

COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1 July 2010
1.30 - 4.20 pm

Present:

Executive Councillors:

Cllr Cantrill, Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation
Cllr Bick, Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health
Cllr Smart, Executive Councillor for Housing

Scrutiny Committee Members:

Councillors Kightley (Chair), Kerr (Vice-Chair) Al Bander, Blackhurst, Brown, Sanders, Todd-Jones and Walker

Non-voting co-optees:

Diane Best and Brian Haywood
(*Tenant/Leaseholder Representatives*)

Officer Present:

Liz Bissett (Director of Community Services)
Debbie Kaye (Head of Active Communities)
Chris Humphris (Principal Accountant)
Julia Hovells (Finance and Business Manager)
Jas Lally (Head of Environmental Services)
Ian Ross (Recreational Services Manager)
Alistair Wilson (Green Spaces Manager)
Bob Hadfield (Head of Technical Services)
Alastair Roberts (Safer Communities Manager)
Ken Hay (Head of Community Development)
Jackie Hanson (Operations and Resources Manager)
Paul Bishop (Children and Young People Service Manager)
Alan Cater (Head of Strategic Housing)
Glenn Burgess (Committee Manager)

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

10/38/CS Apologies

Apologies were received from Tenant Representative Anna Vine-Lott**Minutes**

A slight correction was made to the minutes of 25 March 2010. Under 'Declaration of Interest' it should have been noted that Councillor Walker was a Governor of St Matthews School. With this minor correction the minutes were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The minutes of the Special Meeting held on 27 May 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Item	Interest
Walker		Governor of St Matthews School

10/41/CS Public Questions (See information below)

None

10/42/CS Key Decision - 2009/10 Revenue & Capital Outturn, Carry forward requests and significant variances

Matter for decision: The report presented a summary of the 2009/10 outturn position compared to the final budget for the year, the position for revenue and capital and variances and requests to carry forward funding into 2010/11.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation:

- Agreed the carry forward requests, totaling £112,400 as detailed in Appendix C of the officers report, to be recommended to Council for approval.
- Sought approval from Council to carry forward capital resources to fund re-phased net capital spending of £472,000 from 2009/10 into 2010/11, as detailed in Appendix D of the officers report.

Reason for the Decision: This decision was required as part of the Council's budget setting process.

Any alternative options considered and rejected: As set out in the officer's report.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The Principal Accountant introduced the report to members.

In response to a question from Councillor Todd-Jones, it was confirmed that there were a variety of reasons for budget underspends and the resulting carry forward requests. These could include projects not being completed on time, additional public consultation and outside pressures such as ongoing legal negotiations. However it was noted that, whilst there was no formal policy, the Council did take a very prudent approach to carry forward requests.

Councillor Walker asked for further information on the Green Spaces carry forward request of £22,610, and the Head of Active Communities confirmed that this was due to additional income generated through grazing fees.

In response to further questions from Councillor Walker the Director of Community Services confirmed that:

- the under achievement in the Corn Exchange marketing income was as a result of the current economic downturn.
- the carry forward request for the Community Development Area Committee Grant Budgets was due to the activities organised in the Easter period crossing over into the new financial year. This money had now been spent in full.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by 6 votes to 0

The Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted): None

10/43/CS Non-Key Decision - Cambridge Sport Network 2012 Olympic Action Plan

Matter for decision: To endorse the Cambridge Sport Network 2012 Groups Action Plan and agree the role of Cambridge City Council in the run up to the 2012 Olympics.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation:

- Endorse the proposed stakeholder action plan and actively promote opportunities for participation as widely as possible
- Approved elements specific to Cambridge City Council

Reason for the Decision: To highlight activities and the role of Cambridge City Council and key stakeholders in the run up to the 2012 Olympics.

Any alternative options considered and rejected: As set out in the officer's report.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The Head of Active Communities introduced the report to members.

In response to a question from Councillor Sanders, it was confirmed that both primary and secondary schools and further education colleges had programmes in place to help promote and encourage participation in sports in the run up to the 2012 Olympics. It was also confirmed that the Schools Sports Partnership was involved in the Cambridge Sport Network.

Councillor Brown asked about opportunities to further promote tourism during the Olympics and it was confirmed that the City Centre Manager was currently working with County Council colleagues on this issue.

The Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation highlighted that the City Council was a key supporter of sports in Cambridge – providing both resources and facilities throughout the city. It was felt that the 2012 Olympics would be a good opportunity to celebrate and promote all the good work of the City Council.

Councillor Walker proposed a slight amendment to recommendation 2.1 of the officer's report, to read:

- Endorse the proposed stakeholder action plan *and actively promote opportunities for participation as widely as possible*

Members agreed this amendment.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by 8 votes to 0 votes (unanimously)

The Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted): None

10/44/CS Non-Key Decision - Project Appraisal: Works to improve the skatepark at Jesus Green

Matter for decision: Approval of a project to provide a more up to date skate facility on Jesus Green.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation:

- Recommended the capital scheme (which was not included in the Council's Capital Plan) for approval by Council, subject to resources being available to fund the capital cost associated with the Scheme, and relevant planning permissions are obtained. The total capital cost of the project was estimated to be £65,000, this was to be funded from Informal Open Spaces S106. There were no additional revenue implications arising from the project.
- Added the project to the Capital Plan.

Reason for the Decision: As set out in the officer's report.

Any alternative options considered and rejected: As set out in the officer's report.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The Recreational Services Manager introduced the report to members and gave a short powerpoint presentation on the proposed improvements to Jesus Green Skate Park.

In response to a question from Councillor Sanders, it was confirmed that options regarding the coloured surfaces had formed part of the consultation document, and would need to be formally agreed through planning conditions. The Jesus Green Residents Association were keen that any elevated surfaces should be designed to blend in with the surrounding area and this was also being considered.

The Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation confirmed that further consultation would take place through the planning application process, but felt that this was a good example of stakeholders working together towards a successful end project.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by 8 votes to 0 (unanimously)

The Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted): None

10/45/CS Non-Key Decision - Performance Management Framework for Parks and Open Spaces

Matter for decision: Report on work to date using the Performance Management Framework (PMF), an update on the six previously agreed sites and recommendations for the future use of the PMF.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation:

- Noted progress to date
- Instructed Officers to continue gathering data for comparison purposes
- Instructed Officers to identify improvements and incorporate them into management plans
- Approved the timescales for the replacement planting of the six previously approved priority sites
- Agreed to engage with stakeholders

Reason for the Decision: As set out in the officer's report.

Any alternative options considered and rejected: As set out in the officer's report.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The Green Spaces Manager introduced the report to members.

In response to a question from Councillor Walker, it was confirmed that whilst this report gave an update on just six of the sites, further reports and updates would be coming back to this committee.

Councillor Kightley raised concern that the very dry weather conditions may affect the replanting plans, but was reassured that plant selection would be looked at carefully to combat this.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by 8 votes to 0 (unanimously)

The Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted): None

10/46/CS Key Decision - Response to Communities and Local Government (CLG) Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Consultation 'A Real Future'

Matter for decision: Following the CLG Consultation, 'Reform Council Housing Finance' issued in July 2009, a subsequent detailed consultation paper was issued on 24th March 2010, entitled 'Council Housing: A Real Future'. The current consultation confirms the intention to move from the current HRA Subsidy regime to a system of self-financing for local authority housing. The Executive Councillor is asked to approve a response after considering views.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing:

- Considered the views of Housing Management Board and Community Services Scrutiny Committee members and tenant / leaseholder representatives.
- Approved the proposed response to the consultation, at Appendix B of the officers report, to be sent to the CLG by 6th July 2010, pending final ratification by Council on 22nd July 2010

Reason for the Decision: As set out in the officer's report.

Any alternative options considered and rejected: As set out in the officer's report.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The Finance and Business Manager introduced the report to members.

As Chair of the Housing Management Board, Councillor Blackhurst welcomed the report and the recommended consultation response.

Councillor Walker question whether the situation had changed since the election, and the Finance and Business Manager confirmed that early indications were that the new coalition government recognised that the current system was no longer fit for purpose and recognised the potential benefits of the scheme. Whilst it would depend on the outcomes of the consultation, it seemed that there was general support for change.

The Executive Councillor stated that the new coalition government had indicated that they felt the current system was inadequate but again it would depend on the consultation outcomes.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by 8 votes to 0 (unanimously)

The Executive Councillor for Housing approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted): None

10/47/CS Key Decision - 2009/10 Revenue & Capital Outturn, Carry forward requests and significant variances

Matter for decision: The report presented a summary of the 2009/10 outturn position compared to the final budget for the year, the position for revenue and capital and variances and requests to carry forward funding into 2010/11.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing:

- Agreed the carry forward requests, totaling £135,470 as detailed in Appendix C of the officers report, to be recommended to Council for approval.
- Sought approval from Council to re-phase capital expenditure of £96,000 in respect of Management Orders and the Landlord Accreditation Scheme into 2010/11, as detailed in Appendix D of the officers report.
- Sought approval from Council to re-phase capital expenditure of £25,000 in respect of investment in private sector housing grants and loans into 2010/11 and recognised the use of £41,000 more resource in 2010/11 than anticipated, in respect of the Assessment Centre, as detailed in Appendix E of the officers report and the associated notes.
- Sought approval from Council to carry forward capital resources to fund re-phased net capital spending of £1,389,000 between 2009/10 and 2010/11, in relation to investment in the Housing Revenue Account stock, as part of

the Housing Capital Investment Plan, as detailed in Appendix E of the officers report and the associated notes.

- Confirmed inclusion of £500,000 in 2010/11, £815,000 in 2011/12 and £60,000 in 2012/13 in respect of the redevelopment works at Roman Court in the Housing Capital Investment Plan, as approved by Community Services in March 2010.
- Confirmed inclusion of £236,000 in 2010/11, to meet the decant costs of Seymour Court in the Housing Capital Investment Plan, as approved by Community Services in March 2010.

Reason for the Decision: This decision was required as part of the Council's budget setting process.

Any alternative options considered and rejected: As set out in the officer's report.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The Finance and Business Manager introduced the report to members.

In response to a question from Councillor Walker regarding the Bed and Breakfast budgets, the Head of Strategic Housing confirmed that, as this was needs led, it was very difficult to budget for. A new approach was being trailed by the Housing Options Team in order to offer accommodation *within* the Councils own services, and it was hoped that this would reduce costs and minimise the need to place families outside of Cambridge

In response to a question from Councillor Walker regarding the RSL Partnership Project, the Finance and Business Manager confirmed that this funding had been for specific strategic work. The funding was requested to be carried forward to either resurrect this work in 2010/11 or to allow it to be returned to the RSL contributors.

In response to a question from Councillor Walker regarding Jimmy's Night Shelter, the Finance and Business Manager confirmed that the overspend was as a result of the phasing of the project within each year and did not represent an anticipated overspend in totality.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by 6 votes to 0

The Executive Councillor for Housing approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted): None Exclusion of press and the public

Before considering the next item the Chair asked that members of the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that, if they were present, there would be disclosure to them of information defined as exempt from publication by virtue of paragraph 1, 2 & 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

Key Decision - ANNUAL REVIEW OF 3-YEAR AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMME

Matter for decision: A 3-year rolling programme of Housing owned sites, for consideration for development, redevelopment or disposal, was approved by the Executive Councillor for Housing in June 2009. This report provided an annual review of the programme and sought approval of a revised 3-year rolling programme, which includes 9 sites to be investigated in year 2010/11.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing:

- Noted progress of schemes approved for consideration for development, redevelopment or disposal in 2009/10
- Approved the revised 3 Year rolling programme for 2010/11 to 2012/13

Reason for the Decision: As set out in the officer's report.

Any alternative options considered and rejected: As set out in the officer's report.

Scrutiny Considerations: The Head of Strategic Housing introduced the report and answered members questions on the proposed Investigations Programme as included in the confidential appendix to the officers report.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by 8 votes to 0 (unanimously)

The Executive Councillor for Housing approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted): None Non-Key Decision -Retrospective approval of Project Appraisal for Landlord Accreditation Energy Grant scheme

Matter for decision: East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) invited local authorities to bid for grant funding from the regional Housing Pot to support the Private Sector Renewal, Regeneration and mixed communities programme. In consultation with Executive

Councillor for Housing, a bid was made to provide financial assistance to those private sector landlords who are committed to improving the standard of their properties and are members of the Councils Landlord Accreditation scheme. The bid was successful and the Council received a grant of £50,000 for 2009/10 and £50,000 for 2010/11 from East of England Regional Assembly. Although the project documentation was included in the Council's capital plan, Officers had not gained approval from Asset Management Team and the Executive Councillor for Housing. To address this, Officers have taken a report to Asset Management Team and are now seeking approval from the Executive Councillor for Housing.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing:

- Retrospectively approved the project appraisal for Landlord Accreditation Energy Grant Scheme, which was included in the Council's Capital Plan

Reason for the Decision:

Any alternative options considered and rejected: As set out in the officer's report.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The Head of Environmental Services introduced the report to members.

In response to a question from Councillor Walker, it was confirmed that the scheme was being promoted to all landlords.

The Executive Councillor for Housing did however acknowledge the difficulty of promoting the scheme as landlords were required to cover the initial costs, whilst it was their tenants that received the benefits.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by 8 votes to 0 (unanimously)

The Executive Councillor for Housing approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted): None

10/51/CS Key Decision - 2009/10 Revenue & Capital Outturn, Carry forward requests and significant variances

Matter for decision: The report presented a summary of the 2009/10 outturn position compared to the final budget for the year, the position for revenue and capital and variances and requests to carry forward funding into 2010/11.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health:

- Considered the variances reported as detailed in Appendix B of the officers report subject to the final outturn position.
- Agree forward requests, totaling £ 37,110 as detailed in Appendix C, of the officers report, be recommended to Council for approval.
- Sought approval from Council to rephase net capital spending of £237,000 from 2009/10 into 2010/11 as detailed in Appendix D of the officers report.

Reason for the Decision: This decision was required as part of the Council's budget setting process.

Any alternative options considered and rejected: As set out in the officer's report.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The Principal Accountant introduced the report to members.

In response to a question from Councillor Walker, the Head of Community Development confirmed that the underspend in the Community Centres budget was as a result of an overachievement in income for the last quarter at the Meadows Community Centre and Buchan St in particular.

Councillor Walker also asked for further information on the Green Spaces carry forward request of £22,610, and the Head of Active Communities highlighted a number of contributory factors and agreed to provide more detail in writing.

In response to a question from Councillor Walker, the Head of Technical Services confirmed that the cremation income was significantly lower than budgeted partly due to increased competition in the local area. This would be taken into account when budgeting for future years.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by 6 votes to 0

The Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted): None

10/52/CS Key Decision - Mercury abatement Contract payments

Matter for decision: In 2005 a decision was taken for the crematorium run by the Council to seek to reduce mercury omissions, and therefore to install plant that would achieve this. A constitutional waiver would be required in order to make advance contractual payments for the equipment.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health:

- Sought permission via Full Council to allow a constitutional waiver in that, officers be allowed to make advance contractual payments as outlined in the officers report at 3.7.1, so as to ensure that the project procurement process may proceed and the project completed within required timescales.

Reason for the Decision: By 2012 all councils would be required either to reduce mercury emissions from crematoria by 50%, or to pay into a national penalty scheme of abatement credits, which would operate like carbon offsetting.

Any alternative options considered and rejected: As set out in the officer's report.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The Head of Technical Services introduced the report to members.

In response to a question from Councillor Walker, it was confirmed that services would be maintained throughout the installation of the new equipment.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by 8 votes to 0 (unanimously)

The Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted): None

10/53/CS Non-Key Decision - Operational Guidance s. 30 Dispersal Orders.

Matter for decision: The report sets out the Operational Guidance on the use of Dispersal Powers by Cambridgeshire Constabulary in the City of Cambridge under sections 30 – 36 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 (more commonly referred to as "section 30").

Decision of Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health:

- Noted the content of the report and the Operational Guidance attached to the officer's report.
- Noted the process for considering applications from the police and, in particular, where it was necessary for the local authority to decide quickly whether or not it would grant consent. This "fast track" process was shown graphically in the flowchart on page 14 of the officers report.
- Requested that a further report on the operation of the fast track mechanism be brought back to this committee in twelve months time.

Reason for the Decision: As set out in the officer's report.

Any alternative options considered and rejected: As set out in the officer's report.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The Safer Communities Manager introduced the item to members.

Councillor Walker welcomed the officer's report and highlighted the need to publicise the revised S30 process to the public.

Councillor Brown echoed these points, and highlighted that local residents had become frustrated with the current process. She sought clarity on what police action would come out of a report of anti-social behaviour.

In response, Inspector Kerridge highlighted the need for the public to report all incidents of anti-social behaviour. This should be done via the 0345 number and all individual cases would then be investigated, with the data used to inform the S30 process.

The Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health highlighted that, from 2 July, there would be no S30 Dispersal Orders in the City and this was down to the good work of the police and other agencies. He welcomed the clearer process proposed in the officers report.

In response to a request from Councillor Walker for a further report on the success of DPPO's in other cities, the Executive Councillor felt that the priority should be to look at root causes and prevention measures. A further report on these issues would be brought to a future West/Central Area Committee and it was agreed that this would be shared with all members.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by 8 votes to 0 (unanimously)

The Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted): None

10/54/CS Non-Key Item - New Town Capital Grant Programme

Matter for decision: To provide funding and grant aid for capital projects that would improve community provision, services and development for residents living in the New Town area of the city.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health:

- Noted the progress and achievements to date of the New Town Capital Grant Programme.
- Included a bid of £125,000 to be considered in the Medium Term Strategy process to extend the programme to 2013 in accordance with the remit.

Reason for the Decision: As set out in the officer's report.

Any alternative options considered and rejected: As set out in the officer's report.

Scrutiny Considerations: The Head of Community Development introduced the report to members.

Councillor Blackhurst welcomed the report and highlighted the benefits of local communities working together to identify funding priorities.

In response to a question from Councillor Walker regarding the proposed community room, the Head of Community Development confirmed that space had been allocated on the Cambridge University Press site and it was hoped that this could be integrated with the New Town area.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by 8 votes to 0 (unanimously)

The Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted): None

10/55/CS Non-Key Decision Big Lottery / Urban Adventure Play Project Appraisal

Matter for decision: The report accompanied the retrospective appraisals for the Urban Adventure Play Base at Cherry Hinton Hall and Bramblefields Play Installation, for additional S106 funding to be released to cover the cost of MCA certification for the ChYpPS Community Play Boat and a separate project appraisal for the Play Trails at Cherry Hinton Hall.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health:

- Approved the Big Lottery Urban Adventure Play Portfolio Project Appraisal
- Approved the Big Lottery Play Trails Project Appraisal
- Approved an additional £35k from section 106 resources from Community Development to enable the ChYpPS Community Play boat to comply with MCA certification requirements

Reason for the Decision: As set out in the officer's report.

Any alternative options considered and rejected: As set out in the officer's report.

Scrutiny Considerations:

The Children and Young Peoples Service Manager introduced the report to members.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by 8 votes to 0 (unanimously)

The Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted): None

10/56/CS Non-Key Decision - Funding for the Cambridge Refugee and Migrant Support Service

Matter for decision: To provide funding on a month-by-month basis for the Cambridge Refugee and Migrant Support Service.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health:

- To fund the Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum to host and run the Cambridge Refugee and Migrant Support Service on a month by month basis until a maximum period to 31st March 2011, at a cost of £1,900 a month.

Reason for the Decision: The Cambridge Refugee and Migrant Support Service was only funded up to the end of June 2010 by the Cambridge Local Strategic Partnership through a LPSA reward grant in recognition of the important contribution this service makes to economic migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the City.

Any alternative options considered and rejected: As set out in the officer's report.

Scrutiny Considerations: The Operations and Resources Manager introduced the report to members.

Councillor Walker questioned whether officers were confident that the Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum (CECF) had the human resources to continue with the project. In response the Operations and Resources Manager confirmed an extensive review had been undertaken over the last year and it was felt that CECF were very well placed to continue the service. It was also noted that CECF worked closely with other agencies to bring in specialist advice and, as the funding was proposed on a month-by-month basis, the Council would continue to monitor its progress.

The Scrutiny Committee considered and endorsed the recommendations in the report by 8 votes to 0 (unanimously)

The Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of interest declared by the Executive Councillor (and any dispensations granted): None

The meeting ended at 4.20 pm

CHAIR