

Annual Statement 2014 of the Independent Group on Cambridge City Council

The Independent/Conservative Group on the City Council will not be producing an Annual Statement in the conventional manner since, as its group title suggests, we do not seek to formulate an agreed set of policies. Rather we see ourselves as constructive critics of the ruling group since it is they who are charged with producing policies intended to benefit residents of the city.

However, **independent members** within the group will press for:

Strategic measures:

1. unitary governance in the Cambridge sub region
2. the creation of settlements beyond the green belt in new towns such as Northstowe and the growth of housing in existing market towns to relieve the pressure on the limited space for development within Cambridge.
3. a hugely improved network of the sub-regional road and rail network to expedite more efficient access to the principal employment hubs within and close to the city
4. demand measures designed to reduce traffic flows into the city, including the gradual roll out city-wide of residents' parking zones
5. greater protection of the Cambridge green belt and to that end opposition to the inclusion in the draft Local Plan of incursions into the green belt in and around Worts Causeway

Governance

5. A review of ward boundaries with the city to align them with prospective county council divisions. Correspondingly, to reduce the number of city councillors.
6. the abolition of area committees
7. the reform of planning committee procedure where members of the committee are minded to overturn officer recommendations on major applications.

The local economy and other issues:

8. a speedier disposition of council assets such as the Mill Road Depot and the Park St Car Park and the early conversion of the Guildhall for commercial purposes in order to accrue revenue benefits to the city council
9. tighter control over the requisition of public space in the historic core of the city by private business interests such as cafes and restaurants
10. a considerable upgrading of the market square and of the market itself
- increases in car parking charges designed to create surpluses for expenditure on public transport projects
11. A major park and ride site in the NW segment of the city
12. measures to improve cycling amenities and safety in the city.
- 13 Tourist coaches to be excluded from the city and required to exchange passengers at P&R sites.
14. gradually reducing the volume of large buses entering the city. A number of transport exchange points allowing bus passengers to enter the city on a fleet of small energy-efficient light buses.
15. Re-examining the case for a sixth form college on the north/west of the city.

16. Rapid improvements to waste disposal in the Market Square
17. Many more cycle parking points within the city.
18. A thoroughgoing audit of the costs and benefits of allocating increasing amounts of public space within the city centre to commercial enterprises.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of policies that Independents will support but they represent some of their high priority initiatives. We also appreciate that some of the policies will require the active involvement and support of the County Council. We will press for closer co-operation, particularly through the recently re-established Joint Traffic Committee, between the city and county authorities.

In general terms we will support sensible measures from wherever they come so long as they pass the tests of financial prudence, social welfare, environmental protection and economic benefit to all sections of Cambridge society.