. There would be costs on employing staff to put up the demountable stalls and to take them back down, increased security and increased cleaning.

Question 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.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources said the following.

- i. The Council and the design consortium had been working closely with market traders and surrounding stakeholders, including the Colleges and the contractor to review potential locations for the temporary relocation of the market. Following discussions, Kings Parade and Sydney Street had been identified as the preferred locations for the decant. The next step would be to work through the operational details. The temporary market would be subject to a separate planning application.
- ii. Construction Management: The Council had been in discussion with the Cambridge Arts Theatre, Kings College, Keys and others to gain an understanding of their requirements for the planned works, day to day operations and the lessons learnt from their previous experiences.
- iii. The preferred market decant option had been strongly influenced by site logistics, scaffolding, site construction, traffic management, site compound was all factored into the proposed solutions.
- iv. Designs for the west side of the market proposed to extend the planting established along Pea's Hill and act as an extension to Great St. Mary's Church.
- v. The proposed planting and seating were designed to enhance biodiversity and improve the eastern end of Great St Mary's. Care had been taken to ensure that views of the war memorial were preserved, and that the design complements, rather than detracts from both Great St Mary's and the market.
- vi. Misleading plans: There was no intention to mislead, diagrams were specifically related to ground floors and activities that occurred in the area at different time of the day. Was aware of other uses in the area and the noise impact statement which would be submitted as part of the planning application would provide evidence that the residential uses would not be impacted by the proposed development.
- vii. Survey results had indicated that the railings at Great St Mary's Church currently accommodated an average of fourteen bicycles. However, it was noted some of these bikes were left for extended periods, with some appearing to be abandoned.
- viii. The design team have had useful conversations with Cam Cycle about the proposals and potential upgrades to cycle parking outside the red line boundaries of the proposed planning applications.
- ix. Facilities for events. The proposals had been developed in conjunction with specialist commercial advisors. The business plan had been stress

tested and reviewed by the Section 151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer) presented to the Scrutiny Committee.

Supplementary

- i. It was essential to have a clear understanding of the specific demountable stalls that will be used during the market decant. This will ensure transparency around what is being proposed and demonstrate how the temporary arrangements would meet the needs of traders.
- ii. There was a lack of adequate information regarding cycle parking, creating an issue with the draft DNA statement for the public realm. A significant amount of detail had yet to be fully worked through, making it difficult to assess the proposals.
- iii. It was essential that the Council presented how the surrounding area would be used, particularly if there was an ambition to encourage pavement cafés over takeaways and foster a vibrant city centre. It's important to consider not just the design of the space itself, but also the building use that surrounded it.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources responded:

- i. Having established the market decant preferred solution, the next step would be to address the operation details.
- ii. The design team continued to work with Cam Cycle and Living Streets on the matter of cycle parking.
- iii. The planning application had a redline which defined the boundary of the development. There was no requirement to address the surrounding uses outside of the development but discussions on this subject had taken place and would continue to take place with the various stakeholders.

Question 4

My question is why despite UNISON asking for provision of a UNISON office in the new refurbished Guildhall and receiving reassurance that 'nothing has been finalised' has the UNISON office been replaced by a prayer room? Ironically in 2020 UNISON had asked that the council provides baby feeding and prayer facilities in public buildings, however we certainly didn't expect this to be provided at the expense of trade union facilities for staff.

The Leader replied with the following:

- i. The Council were committed to supporting the staff and unions.

- ii. Currently the designs that had come forward for the Guildhall had no specific room allocation, with a couple of exceptions, such as the mayor's parlour.
- iii. The planning designs offered no restrictions on the room allocations.
- iv. There were indicative drawings that had to be in the public domain and recognised that this may cause concern for the people if they see that their room may move or be changed. Apologised if this had caused any concern.
- v. Committed to ongoing dialogue as part of the technical design stage and working with staff and unions going forward.

25/29/Cab Cambridge Civic Quarter Project Update

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources presented the report.

The report referred to the latest high-level proposals for the Guildhall, Market, Corn Exchange and associated public realm and financial modelling for the next stage of the project.

The Cabinet Member responded to questions from Cabinet and Councillors in attendance as follows:

- i. Noted the comments made by the Chair of the Performance, Assets and Strategy (PAS) Overview and Scrutiny Committee and responded with the following:
 - A further meeting had been held with Camcycle and a meeting was being arranged with Living Streets ahead of planning submission.
 - Noted the PAS Scrutiny Committee had highlighted the Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs) and bus service provision should include adequate wayfinding measures, which were to be incorporated into the TTRO
 - Further work on the demountable stalls would be undertaken as highlighted in the public speaking section of the meeting.
 - A semicircular chamber council was an important point for the chamber's historic value.
 - Ventilation and accessibility for the Guildhall would be included in the planning submission.
 - The project team were exploring options for a museum and / or opportunities for the Council's heritage items to be displayed.

- The Council had recently commissioned experts to conserve and restore the Council's thirty-five royal charters.
- ii. Important that the Guildhall retained the civic space at the heart of the city and remained open to the public.
- iii. For a scheme of this scale, the planning process began with a Planning Performance Agreement between the Council and the Joint Planning Service. Several pre-application meetings were held to explore key aspects, with heritage considerations being central, particularly the aim to retain the Guildhall's original use while adapting it for modern needs and ensuring financial sustainability.
- iv. There was a whole body of evidence that needed to support the planning application. Officers would then review the evidence to determine whether policy compliant, obtain comments from all the statutory consultees and undertake a public consultation.
- v. The officer's recommendation would be based on planning balance and include conditions, some pre-commencement and other reserved matters. A Section 106 agreement would also be secured, outlining the planning obligations attached to the scheme.
- vi. Believed mistakes had been made by other local authorities who had moved out of the city and moved onto buildings on business parks, but the decision was yet to be made.
- vii. There were potentially significant costs which was why the Council were taking a gradual step by step process.
- viii. Believed that investing in all three assets, the Guildhall, the Market, and the Corn Exchange, was the correct decision. The Council also reaffirmed its commitment to being responsible stewards of public funds, ensuring money was managed sensibly and carefully.
- ix. The Guildhall currently costs £1.2 million per year to operate. In the long term, generating income from the site would allow the Council to redirect funds to other priorities across the city. Similarly, increased revenue from the Corn Exchange would enable reinvestment in wider city services.
- x. Recent discussion focused on how the budget for the scheme is split and presented, particularly around the Guildhall and Corn Exchange, where investment cases can be made. Crucially, reducing operating costs and increasing revenue from these assets will help fund the long-term borrowing required for the project.
- xi. The project includes a start-up phase during which was expected to operate at a loss, as is common with many new enterprises. Provisions have been made in the financing to accommodate this, with the expectation that, over time, increased revenue and reduced operating costs would generate net added value and support long-term sustainability.

- xii. Several processes were still to be undertaken, including value engineering. Officers were also exploring external funding opportunities. Additionally, the underspend on Park Street had unlocked access to low-cost borrowing, which could help reduce the ongoing revenue costs associated with financing the project.
- xiii. The other part of the scheme focused on the Market and the public realm. This represented the Council's investment in placemaking, enhancing public infrastructure to make the city more liveable. It reflected the core purpose of the public sector: to create and maintain spaces that benefit the community.
- xiv. Due to sustained investment in transformation over recent years and careful budget-setting for the current financial year, the Council was on track to balance the budget over the five-year period. Did not anticipate the need for further difficult decisions regarding the General Fund in the next two financial years.
- xv. Noted the comments by Liz Watts, Chief Executive at South Cambridgeshire District Council on successful introduction of the 4-day week and that Councillor Bridget Smith had won the Local Government Association award for Council Leader of the Year. All of this has been from a business park.
- xvi. It was noted that, while most business cases breaking even over 19 years would not typically justify investment, this decision was not purely financial. It reflected a broader commitment to investing in Cambridge's communities, civic pride, the city centre, and inclusive public spaces for all.
- xvii. The project was also about achieving the Council's net zero goals.
- xviii. Part of the Guildhall function would be a customer services hub for residents, convenient for residents in the middle of the city.
- xix. The investment in the market was vital, a space that needed to be made much safer for people at night and more welcoming during the day.
- xx. Acknowledged the comments on accessibility for wheelchair users regarding all three assets and how difficult they were to use.

Cabinet unanimously resolved to:

- i. Agree to support this transformative project to restore and modernise the Guildhall, Corn Exchange, Market Square and Public Realm in the historic heart of Cambridge.
- ii. Agrees to Option 4 to take it forward - that a recommendation is made to Full Council for a capital budget of up to £4.4m to be allocated to fund the technical design development, detailed development programme and to finalise the total direct and indirect costs of the project.
- iii. Agrees to develop technical designs with traders and stakeholders

- iv. Delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Development to submit the designs as put forward for the Guildhall, Corn Exchange, Market Square and associated public realm for Planning Consideration.
- v. Delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Development in consultation with the Leader and CEO to approve non-material amendments and/or s73 amendments to the designs as put forward.
- vi. Delegate authority to the Director of Economy and Place in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer regarding the disposal of Mandela House.

Cabinet **noted** that:

- i. Capital Budget is to be allocated from the existing earmarked Civic Quarter Development reserve.
- ii. The project is affordable at the current estimated project cost which could be up to £92.3m.
- iii. A report will be issued to Cabinet and then to Full Council in September 2026 regarding the final proposals and costs
- iv. Feedback to Cabinet from the Performance, Assets and Strategy Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of 9 September 2025 will be issued separately.

25/30/Cab Procurement Pipeline for Repairs, Maintenance and Compliance Works

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report.

The report advised that a medium-term procurement pipeline had been developed for repairs, maintenance, and building compliance, including damp and mould treatment. This coordinated approach enhanced in-house delivery, ensured statutory compliance, and supported goals like tenant satisfaction and service resilience. Publishing the pipeline under the Procurement Act 2023 promoted transparency, helped providers plan, and aligned with the Council's strategic direction.

Following questions, the Cabinet Member and the Leader said the following:

- i. The Housing Advisory Board would be updated on the paper; tenant representatives and lease holders were extremely knowledgeable and helped to assist effective policy.
- ii. There were some areas where past contracts had not delivered everything that was expected which has taught valuable lessons regarding market engagement, contract management and building in the right performance measures.

- iii. The pipeline approach had been developed from the lessons learnt, stronger safeguards were implemented, and continuous improvements were made for future delivery.
- iv. By setting up a clear strategic plan the Council could secure better value and more reliable contractors which means improved quality and consistency of the services for the tenants.
- v. It also helped minimise disruption by enabling better coordination of works, while keeping compliance and safety at the core of all activities undertaken.
- vi. Challenges had been referenced, and it was right to do as there were tenants at home whose repairs hadn't worked out or had experienced problems.
- vii. Tenant satisfaction with repairs was going up; 71% satisfaction that council homes were well maintained, temporary accommodation turn around was down to 11.5 days
- viii. The structure would allow performance to be monitored with a greater oversight of the contracts.
- ix. A report would be brought back at a future meeting outlining the successes of the scheme.
- x. Out of hours and flexible working were part of those contracts.
- xi. Acknowledged the request that the scrutiny committee were presented with the KPI's to ensure best value.

Cabinet **unanimously resolved** to:

- i. Note the procurement pipeline for repairs, maintenance, and compliance works as set out in the appendix to this report.
- ii. Delegate authority to the Director of City Services, in consultation with relevant Cabinet Members and Chief Officers, to award contracts within this pipeline following completion of the appropriate procurement processes

25/31/Cab Greater Cambridge Impact - Council's Investment

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resource presented the report.

The report provided an update on progress made on fundraising, investment pipeline development, governance and due diligence to establish Greater Cambridge Impact (GCI) and enable the first social investments to be made.

The Cabinet Member, the Chief Executive, Head of Economy, Energy and Climate said the following in response to questions.

- i. With any investments there were risks, but strong safeguards had been put in place.
- ii. The payment was conditional on the assurance from the Chief Executive and the Chief Finance Officer that all the governance arrangements were in place and due diligence completed.
- iii. If the target of £6million was not met the funds would be returned. No money would be spent until the full monies had been raised.
- iv. All investment would be subject to two business cases which would be reviewed, selected and monitored by a board which included the Council's Chief Executive.
- v. Greater Cambridge Impact would now focus on developing its investment pipeline.
- vi. The first would be to provide local not for profit care homes for looked after children; the proposal would establish a multi-agency partnership to continue to support individuals after they had left.
- vii. There would be many other proposals to support disadvantage children and those struggling at school, families facing crisis, poverty and homelessness.
- viii. Work would be undertaken to assess the long-term revenue implications of these projects. In the case of the care home example, some of the revenue streams were expected to come from commissioning bodies that provide funding.
- ix. These projects aimed to deliver better value and greater impact, funds could be redirected which were spent on private care home providers located outside the city. A key requirement was that the approach remained financially sustainable, otherwise the vehicle wouldn't be able to recover the loans, after the investment had been made.
- x. Before the investment commitments from interested organisations could be formally ratified, the approval of the recommendations provided a public declaration of support and intent. This will send a positive message and provides confidence among potential partners.
- xi. As the vehicle was not yet established, until the structure is in place the money will then be released.
- xii. This was an exciting development for the public sector; an investment in the long term to prevent inequality. The scheme showed there were better ways to spend public money.

Cabinet unanimously resolved to:

- i. Approve the drawdown of the Councils £0.8m and approve the formalisation of its investment in Greater Cambridge Impact (GCI), following consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Chairs and

Vice-Chairs, and reassurance from the Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer that governance arrangements were in place and due diligence completed.

25/32/Cab Development of the Climate Change Strategy 2026-2031

The report was presented by Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Environment.

The current Climate Change Strategy (2021–2026) ended in March 2026. A new strategy was required from April 2026 to guide the Council's climate action and progress towards net zero.

Approval was sought to begin public engagement in October.

The following comments were made:

- i. The item would come back to the Services, Climate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee after the consultation had ended.
- ii. The emerging local plan showed how ambitious the Council was for the future developments to be as energy efficient as possible, reducing bills for homes and businesses.
- iii. Climate change was one of the top concerns of the younger generation; would be a positive if the consultation could reach young people.
- iv. Welcomed the focus on supply chain, finance and the collaborative approach.
- v. The consultation was welcomed, but with two additional consultations being released publicly, there was concern that each might lose visibility. Officers were encouraged to coordinate consultation timelines and consider joint promotion to maximise public engagement.
- vi. The climate crisis was real, and addressing it required a coordinated, city-wide approach to both mitigation and adaptation.

Both the Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Environment and the Head of Economy, Energy and Climate confirmed.

- i. Was working alongside the urban forest strategy and the emerging local plan to align all new policies and plan.
- ii. Plans were in place on reaching the harder to reach groups.
- iii. There was a detailed engagement plan in place; specifically, on how to engage with young people through schools and external organisations, colleges and universities.
- iv. This strategy was more collaborative with organisations across the city.

- v. It was important to consider how the Council continued to engage with residents after the consultation, to maintain momentum in supporting climate action and enhancing biodiversity and nature.
- vi. The first Cambridge climate charter was published in 2007, the first climate change strategy was in 2008, this showed the Council's full support but now needed to progress to the next stage of the carbon admission reduction projects.

Cabinet **unanimously resolved** to:

- i. Provide approval to progress to public engagement to help inform the development of the new Climate Change Strategy (2026-2031)
- ii. Delegates finalisation of engagement documents and plans (Appendices A, B and C) to the Director of Economy and Place.

25/33/Cab Urban Forest Strategy Consultation

The Cabinet Member for Nature, Open Space and City Services presented the report.

The report referred to the current Tree Strategy (2016–2026) which was nearing expiry, and a new Urban Forest Strategy (UFS) proposed to continue proactive management of Cambridge's urban forest.

Retaining the original vision, the UFS was more concise, with supporting detail provided in separate Topic Papers. It outlined key principles, delivery methods, and KPIs for clarity and accountability.

The shift to the term "urban forest" reflected the success of the previous strategy and is acknowledged through the renaming of the Senior Arboricultural Officer role to Urban Forest Manager.

Members and Officers noted the positive comments made by Cllr Nestor who provided a global context to the UFS.

In response to Members questions and comments the Cabinet Member for Nature, Open Space and City Services said the following:

- i. The strategy updated and strengthened the progress made under the 2016 tree strategy using evidence and broader aims to protect and grow the city's trees for the future. The 2016 tree strategy had set out clear framework and a long-term canopy target of 19% by 2050.
- ii. The new strategy would
 - build on the 2016 foundation and update it for today's climate, biodiversity and growth pressures.

- Make use of the latest mapping and iTree data, improving access to trees for all communities, while supporting nature.
 - The Council would continue to lead by managing its own tree stock, while encouraging residents, landowners, and partners to help care for the remaining 75% of the city's canopy.
- i. Under the new strategy the Council had aspired to 20% canopy cover by 2050 to match good practice and ambition for the long term, while keeping the target realistic for Cambridge.
 - ii. The Forest Research Organisation had suggested that 20% was the suggested target level of canopy cover.
 - iii. As trees took decades to grow, 2050 was the right timescale for new planting to mature and deliver the shade, cooling, carbon storage and biodiversity benefits the city needs.
 - iv. Noted the comment regarding working with the emerging local plan around the subject of trees and subsidence; subsidence could become an issue with the fees and costs involved.
 - v. When the UFS went out to consultation, Members of the planning committee would be able to make comment.
 - vi. Draft policies for the emerging local plan would be coming forward in the next few weeks, one was entitled canopy cover.

Cabinet **unanimously resolved** to:

- i. Approve the progression to consultation on the new Cambridge City Council Urban Forest Strategy (2026-2036) (UFS).
- ii. Notes that consultation will take place in two stages: an internal consultation with service delivery partners, followed by a public consultation alongside the Biodiversity Strategy review.
- iii. Delegates finalisation of consultation documents and proposals to the Director of City Services.

25/34/Cab Establishment of new loan facilities for Cambridge Investment Partnership

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources presented the report.

The report referred to the Cambridge Investment Partnerships LLP (CIP) which required financing to progress approved development sites at Newbury Farm, ATS/Murketts Histon Road, and Fanshawe Road. The council has already allocated HRA capital budgets for purchasing affordable housing on these sites.

As with previous schemes (e.g. Cromwell Road and Mill Road), the council proposed to support CIP through development and equity loans.

Under relevant regulations, such loans count as capital expenditure, which must be approved by full council under the council's constitution.

The following comments made by Councillor Thornburrow were noted:

- i. This was a mutually beneficial arrangement that positioned the Council as one of the city's leading housebuilders, playing a key role in addressing Cambridge's housing crisis.

Cabinet **unanimously resolved** to:

- i. The approval of a capital budget totalling £18.5 million for the provision of three new development loan facilities to Cambridge Investment Partnership LLP in respect of regeneration activities and new build development at Newbury Farm, ATS/Murketts Histon Road, and Fanshawe Road.
- ii. The setting of fixed interest rates applicable to the above loans at 3.5% per annum above the prevailing 5-year UK gilt rate (to be set no later than the date of each drawdown).
- iii. The approval of a capital budget totalling £4.677 million for the provision of equity loan facilities to Cambridge Investment Partnership LLP in respect of the same three schemes, noting that such equity will be matched by an equal investment by Hill Investment Partnerships LLP.
- iv. The delegation of authority to the Council's Chief Finance Officer to agree the full and detailed terms of the loan with Cambridge Investment Partnership LLP, after taking appropriate professional advice and with due regard to relevant statutory requirements.

25/35/Cab 2025/26 Finance Monitoring Report Quarter 1 (April to June)

The Cabinet Leader for Finance and Resources presented the report.

The report outlined the financial position on revenue and capital budgets as at the end of Quarter1 (Q1) (April to June 2025) and forecast outturn position for 2025-26. The Quarterly presentation was in line with best practice under the CIPFA Financial Management Code. The report also provided details of performance against Prudential Indicators as at Q1 in line with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice.

Cabinet **unanimously resolved** to:

- i. Note this 2025/26 Q1 Finance Monitoring Report and the forecast overspend against budget of £29k on the General Fund and the

forecast overspend against budget of £1.876m on the Housing Revenue Account.

- ii. Note the progress to date on delivering against the savings targets for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account.
- iii. Note the actions planned by services to ensure that overspends are addressed and that the savings targets are achieved.
- iv. Note the progress on the capital programme for Q1.
- v. Note the performance against the Prudential Indicators for Treasury Management for Q1 as set out at Appendix C of the Officer's report.

25/36/Cab 2024/25 Treasury Management Outturn Report

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

Cabinet **unanimously resolved** to:

- i. recommend the report to Full Council, which includes the Council's actual Prudential and Treasury Indicators for 2024/25.

The meeting ended at 8.00 pm

CHAIR

Public Questions – Cabinet 21 October

Question 1:

"In September 2023, my partner Taj and I opened the Tourist Information Centre as a 12 month trial, to test to see if reviving the lost service was viable. The results were a success.

In 2024, we built on the progress of the first year, improving our operation and digging into the numbers to ensure that it was self-sustaining with its revenue and costs.

At the end of the second year, we were in a strong enough position to pay for the third year in a single instalment and hire a new full-time salaried employee.

When I started this experiment, I did not know anything about the Civic Quarter plans, and it was only relatively recently, in the last 2 months or so, that the details of that development have really started to emerge, and I am now in a predicament, as it looks as though the success we have achieved is going to be driven over the edge of a cliff.

Since the old TIC closed in 2020, it is clear that the need and value of Tourist Information Services in general have been underestimated and overlooked, which is also apparent from the Civic Quarter plans.

And so, my challenge now is having to try to get the Council to recognise and understand what it is we do, and to make a plea to the decision-makers to incorporate us into the plans for the future of the Guildhall.

Can the members of the Cabinet who are the relevant decision-makers please let me know how and when I can make this pitch to them, and to open a constructive dialogue about how the Council can help us to continue throughout these upcoming changes?

I have been putting together the case for the TIC which includes: Cost/benefits to the Council and society, footfall generation, revenue generation, and data collection, in-person public services 7-days-a week, over 350 5-star google reviews, witness testimony and more.

We have added undoubted value to the visitor economy and experience, and want that to continue throughout and beyond the development.

As well as that, there is a case to be made that using the space for a TIC will create more revenue and overall benefit for the Council than converting it into a rentable office / meeting space, which I also examine in my presentation.

In the Cabinet papers from 25th September 2025 it was recommended that the Cabinet:

(page 9) 1.1. III: "agrees to develop technical designs with traders and stakeholders"

And that the plan is for:

(page 10) 2.1, 4: "opening up the Guildhall to the community".

There is now a strong community presence already alive in that area of the Guildhall, which was not there before September 2023, and we want to protect and nurture it.

I hope we can begin a productive process of collaboration over the TIC which will benefit the Council and let us continue providing the benefit to the community which we serve.

Question 2:

The North Cambridge Framework for Change is an important initiative which is indicative of the forward-looking approach of Cambridge City Council in the aim to provide residents with safe, secure and 'fit for purpose' housing and accommodation north of the City, an area which requires positive attention and a project for redevelopment.

1. Could Cabinet please confirm that the traders of Arbury Court will be supported in this project, for it is vital for residents to retain the current traders in situ. The butcher, baker and Budgens, along with the other small businesses – including the post office - making up Arbury Court, are vital to residents of Arbury, West Chesterton and Kings Hedges at least. Traders need firm and clear assurances in writing that in any requirement to remove from their current premises during rebuilding and refurbishment will enable them to continue trading and to return to Arbury Court to resume trading. In particular, where equipment is central to trading (eg butcher) there needs to be clarity on financial and other support, just as there are clear and firm assurances to residents of Arbury Court and Kingsway Flats that they will be provided with financial and other support during the transition period.
2. Could Cabinet please confirm that the oversight by the Council will be maintained at a level that ensures that this project, which involves a substantial public outlay, will not be left in the hands of the relevant officer in charge. The officer's qualifications are recognised, and at the same time the Council and Councillors engaged in the Council administration have responsibility for the deployment of finances and cannot leave oversight to one Cabinet member despite their substantial qualifications. There must be support from Councillors involved in the administration which is directed to ensuring positive oversight of the Project and residents will require confirmation of this.

Question 3:

Agenda Item 6 - Arbury Court Redevelopment

I wish to ask the following questions:

Support for Traders

It is gratifying to see that residential tenants and leaseholders are to be offered considerable support in finding and transitioning to new homes including financial support and compensation where appropriate.

The report acknowledges the importance of the shopping centre as a vital part of the community but it does not seem to recognise the special role played by the small, independent shopkeepers which make it unique. If we lose them, the community will lose something special and they will lose their livelihoods. It is therefore disappointing that no similar financial support seems to be on offer.

Will the traders:

- a) be guaranteed to have new premises which are comparable in size, cost and footfall to what they have currently?
- b) be assisted with the costs of having to fit out new premises?
- c) be compensated for business disruption, including disruption due to changes and delays in the project?

Will the building contracts include specific requirements to protect the traders' businesses and pay compensation if these are not met?

New Homes and Service Providers

The report envisages a doubling of homes from 205 to 410. At Arbury Court the number of homes will increase by 182 units.

Has an impact assessment been made to give assurance that there will be sufficient capacity in terms of doctors, pharmacies, dentists, schools and child-care facilities to support this?

Programme Management vs Project Management

Project management of building contracts is usually focussed on building to cost and time objectives, often at the expense of impact on the wider community. Residents, and businesses especially, experienced this during the Milton Road reconstruction.

On the other hand a Programme Manager has responsibility to ensure that a complex set of community benefits are achieved overall.

Will a Programme Manager be appointed with overall responsibility to ensure that community objectives are written into contracts and delivered?

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