



## **INFORMATION PACK**

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## Question 1)

I am writing as a dad in East Chesterton, Cambridge, who feels strongly that the paternity pay offer from Cambridge City Council should be much better.

Proper paternity leave benefits all parents and their babies. Polling by The [Dad Shift](#) campaign showed that 90% of dads agree that fathers today want to be a bigger part of their children's lives, and 86% of the public agree it's better when both parents have equal opportunities to be caregivers.

You may know that the Government is currently reviewing the statutory offer for fathers and non-birthing parents, which is currently the worst in Europe. As part of that review, The Dad Shift have researched paternity leave offerings from local authorities. You can find their league table here: <https://tinyurl.com/local-gov-pat-leave>.

As reported in Cambridge Independent, Cambridge City Council only offers 2 weeks full pay for paternity leave. Currently, 42% of births occur by caesarean section, for which doctors recommend birth parents need six weeks to recover. I have personal experience of this; my daughter was born by emergency c-section, and I am so relieved that I was able to take additional time to support her recovery and care for my new child, despite only receiving two weeks statutory paternity leave from my employer.

Cambridge city council has the opportunity to do far better for the dads you employ and their families, leading by example and enabling all parents to be fully involved in their children's lives with an enhanced paternity leave offering. For wider context, the European average is eight weeks at full pay.

In light of the above, my question is: will the council commit to improving its paternity leave offer to at least six weeks at 90% pay, and to officially call on the Government to introduce at least six weeks of fully paid statutory paternity leave nationally?

Thank you for your consideration and the work that you do.

## **Question 2)**

Our 2006 Local Plan took a significant amount of land out of the Green Belt in order to build an urban extension on the Southern Fringe. This was to address the problem facing a city with many more jobs than houses.

This has been very successful in Trumpington, where higher density housing has enabled us to create two large new public open spaces which are benefitting humans and wildlife alike.

Hobsons Park is the area to the east of Trumpington, between the new housing on Clay Farm and the railway line. It includes a children's playground, a skateboard park, a large allotment site, an artificial hill, an all-age trim trail and a network of paths and benches for walkers, runners, and sitters.

It has also created significant new habitats for wildlife in the four balancing ponds, the new hedgerows, the hundreds of new trees and the grassland. The resulting Biodiversity Net Gain has been truly remarkable, but it's future is far from guaranteed.

As in other new developments, the adoption of roads, drainage and public open spaces has been a major problem. Years of delay have caused some of these new neighbourhoods to deteriorate because they have not been maintained properly. Road and pavement surfaces are being damaged by weed growth, and a few areas of open water are being

choked by vegetation. Developers clearly lack the resources or incentives to develop adequate maintenance programmes, and handovers are further delayed.

My question is this: Is the City Council developing detailed written plans for the maintenance and management of the various areas of Hobson's Park, and are they involving residents and groups to ensure that these plans are informed by local knowledge and sustained in future by active partnerships between paid officers and volunteers?

### **Question 3)**

At the Council meeting on Thursday 16 July, I would like to ask the following question during item 5 (Public questions time). I would be speaking as chair of Trumpington Residents' Association.

The first residents on the Southern Fringe developments started moving in 14 years ago. They moved in with an expectation that the roads, green spaces, play areas, and so on, would be adopted by the relevant authority within a reasonable timeframe, an expectation that was encouraged by the developers' own sales teams.

Yet of the roads, only a handful on Trumpington Meadows have been adopted. Not a single road associated with the Clay Farm and Glebe Farm developments has been adopted yet, even though it's been 4 years since the last of the construction was completed. It's been 7 years since the demise of Southern Fringe Forum, which was our chance to have planners, developers and residents in the same place at the same time. Since then, the area committee meetings have also ceased. There are still green spaces that remain to be adopted. There are still recreation areas that aren't even accessible, let alone adopted.

- *How* has this been allowed to continue for 14 years?

- *Why* is it considered acceptable that chasing developers and their contractors, for example to fix street lights and enforce parking restrictions, should be left to residents' associations and individual residents?

This is a major topic at meetings of Trumpington Residents' Association. As Chair, my inbox regularly fills up with complaints from residents and copies of messages that residents themselves are having to send to developers and even to the developers' own contractors.

- *Where* are we as residents supposed to go for updated information about plans for adoption?
- *What* should local residents be able to expect by way of support from Cambridge City Council now and potentially a development corporation in the future?

#### **Question 4)**

The former Leader of Cambridge City Council, Cameron Holloway, met with ACORN Cambridge to discuss our concerns regarding bailiff use by the City Council. Will the new leader of the Council, Councillor Katie Thornburrow, continue negotiations with ACORN regarding the continuing issue of bailiffs being used to terrorise the most vulnerable members of the community, or will she be appointing another member to represent the Council in this issue?

#### **Question 5)**

Could the Council mandate, as a condition for future Planning Permissions most widely and immediately for

- City Council WCs,
- Public Buildings

- Schools + Colleges
- Churches
- Pubs and Clubs
- Cubicled Toilets with Hand-washing Sinks atop the cistern to flush directly?

This spares our fragile Chalk Streams, as well as Saving Space Architecturally, as Greywater from hand-washing would immediately flush the Toilet, thus halving water abstracted from our precious aquifers for wasteful WCs which needlessly and sacrilegiously guzzle expensive potable water, in relieving inordinate numbers of Transients (9 million plus Tourists per annum, 60,000 University students) periodically swelling our Water-Stressed Town's Resident population for free unsustainably.

We are highly indebted to our Cam River System and must stop using it as a sewer. Massive reduction in water usage could easily be achieved by installing loo flushes of this kind. Art Work Posters could educate the world as to why Cambridge has made this choice in the extreme heatwave of 2026 - to Save our Chalk Streams.

Examples of such facilities:

Sisters Grimm Theatre off the Tottenham Court Road in London.

Increasingly switched-on individuals, and now the real possibility Cambridge Councils could thereby spearhead Chalk Stream Recovery. The Japanese have been doing this, (respecting Water, instead of flushing inordinately excessive amounts down the pan), since 1953!

Please consider and implement this most urgently.

Architects back to the drawing board.

It's a No-Brainer, so obvious when you think about it. Do-able now.

## Question 6)

Questions: 1) Why is the Council not including all areas of Cambridge, in controls of over concentration of HMOs. Focus seems to be in the city centre residential areas.

Surrounding areas such as Cherry Hinton, Queen Edith's and Trumpington are part of Cambridge and not receiving an A4 with ABC, sandwiching, and the 100m rule, maybe that's the same for all of Cambridge - who knows.

2) Why is the data on HMOs not up to date, and accurate on the number of HMOs in CH and surrounding areas, indeed for Cambridge as a whole! Is this not a high priority to ensure that all who live and work here have good quality housing. It should be registered, regulated and up to standard, monitored and price controlled.

3) Main employers: not in the city centre, such as ARM, Addenbrookes, the New Hospitals and the Biomedical Campus deserve and require good honest purpose-built regulated HMOs, why are they not being built or funded by these corporations who take much out of our city?

4) This problem concerns the residents of the outer regions of CH, Queen Edith's and Trumpington and probably central Cambridge. Over concentration of HMOs have a negative impact on local communities and decreases the supply of family homes. We ask why has Cambridge resisted being more responsible for HMOs, rather than giving in to opportunist developers or unscrupulous landlords? Oxford and other large cities embraced this long ago so why hasn't Cambridge. We want to know is Cambridge the city of GREED not NEED for this situation is appalling!

## **Question 7)**

### **Cambridge's Planning Safeguards**

#### **Why are residents doing the Council's scrutiny?**

**The Christ's College library is a documented test of Cambridge's planning safeguards. Those safeguards have repeatedly failed.**

#### **FOUR ERRORS. CONSENT TO QUASH.**

Four serious errors reached the Planning Committee. Residents brought a judicial review. The Council and Christ's College conceded all four grounds. They consented to quash the permission; the Council agreed to pay residents' legal costs. The High Court gives its reasoned judgment on 20 October.

#### **APPLICATION RE-RUN. ERRORS RECUR AND GROW.**

On the first application, the Planning Committee was never told that Historic England had warned of harm from the building's excessive bulk and massing. On the identical re-run, the Council failed to consult Historic England at all. Again, residents discovered the omission and pressed the Council to correct it.

#### **FOUR ERRORS. ANSWER REFUSED.**

Residents asked the Council to confirm that its new officer report would address every conceded ground and explain how each error had been corrected. The Council said it was "*not obliged to respond.*"

#### **PUBLIC SCRUTINY CANCELLED.**

Seventy-five residents met every published requirement for a Development Control Forum. Christ's College refused to attend. The

Council treated that refusal as a veto and cancelled the Forum, although no such veto appears in its rules. Residents were forced to issue a formal legal challenge. The Council reinstated the Forum.

**The pattern is systemic: the Council's safeguards fail. Residents identify the failures. Residents force their correction.**

### **The questions**

- 1. Did any Council safeguard identify the failures in officer advice, consultation or public participation before residents did? If yes, which safeguard identified which failure, and when?**
- 2. Did the Council change any planning safeguard after four errors reached the Planning Committee? If yes, what changed and when? If no, was the identical application re-run without any safeguard being changed?**
- 3. How many other planning decisions has the Council audited for similar undetected errors? If none, does the Council have any other evidence that these failures are confined to the Christ's College applications?**

### **Question 8)**

I've just come back from Warrenpoint in Northern Ireland, where I met up with fellow campaigners Fionnuala McKinley and Colum Sands. We discussed Cambridge's recycling contract with Re-Gen over there in Newry.

There is a recent development. On the 19th of May, Cambridgeshire County Council discussed a possible project to build their own MRF (Materials Recovery Facility) in this county. This would obviously avoid the huge level of carbon emissions generated by the Re-Gen lorries taking all our blue bin recycling 400 miles to Northern Ireland for sorting. (And almost all of this is then brought back well over 400 miles to England,

Belgium, Sweden and the Netherlands for actual recycling.)

There are several difficulties involved with building an MRF here. Ros Hathorn, chair of the Environment and Green Investment committee, particularly mentioned that local residents might object to an MRF near them. But campaigners over there could introduce her and you to hundreds and hundreds of residents, particularly in Warrenpoint, who object to Re-Gen's storage of rotting bales a few hundred metres from their town square. Re-Gen are allowed to store up to 21,000 tonnes at the harbour for (each bale for up to 3 months,) and they spray it daily with toxic insecticide and deodoriser to try to kill the flies and disguise the smell. For comparison, the equivalent distance from Market Square here would be if those 21,000 tonnes of bales were dumped on Christ's Pieces.

A new MRF here would mean Cambridge would no longer be exporting its problem for another country to deal with. It is the solution that should have been decided on right at the beginning. Many British councils British councils do own their own local MRFs.

I know this period of transitioning to unitary authorities makes all change more difficult and uncertain. But please could you tell me what you and the Cambridge City council think of this plan? Do you agree that it could be a much better solution for dealing with our recycling than the way we export it now? If so, are there things this council will actively do to support it?"

### **Question 9)**

Red Cross Areas in Queen Edith's has an over concentration of HMOs, many lived in by our valuable NHS. How can these be improved and still have small flats and family housing in the same neighbourhood for them to be able to move on to and stay part of the community keeping their

networks of support for work, children's schooling, family, friends and health services like their local GP?

**Question 10)**

How much longer do families and members of the public have to wait for new public toilets on Jesus Green?

The existing toilets date back almost a hundred years and are totally inadequate, particularly as Jesus Green is so heavily used by families and visitors. This does our City no credit whatever.

Jesus Green Association and ward councillors have been pressing the Council and recommending very suitable alternatives for some 10 years but there has been no progress at all.

**Question 11)**

I have a query about houses of multiple occupation in my area and wondered if you could tell me what the council's stance is on them?

I understand that many Addenbrookes staff reside in the shared accommodation in the Red Cross area but wonder what provision is set out for them to move up into more individual accommodation - are there any smaller affordable flats/houses in the areas being built now?

**Question 12)**

Will Council commit to instruct officers to begin immediate work on implementing an Article 4 Direction to remove permitted development rights for the conversion of family homes into HMOs across the City to include RedCross Areas in Queen Edith's Ward? How is Council committing to introduce strict saturation policies and thresholds in planning policy, including maximum numerical density limits and buffer

zones to prevent clustering of HMOs on individual streets e.g, no 3 in a row, an adjacency rule for housing most at risk small terraced houses not designed for HMO living, to ensure Council strengthens licensing and enforcement?

Will Council commit in 12 months to in RedCross Areas:

- To listen to Cambridge residents first and not the lobbying of institutions, employers Landlords
- An Article 4 - to include 2+ HMOs
- SPD
- Additional Licencing
- A Register of all HMOs including 2+ available to residents
- A rogue Landlord register available to residents
- No 3 HMOs in a row, 100m rule, adjacency rule, no sandwiching of a family home between 2 HMOs
- Tougher licence conditions on landlords covering noise, waste, antisocial behaviour, and property standards so our residents in RedCross Areas have decent well maintained homes?
- Increasing inspections and resourcing enforcement teams to ensure compliance?
- Pursuing maximum penalties against rogue landlords, including licence revocation?
- To stop the creeping overconcentration of HMOs taking out family housing and unbalancing communities

### **Question 13)**

When Government Directives and other leading Cities across the UK have developed HMO planning policy from 2010, why are Cambridge City Council HMO Controls not in place in line with these in 2026?

RARA welcomes Cllr Thornburrow stating as the new Leader of Cambridge City Council at full Council Committee 2026

"I am looking immediately at options for control on concentration of smaller Homes of Multiple Occupation"

But RARA asks Council, Cambridge Council and its members knowing these issues from 2010 another consultation is not required actions are, is this Council committed to address the City as a whole to achieve decent housing in all tenures including HMOs avoiding overconcentration of HMOs whilst not allowing any caveats to enable non compliance by any one Landlord?

Can Council commit to:

- Article 4 being put in place means planning is required for new 3+ HMOs, across Cambridge and in RedCross Areas?
- Special Planning Documents put in place (help know how many HMOs in any one street with the Register available to public)?
- Additional Licensing Scheme for over concentrated areas including RedCross Areas?
- The Government Guidelines of numerical thresholds 10% (some at 20/25%) within 50m or 100m?
- No sandwiching a family house between 2 HMOs?
- No ABC 3 HMOs in a row?
- An adjacency rule so inappropriate terraced housing are not continued to be taken out of the family housing market?

- Proactive A4 that protect and stop overspill of one or key Landlords need dominating and breaking down a cohesive community?
- Protections of amenity by inspections and clear strict enforcement
- To ensure mixed tenure of both 10% HMOs and all housing are available on every street in Cambridge, avoiding overconcentration and the ensuing negative impacts like those in RedCross Areas?
- Not allowing any caveats to enable non compliance by any one Landlord?

#### **Question 14)**

Many NHS live in HMOs in Red Cross Areas how is the current over occupation going to be managed so they can move on into their own or family home locally near their vital work.

#### **Question 15)**

The renewed proposals to build housing on the park adjacent to St Thomas's Road risk reopening a deeply divisive chapter in our community's history. Previous plans, confusing communication, and uncertainty over property, garages and demolition caused anxiety, division and a loss of confidence in the council's decision-making. BARA's position is clear: we support the park as a vital community asset and are committed to protecting and enhancing it for everyone. Working alongside residents and the Friends of the Park, we champion biodiversity, community engagement, cultural capital and inclusive development. BARA's priority is a commitment to developing a non-religious community space that

serves the community covered by the Birdwood Area Residents Association. This should be an integrated priority, not an afterthought. The park is a valued community asset, should its protection and enhancement not be placed at the heart of any future plans and ensured for the rest of this century?

We recognise the significant pressure on local authorities to deliver much-needed housing and support growing demand. However, a larger population also requires investment in the facilities, services and shared spaces that enable communities to thrive. As the park celebrates 75 years of serving local people, it is fair to ask whether our community has also spent 75 years waiting for the resources and infrastructure it deserves. BARA believes that any future development must place community provision at its heart, ensuring that homes are matched by accessible, inclusive spaces and facilities that strengthen community life for generations to come. Should any new development proceed without first ensuring that the community infrastructure needed to support both existing and future residents is delivered alongside it?

### **Question 16)**

How is Council addressing the negative impacts of HMO overconcentration in RedCross Areas reported and increasing over the last decade resulting in a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme needing to be set up in 2020? How will Council address the ongoing and increasing anti social behaviour from this overconcentration of this tenure of housing negatively affecting the previously balanced and cohesive community?

The concentration of shared housing in areas like RedCross In Queen Edith's have created several key challenges for the local community how is Council going to address these?

- **Community Cohesion:** The erosion of family-oriented streets, long-term neighbourhood stability, removal of single-family homes meaning residents cannot move from a HMO to the next stage on the housing ladder in their community. Will Council introduce a Article 4, SPDs, 100m rule, additional licensing, ABC, sandwiching, adjacency rule in RedCross Areas as recommended by Cllr Davies?
- **Environmental Strain:** Increased issues with waste, overflowing bins, vermin and obstructed bicycle storage. Will Council introduce more inspections and enforcement actions in Red Cross Areas as the 2022 Place Based Review brought in to address overconcentration and its negative impacts on the neighbourhood found not 15% HMOs as believed but over 50% HMOs with many inspected failing fire and Health & Safety requirements in place up to 7 years previously.
- **Parking Stress:** Higher vehicle density creating severe local parking congestion, anti social behaviours parking on and blocking neighbouring properties and rights of egress including compromising 24/7 emergency vehicles access.
- **Excessive comings and goings:** 1 family home average 20 vehicle journeys a week to 1 HMO 100 vehicle journeys per week. When garages are removed for more HMO rooms this creates more comings and goings onto others parking areas.
- **Noise and anti social behaviours:** when more than 1 HMO in 100m the issues are exacerbate exponentially. When residents are from the same 3 local key employers residents state it is impossible to complain within or living externally to a HMO. As fears around continuing to live in the HMO, living in the community, job security, tenancy security and the ability to receive a reference to move on to their next home/job. Can Council assure residents their needs are being put first and lobbying from

local employers, institutions and Landlords for HMOs and higher profit is not put first? Additionally noise is not just from the overconcentration but that the design of the house was for a single-family and single storey use, now a HMO some with adjacent HMOs noise transmission is excessive house to house how will Council address this?

- Over crowding: HMO management not addressing over occupation in double rooms, families living in living rooms, sub letting and residents doing hot sheeting or offering bed and breakfast off the books.
- Housing Imbalance: In RedCross Areas there is now reduced availability of affordable single-family homes as landlords take out family homes valued at 1.6-2.4 as returns for HMOs are 3.2-7K in RedCross Areas. Housing pressure and insecurity for families as their homes are targeted to buy by local HMO consortiums and Landlords. What is Council putting in place to stop the erosion of a balanced community in RedCross Areas?

### **Question 17)**

I am writing regarding the housing situation in the Red Cross area of Queen Edith's ward near Addenbrookes Hospital.

The area has a mix of residents including families with school age children, pension age/older vulnerable residents, and many NHS and key workers providing vital services and living in houses of multiple occupancy. The latter make up a large proportion of the local population in the area, and many find themselves living in poor quality accommodation for short term lets before they move on to more permanent homes, at some distance from their place of work. The situation creates a problem for all residents in the area. The key workers and NHS residents who feel they have to move on due to the poor quality of accommodation in their HMOs do not get a chance to settle and make

friends and connections in the local community. The families and older members of the community also find the constant high level of change in the local population and poor housing conditions a challenge for creating a strong and stable sense of community. In addition, it takes considerable effort from more permanent residents to ensure that anti-social behaviour is appropriately managed.

I urge you to consider this and put in place plans that will bring more stability and balance to the area better serving the needs of the permanent local residents as well as the transient NHS/key workers, some of whom would likely choose to settle rather than move on if their housing situation was improved.

#### **Question 18)**

I understand that the Council have brought in a rule banning the public bringing in soft drinks and food to the main arena at this year's Cambridge Folk Festival. I have been to and planned to go to a number of folk festivals this year, they include Ely, Folk East, Cropredy, and Shrewsbury Folk Festivals. I have never seen or heard them having such a policy. Please do all you can to get the council to rescind this ruling.

#### **Question 19)**

Can I welcome the family-friendly, alcohol-free screening of the England Argentina World Cup semi-final, possible final and ask if the Council are planning such events in the future

#### **Question 20)**

Question to the Leader about potholes

The state of our roads is a major concern for all of us in Cambridge and beyond. Whether we walk, cycle, take the bus or drive, poor road conditions affect us all. I've spent months walking my local roads with county councillor Bry Goodliffe, logging hundreds of issues on the County Council website, and even bringing the Under Secretary of State for Transport to Coleridge, where I live, to see for himself how poor the roads are.

Clearly the City Council is not responsible for the state of our roads – it is a County Council function. But I know that it is an issue that affects us all, and that therefore it is something many councillors at the city care deeply about.

The County Council are getting the best part of £188 million over 4 years to fix our roads. They have a highways budget this year of £58 million. The people who live, work and study here don't expect a magic wand, but they do expect to see results, and they expect the money to be spent wisely.

And yet as residents, we are still seeing far too many degraded surfaces. We are fed up with waiting months for a fix that, when it finally comes simply patches the largest hole and leaves several around it unfixed because they aren't deemed 'serious' enough. We are fed up with roads which had very little degradation being resurfaced whilst roads in a much worse state are still waiting to be fixed. And we are fed up with that surfacing being poor quality, impeding access to drains and leaving roads without markings for weeks.

This is an issue that impacts all of us.

Many of us were shocked to discover that the County Council has recently renewed their pothole contract with the same contractors. We need reassurance that this is not going to mean 'more of the same'.

Can the leader tell us what is being done to hold the County Council to account on the state of our roads, and will she write to the County Council to ask what public scrutiny there will be of contractor performance so that residents can understand how wisely the £58m budget for highways repairs is being spent?

### **Question 21)**

Councillors, please listen to traders and to the public: what our City wants and needs is a viable thriving traditional Market.

For 10 years, the Council has been talking about improving the Market Square, but has not listened to its public, or to its market traders. The City Council proposals continually ignore what traders need – both for the continuation of a viable market, as well as for their livelihoods. The Council also ignores what is plain to see – when traders bring their produce and goods to the market, people come to buy. (see change.org petition “Please help us to save Cambridges tradition locals’ market -and its traders”, now with over 2,800 signatures).

The Council’s proposals cannot be implemented without a fit-for-purpose demountable stall (not yet found despite years of searching!) and a viable strategy for decanting the traders during the works.

These crucial issues have been raised repeatedly, but not resolved, in trader liaison meetings. Meetings from which the public were excluded, and whose outcomes have not been made public. These issues were again raised by traders, public and councillors at the 25th March Planning Committee, at which the applications were deferred.

Council Officers presented the demountable stalls and the trader decant as being entirely separate matters from the current application. Leaving both of these issues totally unresolved.

Officers have acknowledged that a separate planning application will be required for the trader decant. The proposal is for this to be submitted in the late Autumn, in the lead up to Christmas which is the traders' busiest time. Making the proposed timescale totally unrealistic, as well as showing a total lack of consideration for the traders, and their livelihoods.

Making this the complete opposite of "One Council: fair for all".

The minuted reasons for deferral on 25th March included "4. Clarification on why there was a lack of support for the proposal from market traders." No such clarification has been provided. The only feedback in the currently proposed amendments is "7.2 Market trader engagement has continued, and ongoing feedback has informed the enclosed proposals to introduce a third stall type. Positive sentiment towards the changes was expressed by some market traders, although the team recognises that some traders still have reservations about the project." (Design and Access Statement "Design Evolution", 7.2. There is no clarification of issues raised or how they are to be resolved.

It's not just that the current amendments do not address these key issues. It's also that they continue to demonstrate that, by failing to even report on the nature and extent of concerns raised by the traders, the City Council is just not listening.

Councillors, this project has been a fiasco due to years of mistaken "divide and rule" rather than involving traders and public as key partners together.

Our question remains – when will our City Council begin to listen to its constituents – both the public who use the market and the traders who make it possible?

Thank you, Leader and Cabinet members. My name is Alex Smaridge and I am here as the Director of the Museum of Cambridge to raise an urgent matter regarding the White Horse Inn—a unique Grade II listed asset within this council’s building stock.

Recently, the council decided that imminent structural repairs are required, which would force the temporary closure of the building's occupier, the Museum of Cambridge. Shockingly, these specific repairs were earmarked and identified several years ago. Yet, only now are they being pushed forward.

For years, the Museum has been an exemplary tenant. They have repeatedly engaged with officers to find solutions, manage the building's condition, and attempted to establish a proactive maintenance relationship with the City Council. Despite these efforts, to our knowledge, the council still has no Conservation Management Plan in place for the care of this historic, 17th-century timber-framed asset.

Now, the council is using the imposed cost of these self-inflicted building works to stall and delay negotiations over the Museum’s future lease.

In a city that prides itself on being on the brink of major growth—championed by the Cambridge Growth Company and massive expansions over the coming years— Why has the council neglected its fundamental duty of care toward its listed building stock, and when will it stop using its own maintenance delays to block the future of the Museum of Cambridge?

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## **Full Council – 16 July 2026 – Oral Questions in Order Received**

### **1. From Cllr Payne to the Cabinet Member for Communities**

Do they agree that anti-social behaviour in Cambridge is increasing and can they outline any steps the council are taking to support the police in addressing this?

Lead Officer: Yvonne ODonnell

Cabinet Member: Cllr Todd-Jones

### **2. From Cllr Grimwood to the Cabinet Member for Nature, Open Space and City Services**

Last year, the Liberal Democrat Group submitted a council motion calling for a concerted rethink, involving the public and the many stakeholders, about the future of our city centre. The aim was to ensure that it maintains its meaning, diversity and vitality for all, including local residents, at a time of significant change on high streets across the country.

The motion attracted wide support and was passed. It called for a placemaking project, together with a scoping exercise and a report back by summer 2026. We were pleased that this was subsequently supported by a budget provision to take the work forward.

As it is now summer 2026 and nothing has so far been brought forward, could the Cabinet Member explain to the Council what this project will look like and what the timeline is for its delivery?

Lead Officer: Alistair Wilson

Cabinet Member: Cllr Smart

### **3. From Cllr Davison to the Cabinet Member for Communities**

Following the council's commitment to responding to the (draft) EHRC code of practice, for residents in the meantime who are vulnerable, afraid, and have learned to expect persecution from certain political fringes, will the council make clear, now, on record, that in whatever form and at whatever time this code of practice comes to pass, and within whatever legal requirements are placed on this council, that we

will seek to do as much as we can to protect vulnerable residents, and in this instance particularly trans residents?

Lead Officer: Yvonne ODonnell,

Cabinet Member: Cllr Todd-Jones

#### **4. From Cllr Tong to The Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Environment**

I would like to thank council officers for their prompt outreach work to protect rough sleepers in the current heat wave. With the increased risk of extreme weather because of the climate emergency, will the leader commit to working cross party and cross council on a heat resilience plan and bring it back to full council by February 2027.

Lead Officer: Sam Scharf

Cabinet Member: Cllr Moore

#### **5. From Cllr Bennett to The Cabinet Member for Communities and/or Inclusive Economy and Skills**

The Museum of Cambridge is at risk of closure because the council has still not renewed its lease. Will the cabinet member explain why and say what she proposed to do about it?

Lead Officer: Sam Scharf

Cabinet Member: Cllr Todd-Jones and/or Nestor

## Labour Amendment to Agenda Item 10a

Existing text ~~struck through~~, additional text underlined

### Council notes:

That many residents move into new developments expecting to become part of established communities yet can spend many years living with unresolved issues such as roads awaiting new markings or safety features, waiting for adequate street lighting, lack of facilities and upkeep of open spaces, play areas, drainage, signage and other community infrastructure such as health provision, community spaces and libraries.

That responsibility for such infrastructure is often divided between developers, management companies, Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and other public bodies. As a result, residents can face considerable difficulty in identifying who owns or maintains particular assets, who is responsible for resolving issues, whether infrastructure is intended for adoption, and what barriers remain to adoption.

Council recognises that adoption of highways, open spaces and other infrastructure can only occur where the relevant standards have been met and the responsible authority is satisfied that legal and technical requirements have been fulfilled.

That lengthy periods of uncertainty and unclear accountability can delay the resolution of problems, reduce confidence in the stewardship of developments and undermine trust in the planning and delivery of new communities.

That Cambridge City Council already works with developers, management companies, Cambridgeshire County Council, the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service and local ward councillors to help resolve issues where appropriate, recognising that statutory responsibilities remain with the relevant landowner, developer, management company or adopting authority.

That not all infrastructure is intended to be adopted by a public authority and, in some developments, the long-term management of open spaces and communal infrastructure by management companies or trusts is an intended outcome secured through the planning process. In such cases, transparency over ownership, maintenance responsibilities and resident engagement is particularly important.

Council believes:

That residents should be able to understand who is responsible for the places in which they live, how issues can be reported, and what progress is being made towards long-term management and adoption arrangements.

That improving transparency, accountability and communication on existing developments will help build public confidence in the delivery and stewardship of future developments and demonstrate that growth is accompanied by clear responsibilities and effective community engagement.

That the City Council's powers in relation to privately managed developments are limited and many responsibilities rest with developers, management companies, Cambridgeshire County Council, statutory undertakers and other public bodies. The Council's role is therefore to

influence, coordinate and advocate where appropriate rather than to direct or assume responsibility for infrastructure owned or managed by others.

That Cambridge is a growing city that will continue to see significant housing and infrastructure development in the coming years, and in future that this is proposed to be the responsibility of a Development Corporation.

Council therefore requests that the Leader works with relevant officers to make clear and timely representations to the Development Corporation on behalf of the council, as the Dev Co establishes itself and its role in larger developments, to ~~ensure~~ request that any proposals include:

1. Working with developers, management companies, Cambridgeshire County Council, and the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service to improve, for residents, transparency, accountability and coordination between the relevant responsible organisations.
2. Exploring the establishment of a code of engagement for developers and management companies operating occupied developments within the city;
3. Considering mechanisms to ensure residents have access to clear and publicly accessible information on:
  - ownership and maintenance responsibilities for community infrastructure;
  - adoption intentions and adoption status;
  - clear signposting to routes for addressing issues;

- barriers preventing adoption or transfer to public or private bodies; ~~and~~
- expected timescales for resolution where known; and
- Property Management Company governance models which make estate management providers directly accountable to residents for performance against specified services, standards and agreed budgets.

4. Exploring mechanisms to improve visibility of progress on issues, including response and progress monitoring, making use of existing reporting systems wherever possible.

5. Considering how successful elements of any code could be incorporated into future planning policy, planning conditions, management arrangements or Local Plan policies for major developments.

In addition, in the near term, Council requests that the Leader works with planning officers, and with relevant cross party ward and planning members to:

1. Identify opportunities working with relevant partners, to reduce unnecessary delays in the current adoption of infrastructure by the relevant public and private bodies and to highlight any barriers that may require further action by local government, developers or management companies;
2. To remind developers and management companies of their responsibilities to maintain positive engagement throughout the development of new sites and once these are established;

3. To consider whether existing planning guidance, supplementary planning guidance and conditions could be strengthened to bring this forward;
4. To report back to Council within six months with an update on progress on all of the above.

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Green Amendment to Agenda Item 10a: Proposed by Councillor Flaubert,  
Seconded by Councillor Sage

Existing text ~~struck through~~, additional text underlined

Council notes:

That many residents move into new developments expecting to become part of established communities yet can spend many years living with unresolved issues such as roads awaiting new markings or safety features, waiting for adequate street lighting, lack of facilities and upkeep of open spaces, play areas, drainage, signage and other community infrastructure such as health provision, community spaces and libraries. That responsibility for such infrastructure is often divided between developers, management companies, Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and other public bodies.

As a result, residents can face considerable difficulty in identifying who owns or maintains particular assets, who is responsible for resolving issues, whether infrastructure is intended for adoption, and what barriers remain to adoption. Council recognises that adoption of highways, open spaces and other infrastructure can only occur where the relevant standards have been met and the responsible authority is satisfied that legal and technical requirements have been fulfilled. That lengthy periods of uncertainty and unclear accountability can delay the resolution of problems, reduce confidence in the stewardship of developments and undermine trust in the planning and delivery of new communities.

Council believes:

That residents should be able to understand who is responsible for the places in which they live, how issues can be reported, and what progress is being made towards long-term management and adoption arrangements. That improving transparency, accountability and communication on existing developments will help build public confidence in the delivery and

stewardship of future developments and demonstrate that growth is accompanied by clear responsibilities and effective community engagement.

That residents living on existing developments should benefit from improved transparency and communication now, using the powers, partnerships and information already available to the City Council and its partner organisations, rather than waiting for future governance arrangements to be established.

That Cambridge is a growing city that will continue to see significant housing and infrastructure development in the coming years, and in future this is proposed to be the responsibility of a Development Corporation. Council further requests that, alongside this work, officers identify practical measures that can be implemented within existing governance arrangements to improve transparency and communication for residents of occupied developments. Council therefore requests that the Leader works with relevant officers to make clear and timely representations to the Development Corporation on behalf of the council, as the Dev Co establishes itself and its role in larger developments, to ensure that any proposals include:

1. Working with developers, management companies, Cambridgeshire County Council, and the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service to improve, for residents, transparency, accountability and coordination between the relevant responsible organisations.
2. Developing, in consultation with residents, developers, management companies and partner authorities, a draft code of engagement
3. Considering mechanisms to ensure residents have access to clear and publicly accessible information on:
  - o ownership and maintenance responsibilities for community infrastructure;
  - o adoption intentions and adoption status;
  - o clear signposting to routes for addressing issues;
  - o barriers preventing adoption or transfer to public or private bodies; and
  - o expected timescales for resolution where known.

4. Exploring mechanisms to improve visibility of progress on issues, including response and progress monitoring, making use of existing reporting systems wherever possible.

5. Exploring the creation of a publicly accessible source of information for occupied major developments within the city, bringing together, where available, information on ownership, maintenance responsibilities, adoption status, reporting routes and the organisations responsible for resolving issues.

6. Considering how successful elements of any code could be incorporated into future planning policy, planning conditions, management arrangements or Local Plan policies for major developments.

In addition, in the near term, Council requests that the Leader works with planning officers, and with relevant cross party ward and planning members to:

1. Identify opportunities to reduce unnecessary delays in the current adoption of infrastructure by the relevant public and private bodies and to highlight any barriers that may require further action by local government, developers or management companies;

2. To remind developers of their responsibilities to maintain positive engagement throughout the development of new sites and once these are established;

3. To consider planning guidance and conditions to bring this forward;

4. Within existing resources and in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council, developers and management companies, explore the establishment of a publicly accessible information resource for occupied major developments within the city, bringing together, where available from the relevant responsible organisations:

- who is responsible for maintaining key infrastructure;
- whether roads, open spaces and drainage are intended for adoption;
- the current stage of any adoption process;

- how residents can report issues; and
- the organisation responsible for responding.

5. Report back within six months with recommendations for immediate actions that can be taken under the Council's existing powers to improve communication and transparency for residents of occupied developments.

6. Consider how the stewardship of open spaces, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage systems can be strengthened during the period between occupation of developments and formal adoption or transfer, including:

- ensuring public open spaces are maintained to an appropriate environmental standard before transfer;

- protecting biodiversity features and ecological enhancements during the period before adoption; and

- ensuring sustainable drainage systems and green infrastructure are properly maintained and monitored throughout the transition from developer responsibility to the adopting body.

Liberal Democrat amendment to Agenda Item 10b:

Existing text ~~struck through~~, additional text underlined

## **1 Introduction (not part of active motion)**

~~The Green Group proposes the following motion to address resident concerns over the state of our rivers and chalk stream.~~

~~We regard the river as an integral part of the life of our city. Threats to our rivers are threats to us all.~~

~~The purpose of this motion is to:~~

- ~~• state our city's aspirations for our river and chalk streams ("the declaration of the Rights of the River Cam")~~
- ~~• petition the organisations responsible for our river to improve their performance to help save our river and its tributaries.~~
- ~~• recognise the limits placed by the critically depleted state of our river on future growth in buildings and infrastructure.~~
- ~~• publicise the immediacy of the water crisis, creating awareness of the need to reduce water use.~~

## **Active Motion**

### **1 Declaration of the Rights of the River Cam**

This council declares that the River Cam and its tributaries should have the following rights arising from their existence in nature:

- The right to flow and be free from over-abstraction
- The right to perform essential functions of flooding, moving sediment, recharging groundwater and sustaining biodiversity
- The right to be free from pollution
- The right to feed and be fed by sustainable aquifers
- The right to native biodiversity
- The right to restoration
- The right to maintain connections with other streams and rivers

This council undertakes to assess the impact of all its decisions on the health of the river and ensure that all its decisions support these rights.

This council calls on all residents and organisations to act as guardians of the River Cam and engage with the river in a relationship of respect and stewardship.

## **2 Responsibility**

This council notes that the responsible bodies are:

- Environment Agency – general oversight, including preventing environmental damage to water and associated biodiversity
- Cambridge Water – ensuring adequate water supply
- Anglian Water – management and treatment of sewage
- The Conservators of the River Cam - the statutory navigation authority for the river, responsible for the locks, weirs and sluices that hold up the water level of the Cam

The council proposes to write to all ~~three~~ of these bodies to share its concerns over the state of the river and call upon them for their assistance.

The council further notes that there are other bodies and institutions whose actions have significant impacts on the health of the river, and particularly highlights the importance of:

- The University of Cambridge and its associated colleges, through the maintenance of their assets and the management of their activities
- The Cambridge Development Corporation – through its influence over the scale, location and water efficiency of new development.

The Council proposes to write to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge and the Chief Executive and Chair of the Cambridge Development Corporation to share its concerns over the state of the river and call upon them for their assistance.

### **3. Interaction with the Council's own actions and the growth of the city**

The Council proposes to set up a small cross-party group to draw up a plan for the actions that it can specifically undertake to contribute to protection of the river. This will include:

- considering the impact of future growth in buildings and infrastructure in the City on the depleted state of our river
- recognising the limits that may be necessary to respect the rights of the river
- reporting back to full Council preferably prior to updating the Local Plan.

The group will consult with the various environmental organisations currently actively involved in working for the improved health of the river. For the avoidance of doubt, it is intended that this group will supplement rather than displace the work of existing scrutiny committees.

The Council proposes to initiate a publicity campaign to create wide awareness of the current water crisis and the urgent need to address both the increasing over-abstraction of water and the decreasing quality of water.

The Council will actively publicise the Environment Agency's recommendations to take early action (e.g, water companies to reduce leakage as a priority, and initiate actions required under their drought plans), and encourage the public to do all it can to use water wisely.

## **4 What the River Cam needs**

This Council believes that the aspirations set out in Section 1 must be matched by action.

### **4.1 Water in the river**

This Council notes that Cambridge Water introduced a temporary hosepipe ban on 9 July 2026, enforceable from 17 July - the first in over thirty years; that the Environment Agency declared the Cam and Ely Ouse catchment to be in prolonged dry weather on 22 June 2026; and that new supply for the Cambridge area is not expected from the

Grafham Water transfer until 2032, or from the Fens Reservoir until the mid-2030s.

This Council further notes that the emerging Local Plan phases new development against the arrival of that infrastructure, but that no equivalent plan exists to improve water efficiency in the years before it arrives. This Council therefore resolves to:

- request a report to the relevant committee on water efficiency within the Council's own estate and its council housing retrofit programme, so that homes retrofitted for carbon are also retrofitted for water;
- support Cambridge Water's programme to reduce leakage and demand, and press for the Grafham Water transfer to be brought forward wherever possible;
- work with Cambridgeshire County Council on over-abstraction and on the restoration of the chalk streams of the Cam catchment.

## **4.2 Sewage out of the river**

This Council notes that consent for the relocation of the Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant was granted in April 2025 but the funding for it was withdrawn in August 2025, with no funded alternative brought forward by the government since; and that the emerging Local Plan, and the scrutiny committees of both councils, identify wastewater treatment capacity as the principal unresolved risk to the health of the river. No local plan, however carefully prepared, can build a treatment works with a withdrawn cheque. This Council therefore resolves to:

- call on the Government to resolve the uncertainty it has created, and to fund a treatment solution for Greater Cambridge;
- press Anglian Water for a published timetable for the upgrade of the Haslingfield Water Recycling Centre, and for the reduction of storm overflow discharges into the Cam and its tributaries;
- use the water quality data from the Designated Bathing Area at Sheep's Green requires to demand action.

## **4.3 Locks that work**

This Council notes that Baits Bite Lock and Jesus Green Lock were closed in June 2024 because of the risk of structural failure; that Baits Bite has since been stabilised following a £500,000 grant led by the

Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, which met around one third of the cost, with the Conservators meeting the rest from their own reserves; that Jesus Green Lock remains at risk and full reconstruction is estimated at over £5 million per lock; and that the Conservators, funded principally through navigation charges, have stated that they do not have the money. Comparable navigations elsewhere in England receive government funding for their infrastructure. The River Cam receives none. This Council therefore resolves to:

- write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs seeking a sustainable, long-term funding settlement for the Conservators of the River Cam, and asking the Government to set out how navigation infrastructure of national significance is to be funded where it sits outside the Environment Agency and Canal & River Trust estates;
- write to the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to welcome the funding secured for Baits Bite Lock and to seek his support in securing the future of Jesus Green Lock;
- request a report on this Council's powers under the legislation governing the Conservators to contribute to their funding, and on the liability arrangements preventing the recruitment of new Conservators;

### **End of Active Motion**

~~Background Notes (not part of active motion):~~

~~1. In late 2025 the Environment Agency announced (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drought-prospects-for-spring-2026/executive-summary-and-acknowledgements-drought-prospects-for-spring-2026>) that, unless we have average rainfall or more this winter, there will again be drought this year, with the area including Cambridge highlighted as being particularly vulnerable.~~

~~2. On 22 June 2026, the Environment Agency announced that the Cam and Ely Ouse catchment has been declared in an area of Prolonged Dry Weather, after East Anglia received only 37% of the long-term average rainfall over the past three months.~~

~~3. On Midsummer's Day in 2021, Friends of the River Cam made the first public declaration in the UK of the rights of the River at Jesus Green, linked to the Universal Declaration of River Rights: <https://www.rightsofrivers.org>~~

~~4. The declaration is repeated on Midsummer's Day each year and is repeated in the text of this motion.~~

~~5. The declaration of rights is supported by many of our local environmental and community groups including CPRE, FeCRA, Cambridge Friends of the Earth, Save Honey Hill, Keep Waterbeach Rural, Friends of Logan's Meadow, Friends of Cherry Hinton and Coldhams Brooks, and many others.~~

~~6. In 2023 Lewes District Council passed a Rights of Rivers Motion to protect the River Ouse in East Sussex. Momentum has been growing globally to extend legal rights to nature and in some cases specifically to rivers.~~

~~<https://democracy.leweseastbourne.gov.uk/documents/s27490/Motion%20-%20Rights%20of%20the%20River.pdf>~~

~~Councillors Toye-Scott and Nicmanis wish to thank the Friends of the River Cam and representatives from a number of local environmental groups for their help in putting this motion together. Any errors or omissions are of course our own.~~

## Labour Amendment to Agenda Item 10b:

Existing text ~~struck through~~, additional text underlined

~~The Green Group proposes the following motion to address resident concerns over the state of our rivers and chalk stream. We regard the river as an integral part of the life of our city. Threats to our rivers are threats to us all.~~

~~The purpose of this motion is to:~~

- ~~• state our city's aspirations for our river and chalk streams ("the declaration of the Rights of the River Cam")~~
- ~~• petition the organisations responsible for our river to improve their performance to help save our river and its tributaries.~~
- ~~• recognise the limits placed by the critically depleted state of our river on future growth in buildings and infrastructure.~~
- ~~• publicise the immediacy of the water crisis, creating awareness of the need to reduce water use.~~

### **1 Declaration of the Rights of the River Cam**

This Council declares that the River Cam and its tributaries should have the following rights arising from their existence in nature:

- The right to flow and be free from over-abstraction
- The right to perform essential functions of flooding, moving sediment, recharging groundwater and sustaining biodiversity
- The right to be free from pollution
- The right to feed and be fed by sustainable aquifers
- The right to native biodiversity
- The right to restoration
- The right to maintain connections with other streams and rivers

~~This Council undertakes to assess the impact of all its decisions on the health of the river and ensure that all its decisions support these rights.~~

~~This Council calls on all residents and organisations to act as guardians of the River Cam and engage with the river in a relationship of respect and stewardship.~~

This Council recognises the River Cam and its tributaries as vital environmental, ecological, recreational and cultural assets and so will continue to have regard to the impact of its decisions on the health of the river, consistent with its statutory duties, powers and responsibilities.

Cambridge City Council is a significant riverbank landowner and undertakes riverbank management, biodiversity enhancement, sustainable drainage, flood resilience, public access management, river infrastructure projects and partnership working to improve the River Cam.

## **2 Responsibility**

~~This Council notes that the responsible bodies are:~~ responsibility for the health of the River Cam is shared between:

- the Environment Agency – general oversight, including preventing environmental damage to water and associated biodiversity
- Cambridge Water – ensuring adequate water supply
- Anglian Water – management and treatment of sewage
- the Conservators of the River Cam
- Natural England
- Greater Cambridge Shared Planning
- the University of Cambridge and its Colleges
- riverbank landowners
- and local communities.

The Council proposes to write to all ~~three~~ bodies to share its concerns over the state of the river and call upon them for their assistance.

~~The Council further notes that there are other bodies and institutions whose actions have significant impacts on the health of the river, and particularly highlights the importance of:~~

- ~~— The University of Cambridge and its associated colleges, through the maintenance of their assets and the management of their activities~~

~~The Cambridge Development Corporation—~~

~~The Council proposes to write to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge and the Chief Executive and Chair of the Cambridge Development Corporation to share its concerns over the state of the river and call upon them for their assistance.~~

### **3. Interaction with the Council's own actions and the growth of the city**

~~The Council proposes to set up a small cross-party group to draw up a plan for the actions that it can specifically undertake to contribute to protection of the river. This will include:~~

- ~~— considering the impact of future growth in buildings and infrastructure in the city on the depleted state of our river~~
- ~~— recognising the limits that may be necessary to respect the rights of the river~~
- ~~— reporting back to full Council preferably prior to updating the Local Plan.~~

requests an officer report to be presented to one of the council's overview and scrutiny committees to review current Council activity, partnership arrangements, opportunities for improvement and alignment with the Biodiversity Strategy, Climate Change Strategy, Urban Forest Strategy and Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

~~The group Officers will consult with the various environmental organisations currently actively involved in working for the improved health of the river. For the avoidance of doubt, it is intended that this group will supplement rather than displace the work of existing scrutiny committees.~~

Council notes the extensive evidence prepared to support the Greater Cambridge Local Plan on water scarcity, abstraction reduction and sustainable growth. These matters have been considered throughout the Local Plan process and will be reported to scrutiny committee and to Full Council as part of the Submission Local Plan. All future development should continue to be informed by evidence demonstrating sustainable water supplies, reduced abstraction, water efficiency and environmental capacity.

The Council proposes to initiate a publicity campaign to create wide awareness of the current water crisis and the urgent need to address both the increasing over-abstraction of water and the decreasing quality of water. supports continued collaboration through the Cambridge Water Scarcity Group, Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project, Water Resources East, the Environment Agency, Cambridge Water, Anglian Water and the Conservators of the River Cam and will work to promote all communication campaigns regarding water quality and scarcity using the Council's media channels and press releases.

The Council will actively publicise the Environment Agency's recommendations to take early action (e.g, water companies to reduce leakage as a priority, and initiate actions required under their drought plans), and encourage the public to do all it can to use water wisely.

Background Notes (not part of active motion):

~~1 In late 2025 the Environment Agency announced~~  
~~(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/drought-prospects-for-spring-2026/executive-summary-and-acknowledgements-drought-prospects-for-spring-2026>) that, unless we have average rainfall or more this winter, there will again be drought this year, with the area including Cambridge highlighted as being particularly vulnerable.~~

~~2 On 22 June 2026, the Environment Agency announced that the Cam and Ely Ouse catchment has been declared in an area of Prolonged Dry Weather, after East~~

~~Anglia received only 37% of the long-term average rainfall over the past three months.~~

~~3 On Midsummer's Day in 2021, Friends of the River Cam made the first public declaration in the UK of the rights of the River at Jesus Green, linked to the Universal Declaration of River Rights: <https://www.rightsofrivers.org>~~

~~4 The declaration is repeated on Midsummer's Day each year and is repeated in the text of this motion.~~

~~5 The declaration of rights is supported by many of our local environmental and community groups including CPRE, FeCRA, Cambridge Friends of the Earth, Save Honey Hill, Keep Waterbeach Rural, Friends of Logan's Meadow, Friends of Cherry Hinton and Coldhams Brooks, and many others.~~

~~6 In 2023 Lewes District Council passed a Rights of Rivers Motion to protect the River Ouse in East Sussex. Momentum has been growing globally to extend legal rights to nature and in some cases specifically to rivers.~~

~~<https://democracy.leweseastbourne.gov.uk/documents/s2749-0/Motion%20-%20Rights%20of%20the%20River.pdf>~~

~~6 Councillors Teye-Scott and Nicmanis wish to thank the Friends of the River Cam and representatives from a number of local environmental groups for their help in putting this motion together. Any errors or omissions are of course our own.~~

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Labour Amendment to Agenda Item 10d:

Existing text ~~struck through~~, additional text underlined

This Council commits ~~resolves that in line with its aspirations to keep~~  
building more council homes to achieve the highest quality and  
affordability most affordable homes in Cambridge, in order to help tackle  
the housing crisis in Cambridge and to reduce the number of families  
living in temporary accommodation or on the housing register. From the  
date of this resolution being agreed that no residential development in  
which the Council has an ownership interest, financial interest or  
development role shall proceed unless it achieves the following  
standards

- ~~on~~ across all sites, as per the Portfolio Strategy of 10 or more  
dwellings that at least 40% 50% of the homes shall be affordable  
homes, with rents set as follows:
  - 10% at social rent: 40% - 45% of the median market rent
  - 65% at affordable rent: 60% of the median market rent
  - 25% at intermediate rent: 80% of the median market rent

This Council notes that the Labour government has now prioritised  
funding for social rents, so for schemes being built with grant funding  
from Homes England - this tenure mix will be changed to 60% of council  
homes for social rent (45% of market rent) and 40% at intermediate rent  
(80% of market rent).

Furthermore, this Council resolves that on any development that this  
council has an ownership interest, financial interest or development role:

1. All homes shall be developed to the ~~highest recognised sustainability standard at the time that they are built.~~ Council's Sustainable Housing Design Guide which targets CamStandard for council homes being built now and to net zero standard from 2030.
2. ~~No single aspect homes shall be built.~~ Layouts must prioritise providing dual aspect homes and avoid single aspect where possible, whilst also ensuring for a maximum number of council homes to be built
3. As per current planning policy all sites shall have disabled parking, by right.
4. Subject to the provision of disabled parking, all developments shall be designed following the Cambridge sustainable housing design guide with a target of 0.5 car parking spaces per home. ~~as car free by default.~~  
Where possible, car parking ~~is considered necessary~~, it shall be provided in a separate stand-alone car park (so that in due course this can gradually be used for building more homes).
5. ~~Any~~ No council land, or property, ~~shall be that is due to be sold without the approval of the full Council~~ will be done so, as per the Council's constitution.

## **Council 16 July 2026 Written Questions**

### **1. Councillor Tong**

#### **To the Leader**

Cambridge City Council has previously spoken with members of ACORN, a community union with a branch here in Cambridge, about seeking to end its use of bailiffs to collect council tax debt. Will the Leader of Cambridge City Council commit to establishing a working group to tackle this pressing issue, including at least one ACORN representative in an advisory position amongst its membership?

Response to follow:

### **2. Councillor Tong**

#### **To the Cabinet Member for Housing**

Despite the fact that many local residents are unable to afford a place of their own, it has been estimated that there are hundreds of empty homes across Cambridge. What plans does Cambridge City Council have to exercise its compulsory purchase powers to bring these properties back into use?

#### **Response:**

The Empty Homes Officer deals with long term empty properties which have come to the Councils attention via complaints / other means, they are currently involved in investigations relating to 160 such properties known to them.

The Councils Empty Homes Policy, available on our website, explains how we work to bring homes back into use on a case-by-case basis in line with consideration of the most appropriate course of formal enforcement action where necessary / appropriate.

Earlier this year, following continued investigation, the Empty Homes Officer sought engagement with the owner of a problematic, long-term empty property in the City for which compulsory purchase was being

considered. Negotiation with the owner resulted in a swift sale of the property by auction a process which the Empty Homes Officer assisted the property owner with to ensure that the property can now be improved and brought back into use.

Informal approaches have included working with owners, offering support and incentives to bring their houses back into use. We encourage owners to use the services of the Council's Town Hall Lettings, to make improvements to the standard of their properties and property management, subsequently letting them to those most in need of accommodation in the City.

In 2025/2026 27 units of accommodation were brought back into habitable use within the city via intervention by the Empty Homes Officer.