



CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

INFORMATION PACK

EXTRA-ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING 11.00AM
ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING 11.05AM

Thursday, 28 May 2015

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Russ McPherson

Nigel Gawthrope

Anna Smith

Mike Todd-Jones

Martin Smart

Lewis Herbert

Gerri Bird

Carina O'Reilly

Charlotte Perry

Peter Sarris

Peter Roberts

Kevin Price

Caroline Hart

Margery Abbott

Ann Sinnott

Mark Ashton

Dan Ratcliffe

Richard Johnson

Richard Robertson

Kevin Blencowe

Dave Baigent

George Owers

Oscar Gillespie

Zoe O-Connell

Mike Pitt

The Mayor's Chaplain
(side of dais)

The Deputy Mayor
Jeremy Benstead

The Mayor
Rob Dryden

Head of Legal Services

The Chief Executive

Shapour Meftah

Marie-Louise Holland

John Hipkin

Damien Tunnacliffe

Valerie Holt

Catherine Smart

Tim Blck

Ysanne Austin

Nick Avery

Markus Gehring

Rod Cantrill

Sian Reid

Viki Sanders

George Pippas

Tim Moore

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CIVIC AFFAIRS

18 May 2015
6.00 - 6.20 pm

Present: Councillors McPherson (Chair), Benstead (Vice-Chair), Cantrill, Pitt, Hart and Robertson

FOR ADOPTION BY THE COUNCIL

15/26/CIV Nominations For Committee for the Municipal Year 2015/16

The Committee considered a paper setting out the proposed Committee allocations by party and the nominations received. The Committee considered the rules on political balance set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 in developing the recommendations set out below.

Councillor Pitt updated the Committee on the Liberal Democrat Group's nominations.

The Committee noted the Minorities Group nominations.

The Committee noted the Leaders approval of the following Councillors to the Executive. Opposition Spokes were also noted.

The Executive	Opposition Spokes
Leader & Exec Cllr for Strategy & Transformation – Lewis Herbert	Councillor Bick
Deputy Leader & Exec Cllr for City Centre & Public Places – Carina O'Reilly	Councillor Austin
Exec Cllr for Finance and Resources – George Owers	Councillor Bick
Exec Cllr for Housing – Kevin Price	Councillor Avery
Exec Cllr for Environment & Waste – Peter Roberts	Councillor Pitt
Exec Cllr for Planning Policy & Transport – Kevin Blencowe	Councillor C Smart
Exec Cllr for Communities– Richard Johnson	Councillor Reid

Councillor Cantrill was noted as the Opposition Spokes for Civic Affairs.

The Committee discussed the numbers and proportionately of Strategy and Resources Committee. The numbers would need to increase to 10 should Councillor Hipkin take up the seat Minorities Group were entitled to with the Liberal Democrats numbers staying at 3. The Head of Legal Services reminded the Committee that Council could agree to Committee size that did not meet proportionality requirements if all Groups agreed to this.

Post meeting notes: Councillor Hipkin confirmed that he would like to take a place on the Strategy and Resources Committee.

Resolved (unanimously) to:

- i. Recommend Council to agree to the number and size of committees and to note the nominations listed below

SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

COMMUNITY SERVICES	NOMINATION(S)	CURRENT NUMBERS (1) =Alternate	PROPOSED NAMES OF NOMINATIONS TO THE COMMITTEE
	Labour	5 (1)	Sinnott, Ratcliffe, Baigent, Sarris, Bird, Benstead (Alt)
	LD	3 (1)	Austin, Reid, O' Connell Holt (Alt)
		8 Total	

ENVIRONMENT	NOMINATION(S)	CURRENT NUMBERS (1) =Alternate	PROPOSED NAMES OF NOMINATIONS TO THE COMMITTEE
	Labour	6 (1)	Gawthrope, Perry, Ratcliffe, Robertson, M Smart, Baigent,
	LD	3 (1)	Sarris (Alt) C Smart, Pitt, Gehring
	Minorities	1	Moore (Alt) Gillespie
		10 Total	

HOUSING	NOMINATION(S)	CURRENT NUMBERS (1) =Alternate	PROPOSED NAMES OF NOMINATIONS TO THE COMMITTEE
	Labour	5 (1)	Todd-Jones. Baigent, Ashton, Bird, Sarris Gawthrope (Alt)
	LD	2 (1)	Avery, Moore Cantrill (Alt)
	Minorities	1 (1)	Holland
		8 Total	

STRATEGY & RESOURCES	NOMINATION(S)	CURRENT NUMBERS (1) =Alternate	PROPOSED NAMES OF NOMINATIONS TO THE COMMITTEE
	Labour	6 (1)	Robertson, Sinnott, Baigent, Benstead, M Smart, Sarris
	LD	3 (1)	Abbot (Alt) Bick, Holt, Cantrill
	Minorities	1	C Smart (Alt) Hipkin
		10 Total	

REGULATORY COMMITTEES

PLANNING	NOMINATIONS(S)	CURRENT NUMBERS (1) =Alternate	PROPOSED NAMES OF NOMINATIONS TO THE COMMITTEE
	Labour	4 (1)	Dryden, Blencowe, Gawthrope, Hart, Bird (Alt)
	LD	3 (1)	C Smart, Pippas, Tunnacliffe, Holt (Alt)
	Minorities	1 (1)	Hipkin
		8 Total	

JOINT DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE	NOMINATIONS	CURRENT NUMBERS (2)= Alternate	PROPOSED NAMES OF NOMINEES TO THE COMMITTEE
	Labour	4 (2)	Blencowe, Baigent, Bird, Price, Gawthrope (Alt) Herbert (Alt)
	LD	2 (2)	C Smart, Holt Moore (Alt)
		6 Total	

LICENSING	NOMINATIONS	CURRENT	PROPOSED NAMES
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		NUMBERS (1)= Alternate	OF NOMINEES TO THE COMMITTEE
	Labour	7 (1)	Benstead, Bird, Ratcliffe, Gawthroe, McPherson, O'Reilly, Owers
	LD	4 (1)	Smith (Alt) Pippas O' Connell, Bick, Austin
	Minorities	1 (1)	Moore (Alt) Meftah
		12 Total	

OTHER COMMITTEES

CIVIC AFFAIRS	NOMINATIONS	CURRENT NUMBERS (1)= Alternate	PROPOSED CHANGES AND NOMINATIONS
	Labour	4 (1)	McPherson, Sinnott, Benstead, Robertson
	LD	2 (1)	Ratcliffe (Alt) Holt, Cantrill
		6 Total	Pitt (Alt)

EMPLOYMENT APPEALS SUB	NOMINATIONS	CURRENT NUMBERS (1)= Alternate	PROPOSED CHANGES AND NOMINATIONS
EMPLOYMENT APPEALS SUB	Labour	5	Price, Gawthroe, Blencowe, Sarris, Bird
	LD	3	Smart, Holt, Moore
		8 Total	

COMMITTEE/SUB COMMITTEE	NOMINATIONS	CURRENT NUMBERS (1)= Alternate	PROPOSED CHANGES AND NOMINATIONS
JOINT AREA COMMITTEE (with County Council)	Labour LD	4 2 6 Total	Blencowe, Smith, Ratcliffe, Robertson (Alt) Price C Smart, Tunnacliffe, (Alt) Moore

COMMITTEE/SUB COMMITTEE	NOMINATIONS	CURRENT NUMBERS (1)= Alternate	PROPOSED CHANGES AND NOMINATIONS
CITY DEAL ASSEMBLY	Labour LD	2 1	Price Baigent Bick

CIVIC AFFAIRS

18 May 2015
6.00 - 6.20 pm

Present: Councillors McPherson (Chair), Benstead (Vice-Chair), Cantrill, Pitt, Hart and Robertson

FOR ADOPTION BY THE COUNCIL

15/27/CIV Nominations for Chairs and Vice Chairs of Scrutiny & Regulatory Committees

The Committee received nominations for Chairs and Vice Chairs of Scrutiny and Regulatory Committees.

Resolved (unanimously) to:

- i. Note the nominations for Chairs and Vice Chairs of Scrutiny and Regulatory Committees as follows:

Committee	Labour Nominations		Liberal Democrat Nominations	
	Chair	Vice Chair	Chair	Vice
Community Services	Sinnott	Ratcliffe		
Environment	Gawthrope	Perry		
Housing	Todd-Jones	Baigent		
Strategy & Resources	Robertson	Sinnott		
Planning	Dryden	Blencowe		
Joint Development Control (City Lead)	Blencowe			
Licensing	Benstead	Bird		
Civic Affairs	McPherson	Benstead		
Employment Appeals Sub	Price			
Development Plan Scrutiny Committee	Sarris	Gawthrope		

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Name	Political Party	Total Meetings	Present	% Present
Councillor Andrea Reiner	Liberal Democrat	16	14	88
Councillor Andy Blackhurst	Liberal Democrat	15	15	100
Councillor Ann Sinnott	Labour	33	33	100
Councillor Carina O'Reilly	Labour	28	26	93
Councillor Caroline Hart	Labour	28	28	100
Councillor Catherine Smart	Liberal Democrat	47	43	91
Councillor Charlotte Perry	Labour	18	17	94
Councillor Damien Tunnacliffe	Liberal Democrat	28	27	96
Councillor Dan Ratcliffe	Labour	24	22	92
Councillor Dave Baigent	Labour	43	42	98
Councillor George Owers	Labour	26	24	92
Councillor George Pippas	Liberal Democrat	31	30	97
Councillor Gerri Bird	Labour	25	21	84
Councillor Jeremy Benstead	Labour	34	32	94
Councillor John Hipkin	Independent	23	21	91
Councillor Julie Smith	Liberal Democrat	26	24	92
Councillor Kevin Blencowe	Labour	39	39	100
Councillor Kevin Price	Labour	33	32	97
Councillor Lewis Herbert	Labour	24	23	96
Councillor Margery Abbott	Labour	17	16	94
Councillor Marie-Louise Holland	Independent	15	15	100
Councillor Mark Ashton	Labour	16	15	94
Councillor Martin Smart	Labour	30	29	97
Councillor Mike Pitt	Liberal Democrat	26	22	85
Councillor Mike Todd-Jones	Labour	19	19	100
Councillor Nicholas Avery	Liberal Democrat	24	22	92
Councillor Nigel Gawthrop	Labour	52	49	94
Councillor Peter Roberts	Labour	19	19	100
Councillor Peter Sarris	Labour	19	17	89
Councillor Philip Tucker	Liberal Democrat	11	8	73
Councillor Richard Johnson	Labour	16	16	100
Councillor Richard Robertson	Labour	39	34	87
Councillor Robert Dryden	Labour	35	32	91
Councillor Rod Cantrill	Liberal Democrat	25	24	96
Councillor Russ McPherson	Labour	26	25	96
Councillor Shapour Meftah	Conservative	26	26	100
Councillor Sian Reid	Liberal Democrat	16	12	75
Councillor Tim Bick	Liberal Democrat	36	33	92
Councillor Tim Moore	Liberal Democrat	18	18	100
Councillor Tim Ward	Liberal Democrat	2	2	100
Councillor Viki Sanders	Liberal Democrat	6	5	83
Councillor Ysanne Austin	Liberal Democrat	33	31	94
Councillor Zoe Moghadas	Labour	17	16	94

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Cambridge City Council

CIVIC AFFAIRS

To: Councillors McPherson, Benstead, Sinnott, Robertson, Holt and Cantrill.

Alternates: Councillors Ratcliffe and Pitt.

Despatched: Tuesday, 19 May 2015

Date: Thursday, 28 May 2015

Time: 1.00 pm

Venue: Council Chamber - Guildhall

Contact: Democratic Services **Direct Dial:** 01223 457013

AGENDA

1 APPOINTMENT TO WORKING PARTY

To agree membership of the following:

CHIEF OFFICER PERFORMANCE REVIEW (6 members)

Councillors Ashton, Herbert, Owers, Price, C Smart, Bick

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Cambridge City Council

COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

To: Councillors Sinnott, Ratcliffe, Baigent, Sarris, Bird, Austin, Reid, O'Connell

Alternate Councillors: Benstead and Holt

Executive Councillor for City Centre and Public Places

Executive Councillor for Community, Arts, Recreation and Heath

Despatched: Tuesday, 19 May 2015

Date: Thursday, 28 May 2015

Time: 1.00 pm

Venue: Council Chamber - Guildhall

Contact: Democratic Services **Direct Dial:** 01223 457013

AGENDA

1 APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Scrutiny Committee is requested to recommend appointment to the outside bodies listed below.

The Executive Councillor for City Centre and Public Places and the Executive Councillor for Communities will be asked to agree the appointments.

- **The Junction (2)**
Councillors Gawthrope and Austin
- **City and South Cambs Children's and Young People's Area Board (1)**
Councillor Johnson
Opposition Spokes: Councillor Austin
- **Storey's Field Trust (3)**

Councillors Blencowe, Reid, Hipkin

- **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Military Covenant Board (1)**

Councillor McPherson

- **Cambridge Live (2)**

Councillor Reid & TBC

- **Destination Management Organisation (1)**

Councillor O'Reilly

- **Cambridge Bid (1)**

Councillor O'Reilly

- **Health and Wellbeing Partnership District Members Group (1)**

Councillor Johnson

Opposition Spokes: TBC

- **Cambridge Local Health Partnership (3)**

Councillor Johnson

Councillor Price

Opposition Spokes: Councillor Moore

- **Addenbrookes Board of Governors (1)**

Councillor Dryden

- **Health Committee (1) (County Council function - District Councils nominate)**

Opposition Spokes: Councillor Johnson
Councillor Moore



Cambridge City Council

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

To: Gawthrope, Perry, Ratcliffe, Robertson, C Smart, Baigent, Pitt, M Smart, Gehring & Gillespie

Alternates: Councillor Sarris & Moore

Executive Councillor for Environment and Waste: Councillor Roberts

Executive Councillor for Planning Policy & Transport: Councillor Blencowe

Despatched: Tuesday, 19 May 2015

Date: Thursday, 28 May 2015

Time: 1.00 pm

Venue: Council Chamber - Guildhall

Contact: Democratic Services

Direct Dial: 01223 457013

AGENDA

1 APPOINTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

The Scrutiny Committee is requested to agree the membership of the Development Plan Scrutiny Sub-Committee:

Councillors Sarris, Gawthrope, Ashton, Baigent, C Smart & Tunnacliffe.

Alternates: Councillors M Smart & Reid.

To agree the Chair and Vice Chair for the Sub-Committee:

Nominations for Chair: Councillor Sarris

Nomination for Vice Chair: Councillor Gawthrope

2 APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES

To recommend appointments to the outside bodies listed below.

The Executive Councillor for Environment and Waste and the Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport will be asked to agree the appointments.

- **Joint Strategic Transport and Spatial Planning Group (3 + 2 alternates)**

Councillors Blencowe, Herbert & C Smart

Alternates: Councillors M Smart and Gehring

- **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Joint Strategic Planning and Transport Member Group (3 + 2 alternates)**

Councillors Blencowe, C Smart, TBC

Alternates: Councillors Gehring, TBC

- **Recycling in Cambridge and Peterborough (RECAP) (1)**

Councillor Roberts

- **Cambridge Future Transport - Cross Party Working Group (1)**

Councillor Blencowe



Cambridge City Council

LICENSING COMMITTEE

To: Benstead, Bird, Ratcliffe, Gawthrope, McPherson, O'Reilly, Owers, Pippas, O'Connell, Bick, Austin and Meftah

Alternate: Councillors Sinnott & Moore

Despatched: Tuesday, 19 May 2015

Date: Thursday, 28 May 2015

Time: 1.00 pm

Venue: Council Chamber - Guildhall

Contact: Democratic Services **Direct Dial:** 01223 457086

AGENDA

1 APPOINTMENT OF SUB COMMITTEES

(Pages 3 - 6)

- 1) The Committee is asked to agree membership of 4 Sub Committees of 3 members each:

Sub Committee A: Austin, Benstead, Bird

Sub Committee B: Gawthrope, Meftah, O'Connell

Sub Committee C: Pippas, Owers, Ratcliffe

Sub Committee D: Bick, McPherson, O'Reilly

If any member is unable to attend a scheduled Sub Committee they will be substituted by another member of the Committee.

The responsibilities delegated to the Sub Committees are set out over the page.

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Subject area	Licensing Committee Decision	Sub Committee Decision	Officer Decision
Licensing Act 2003	<p>To determine/ amend Statement of Licensing Policy</p> <p>To approve changes to delegation to officers and there by amendment to the constitution</p>	To determine any licensing application where a representation from the responsible authorities and/or person(s) has been made	To grant any licensing application where no representation from the responsible authorities has been made
Gambling Act 2005	<p>To determine/ amend Statement of Gambling Principles</p> <p>To approve changes to delegation to officers and there by amendment to the constitution</p>	To determine any application where a representation from the responsible authorities and/or person(s) has been made	To grant any application where no representation from the responsible authorities has been made
Hackney Carriage/ Private Hire vehicles	<p>To determine/ amend policies</p> <p>To set fare charges for Hackney carriages</p>	To determine to suspend, revoke, refuse to issue or renew a vehicle licence, if the vehicle is not fit for purpose or does not meet the criteria set out in the policy	To issue licences that do not need a sub committee decision

Subject area	Licensing Committee Decision	Sub Committee Decision	Officer Decision
Hackney / Private Hire Drivers	To determine/ amend policies	To determine to suspend, revoke, refuse to issue or renew a driver licence, if the driver is not fit and proper or does not meet the criteria set out in the policy	To issue licences that do not need a sub committee decision
Private Hire Operators	To determine/ amend policies	To determine to suspend, revoke, refuse to issue or renew an operator's licence, if the operator is not fit and proper or does not meet the criteria set out in the policy	To issue licences that do not need a sub committee decision
Sex Establishment Venues	To determine/ amend policy	To determine an application, where relevant objections have been received	To determine an application, where no relevant objections have been received
Market and Street Trading	To determine/ amend policy	To determine a application for a consent if there is a contested application for street trading	To determine a application for a consent if there is no contested application

Miscellaneous	<p>If there is a requirement to make by-laws or have a particular policy</p> <p>To agree licensing fees where required to be locally set</p>	All delegated to Officers
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Cambridge City Council

STRATEGY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

To: Robertson, Sinnott, Baigent, Benstead, M Smart, Sarris, Bick, Holt, Cantrill, Hipkin

Alternate: Councillors C Smart & Abbott

Executive Councillor Strategy and Transformation: Councillor Herbert

Executive Councillor for Finance & Resources: Councillor Owers

Despatched: Tuesday, 19 May 2015

Date: Thursday, 28 May 2015

Time: 1.00 pm

Venue: Council Chamber

Contact: Democratic Services

Direct Dial: 01223 457013

AGENDA

1 APPOINTMENT OF EQUALITIES PANEL

The Scrutiny Committee is requested to agree the nominations below:

Councillors Abbott, Ratcliffe, Bird, Holt, O' Connell.

2 APPOINTMENT OF JOINT STAFF EMPLOYMENT FORUM (JSEF)

The Scrutiny Committee is requested to agree the membership of Joint Staff Employer Forum:

Councillors Gawthrope, Bird, C Smart, Holt, TBC

Alternates: Councillors Price & TBC

To agree the Chair for the Forum:

Nomination for Chair: Councillor Gawthrope

Nomination for Vice-Chair: Councillor Bird

3 APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Scrutiny Committee is requested to recommend appointment to the outside bodies listed below.

The Leader and the Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources will be asked to agree the appointments.

- **City Deal Executive Board (1 + 1 alternate)**

Councillor Herbert
Alternate: Councillor Blencowe

- **Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership (1)**

Councillor Herbert
Opposition Spokes: Councillor Bick

- **Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Panel (1 + 1 alternate)**

Councillor Herbert
Alternate: Councillor Sinnott

- **Local Government information Unit (1)**

Councillor Herbert

- **East of England Local Government Association (1)**

Councillor Herbert

- **LGA General Assembly (1)**

Councillor Herbert

- **Horizons Board (1)**

Councillor Herbert

- **Cambridge Community Safety Partnership (1)**

Councillor Herbert

Alternate: Councillor Sinnott

- **Connecting Cambridgeshire Steering Board and Delivery Group (1)**

Councillor Herbert

- **CCTV Shared Service Board (1)**

Councillor Herbert

- **Making Assets Count (MAC) Member Reference Group (1)**

Councillor Owers

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Annual Statement of the Liberal Democrat Group 2015

Liberal Democrat councillors will work with a backcloth of our own proposals for leading the city council as published in our 2015 manifesto *Liberal Democrats for a liberal city* (www.cambridgelibdems.org.uk/city-council-manifesto).

As the council's main opposition group we will continue to play a constructive role in decision making, holding the torch for a city council which -

- Is more focused on involvement, enablement and leadership and less focused on centralisation, regulation and control
- Understands the difference between what is within its power - and can practically change - and what it cares about but can only meddle in
- Is dedicated to bringing the city together rather than emphasising difference
- Appreciates what makes Cambridge such a phenomenally successful city by comparative standards and acts to make this sustainable, as well as widely shared, for the future.

We are happy to see that a significant amount of the Council's work programme remains initiatives commenced under Liberal Democrat council leadership including many which did not attract Labour group support at the time, as well as other measures we have pressed for.

Over the forthcoming year our top priorities are to:

- Press for the council to respect the serious need for more housing in the city with a commitment to mobilise its own powers and resources to take practical action, free of ideological baggage. We call again for Labour to make residential rather than commercial property its priority for investment of council funds and to bring forward a significant intermediate housing scheme.
- Cut congestion and pollution within the city by ensuring thorough consultation on City Deal-funded schemes which improve the efficiency and reliability of public transport and provide a safe environment for cyclists and pedestrians; and to ensure a no-holds-barred public debate on the full range of options for traffic management within the city.
- Ensure that the promised review of the council's climate change strategy results in a continued building, rather than a weakening of impact in this field and that all avenues for funding projects within the city are targeted, including resources available from the European Union via the LEP.
- Ensure the Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy produces measurable benefit and value for money.
- Support the council's drive for economies of scale from sharing back office services with neighbouring authorities, but in the case of the planning service, to challenge proposals to extend of this beyond Greater Cambridge, which threaten to spread strategic planning leadership too thinly at a time when geography-specific leadership in managing development pressures and developer relationships have never been more needed.
- Push for progress on the council's agreed policy to seek a single tier elected council for Greater Cambridge and, as a precursor to that formal arrangement, to increase opportunities for joined up working between the three authorities.
- Challenge the council's misrepresentation of its powers in trying to ban consumption of alcohol in public places, thus intimidating the general public from a right they continue to have.

We remain ready to find common ground across the council for lobbying of MPs and the government on matters in the government programme which affect the city council's responsibilities, or on measures that should be adopted which would enable the council to discharge its role more effectively, especially through increased devolution and local autonomy.

1) Councillor Avery to the Executive Councillor for Housing

When will he be publishing the results of the review of policy on homelessness undertaken by the Lead Councillor for Homelessness?

2) Councillor Bick to the Leader

At committee the Police stated that someone on Petersfield Green having a beer or a glass of wine, but not creating any kind of problem to anyone, would remain perfectly free to do so despite the imposition of a Public Spaces Protection Order. Why therefore did the Leader choose to obscure this from the public, by wording the PSPO notices that are shortly to be put in place as a general prohibition on consuming or having an open container of alcohol?

3) Councillor Austin to the Executive Councillor for Environment and Waste

Could the Executive Councillor identify what consultation he initiated prior to the recent installation of the new model of litter bins on Parker's Piece?

4) Councillor Cantrill to the Leader

What is the Leader's view on the Grosvenor proposals for the abbey stadium and the linked sporting village in Trumpington?

5) Councillor Holland to the Executive Councillor for Communities

Will Cambridge City Council be pressing Cambridge Live to encourage more use of the Large Hall in the Guildhall by local schools and music groups than has been the case over the past two decades?

Second Questions

Councillor Holland to the Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources

What is to become of the magnificent organ in the Large Hall which has fallen into disrepair?

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Council 28th May 2015 Written Questions

1. From Councillor Holland

To the Executive Councillor for Housing: Councillor Price

Without going into the personal details of a Cambridge City resident who wishes to move out of a three-bedroom social housing property in the north of the city to a two-bedroomed property in the south of the city and who is being frustrated by the online processes of Homeswapper and Homelink.

How can Cambridge City Council make this process seamless and release properties more efficiently?

Response from Councillor Price:

Housing register and determination of priority

When an individual or family applies to the Council for housing their application is assessed and awarded a banding status which reflects their housing priority. The way that banding is assessed is determined by the Council's Lettings Policy and the categories of need which fall within each band are agreed by the 7 local authority partners that form Home-Link.

For households who are under-occupying accommodation, some of whom are affected by the size-related criteria for housing benefit, priority is awarded based on the number of unrequired bedrooms. For households under-occupying by two bedrooms a band A category is awarded. For those under-occupying by one bedroom, assuming there are no other factors affecting their housing need, a band B is awarded.

Decisions about how to set the banding criteria are made in relation to other categories of housing need. For example, band A is defined as 'Urgent Need' under the policy and covers situations such as:

- Urgent medical need
- Severe overcrowding – lacking two bedrooms
- Homeless households owed a full homelessness duty by the Council
- The accommodation presents an urgent health and safety risk

The City Council is currently leading on a sub-regional review of the Lettings Policy and will be bringing a report to Housing Scrutiny Committee in September. Any proposals to change banding criteria would need to be approved by all 7 local authorities who form part of Home-Link.

Applicants who are in band B may find that they are not being prioritised for the properties they are bidding for, especially in Cambridge City where demand far outweighs supply. The Council seeks to assist applicants by advising them to use the Home-Link feedback reports on previous lets to inform judgements about what and where to bid on in future. It will also support applicants to understand the advert symbols so that bids are not made for properties that applicants are ineligible for. Occasionally, new build properties are allocated under local lettings plans. This is usually to ensure that the new scheme comprises of a mixed and balanced community from the outset. Cambridge City has made additional provisions for those under occupying accommodation within its own local lettings plans and this has improved the prospects for those in this situation and bidding from a band B status.

Mutual exchange

The Home-Link website allows those looking for an exchange to link up with others in the same position through *Exchange Locata*. There are other sites that can offer such a service, the most well-known of these being *Homeswapper*, but all are independent of the Council. Applicants can register with *Exchange Locata* for free but *Homeswapper* and many other sites charge a fee. The Council also holds its own mutual exchange register for its own tenants seeking to exchange with each other.

Social housing providers will all have mutual exchange policies which are usually framed around the Schedule 3 of the 1985 Housing Act & Section 15 of the 1988 Housing Act. Occasionally, applicants can be frustrated in their attempts to move by the circumstances of the partner they are seeking to exchange with. Housing providers are required in law to make a decision on a mutual exchange within 42 days and the Council normally makes a decision well within this timeframe but occasionally the process can be delayed if the applicant or the third party housing provider does not supply the information required in a timely fashion.

Schedule 3 of the 1985 Housing Act sets out the grounds upon which an exchange can be refused. These are:

- The Landlord has obtained a court order or has given notice of/commenced proceedings for repossession of your home.
- The property you propose to exchange to is substantially larger than your needs and the exchange would result in Under Occupancy.
- The property you propose to exchange to is too small for your needs and the exchange would result in Overcrowding/Over Occupancy.
- The existing tenant obtained the property through his/her employment and it is located within the grounds of a building not normally used for housing purposes.
- The Landlord is a registered charity and the applicant would not meet the criteria for assistance from that charity.
- The property has adaptations to suit the needs of a physically disabled person and the applicant would not require those adaptations/is not considered physically disabled.
- The Landlord is a Housing Association or Trust that accommodates only applicants of a specific group and the applicant does not meet that criteria.
- The property is of a group that are normally occupied by tenants with special needs, there are special facilities nearby designed for persons with the type of special needs and the applicant does not require that type of specialist accommodation.
- The property is managed by a management co-operative and the applicant is not willing to join the co-operative.
- It is established that; the applicant has exchanged his home with another tenant and either paid money to, or received money from, the other tenant as a condition of making the exchange.

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