

**ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** 23 March 2023  
5.30 - 8.00 pm

**Present:** Councillors Pounds (Chair), Carling (Vice-Chair), Divkovic, Hauk, Holloway, Howard, Payne and Swift

Executive Councillors: Collis (Executive Councillor for Open Spaces, Food Justice and Community Development), Gilderdale (Executive Councillor for Recovery, Employment and Community Safety), Healy (Executive Councillor for Equalities, Anti-Poverty and Wellbeing) and Moore (Executive Councillor for Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity)

**Officers:**

Director of Neighbourhoods and Communities: Jane Wilson

Head of Climate, Environment & Waste: Bode Esan

Head of Environmental Services: Joel Carré

Community Safety Manager: Keryn Jalli

Development Manager, Streets & Open Spaces: Alistair Wilson

Waste Projects Officer: Jack Howe

Committee Manager: James Goddard

Meeting Producer: Boris Herzog

<b>FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL</b>
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**23/11/EnC Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Copley (Councillor Howard attended as her Alternate) and Sweeney.

**23/12/EnC Declarations of Interest**

Name	Item	Interest
Councillors Carling and Swift	23/15/EnC	Personal: Ward Councillor for West Chesterton. Discretion unfettered for this item.
Councillor Hauk	23/15/EnC	Personal: Ward Councillor for Trumpington. Discretion unfettered for this item.

## **23/13/EnC Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **23/14/EnC Public Questions**

Members of the public asked a number of questions, as set out below.

1. Newnham Croft Resident Association representative raised the following points:
  - i. Had asked for an end to herbicide use in their area for some time so were pleased that the Council agreed to run one of the trials in Newnham.
  - ii. Welcomed the report which showed what had been achieved and thanked officers for the work they put in to make the trials a success.
  - iii. The need for the City to work more closely with the County Highways team had become clear.
  - iv. One of the issues raised in Newnham was the maintenance of solar lighting on the footpaths and cycleways. Those on Lammas Land, the Driftway and across Sheeps Green and Empty Common were very dirty and obscured by leaves and other debris so there were now fewer lights working than were operating.
  - v. This was unsafe, discouraged active travel, and had led to pressure for additional lighting which would be expensive, environmentally harmful and unnecessary if the existing solar lights were kept clean and functioning.
  - vi. It seemed from the report that manual removal was an effective alternative way of dealing with clearing weeds and debris, but it was more expensive. This may be compensated by the reduced cutting/mowing schedule that had now been agreed with the County Highways but will the Council commit to making sure there was sufficient funding for alternative methods to ensure that the solar lights in our parks and open spaces remain clean and functional?

The Executive Councillor for Open Spaces, Food Justice and Community Development responded:

- i. The Newnham trial was generally successful.

- ii. City Council actions were now being matched by the County Council. Manual removal of weeds was more effective but required more officer time and money than other measures.
- iii. Shifting priorities meant staff could be redeployed to focus on areas of need.
- iv. Issues with solar lights could be reported online.

The Development Manager, Streets & Open Spaces said:

- i. Officers would respond to issues with solar lights reported online.
- ii. There was scope to deploy staff resources where needed depending on priorities.

Supplementary question:

- i. Some people may see unmown verges as 'untidy' and believe Council standards were slipping, so it's important that people understood the rationale for these changes and there was good communication about them
- ii. The report recognised this and proposed ways to address concerns, for example noting that 'ward walkabouts' were conducted in the Arbury and Newnham Wards, where a range of items, concerns and improvements were identified'.
- iii. There was a good ward network here through our Residents' Associations and Friends groups. Could our representatives take part in these and work with the Council and 'On the Verge' so more local people were involved?

The Executive Councillor responded:

- i. Residents were good at letting councillors know about issues. The Executive Councillor was working with the Communications Team about council issues such as the herbicide trial.
- ii. Where residents saw a change in their area, they may not know why so it was important to communicate through the Communications Team.
- iii. Two ward walks had been organised to date. Only Ward Councillors had been invited to participate on these. Residents could give feedback through their Ward Councillors.

2. Pesticide-Free Cambridge raised the following points:
  - i. In relation to the Update on the Herbicide Reduction Plan Report (<https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/documents/s62188/Update%20on%20the%20Herbicide%20Reduction%20Plan%20report.pdf>), why was there a need for two more trial wards instead of an immediate hard-stop of herbicide use across the city when we have learnt all we need to from last year's two-ward trials in Newnham and Arbury?
  - ii. It would seem that moving from sixteen to six cuts a year in the mowing regime would free up manpower that could be redirected to manual treatment of pavement plants. As Cambridgeshire County Council were moving to three cuts a year, and moreover, have decided on a hard-stop of herbicide use on land that it manages itself, why does the City not do likewise now to save resources that could be redirected to mechanical weeding rather than waiting for a directive from the County to stop using herbicides on its land?

The Executive Councillor for Open Spaces, Food Justice and Community Development responded:

- i. The Council had not learnt all they needed to from the trial so it would be extended to two more wards.
- ii. Options had been discussed with Pesticide-Free Cambridge who were aware of plans for the trial and reasons for extension of the scheme.
- iii. The City Council wanted to stop using herbicide in a sustainable way.
- iv. The Executive Councillor was liaising with Councillor Bird who was concerned about slips, trips and falls if access routes were not properly maintained.
- v. There was a need to talk to residents about changes to management of land around their homes.
- vi. The City Council did not want to follow Brighton Council's example and go back on their hard stop commitments.

The Development Manager, Streets & Open Spaces said:

- i. Reducing grass cutting to just three times per year may not be sustainable for an urban setting. This may cause more issues if grass cutting was not undertaken.

3. Raised the following points:

- i. Referred to item 9 in the meeting agenda on the work of health partnerships.
- ii. Please could the Executive Councillor or the responsible council officer state what consideration had been given to funding 'Active Bystander Training' similar to that delivered to London NHS (<https://www.england.nhs.uk/london/our-work/equality-and-diversity/active-bystander-training/>).
- iii. If none had been proposed/discussed, requested that consideration was given to funding a pilot programme in Cambridge, perhaps starting with sports clubs and further education colleges, and possibly extending to local community groups and societies that have a core of longer standing members who were familiar with their local neighbourhoods and communities?

The Executive Councillor for Equalities, Anti-Poverty and Wellbeing responded:

- i. Starting with our internal training for City Council staff, although we do not commission the company referred to in the question, we do have training that covers similar areas including our EDI Employee Induction programme, which includes videos and scenarios covering workplace discrimination, and actions people could take to deal with and challenge discrimination. Our EDI programme also includes workshops on Trans Awareness, Gypsy Roma Traveller awareness – which include elements of challenging discrimination and reporting concerns. We also facilitate Dignity and Respect workshops for teams – which challenges negative behaviours and encourages people to report their concerns. Also anti-racism training.
- ii. In addition, we run sessions on domestic violence, and a programme of facilitated and e-learning Safeguarding courses.
- iii. This was an area which the Council takes very seriously and all of the above build awareness and encourage colleagues to challenge or report negative behaviours, discrimination and or safeguarding concerns. In addition to our internal training we also support wider programmes, for example:
  - a. As part of our community safety work We support awareness raising of the Cambridgeshire kNOw violence campaign, which

includes how to be an active bystander [How Can I help someone in need? | Know Violence](#)

- b. We fund infrastructure organisations including Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service, and they run training programmes based on the needs of our local community organisations. Cambridge CVS had run bystander training previously and was looking at options to do so again.
- iv. Turning now to the NHS, it was important to recognise that the individual organisations within the Integrated Care System continue to be employers in their own right. We could and would raise the principle of active bystanders with our NHS colleagues, however it was not the role of the City Council to determine specific elements of their workforce training.
- v. Possible addition: As we continue to build our approach to partnership working, training was one of the areas where collaboration could be very effective. However, it should be noted that this would need to be developed collaboratively, and go through the right commissioning and procurement processes, which would not necessarily lead to the use of any specific training provider.

Supplementary question:

- i. Had attended the Cambridge Ahead launch of the Vision of Cambridge for young adults.
- ii. Was this how young adults could be incorporated (encouraged to participate) into the culture of the city? Could councillors liaise with the community rather than rely on other organisations to do so?

The Executive Councillor supported younger peoples' participation in the community.

## **23/15/EnC Update on the Herbicide Reduction Plan**

### **Matter for Decision**

On 27 January 2022 the Executive Councillor for Open Spaces, Sustainable Food & Community Wellbeing (after scrutiny) approved a Herbicide Reduction Plan (HRP), which included Newnham and Arbury as the two herbicide free wards and the introduction of up to 12 herbicide free streets.

The Council's declaration of a Biodiversity Emergency (18th July 2019) included a commitment to reducing and removing the need to use herbicides on highway verges, roads, and pavements, and to find viable and effective alternatives, and this was reflected in the development and application of the HRP.

The Council's passing of a Herbicide Motion (ref. 21/32/CNlc - 22nd July 2021) included a commitment to undertake a range of tasks and actions to reduce the reliance on herbicide, as a means of managing unwanted vegetation on public property asset within the city.

The Officer's report gave updates on the work completed on the HRP to date, including an evaluation of the two herbicide free wards and the herbicide free street scheme; and made recommendations on the further reduction in the use of herbicides in the city's public realm.

### **Decision of Executive Councillor for Open Spaces, Food Justice & Community Development**

- i. Approved the expansion of the Herbicide Reduction Plan to include two additional herbicide free wards for 2023 - West Chesterton and Trumpington, (and continuation with Newnham and Arbury herbicide free wards from 2022).
- ii. Approved the continuation and further development of the 'Happy Bee Street Scheme'.
- iii. Noted the decision of the County Council on their use of herbicides in the city and to assist them with their new approach (paragraphs 3.2 to 3.4 of the Officer's report).
- iv. Noted the decision of the County Council to change the grass cutting specifications in the city (paragraphs 3.5 to 3.7 of the Officer's report).
- v. Supported the development of a collaborative communication plan as detailed in Section 5 of the Officer's report.

### **Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

### **Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

### **Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Development Manager, Streets & Open Spaces.

The Development Manager said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Complaints referred to the:
  - a. Early stage of the trial where herbicide was applied by a third party who was unaware of the herbicide free trial.
  - b. Appearance of the area when people were unaware the trial was underway and thought the area was untidy.
- ii. The scheme showed how much potential the Happy Bee scheme had for the Council. There was interest in more streets joining the scheme. The Council would provide appropriate personal protective equipment to participants.
- iii. There was a risk of accessibility around the city as wet vegetation could block/overhang pavements in open spaces causing hazards. Weeds in gutters were another issue as channels needed to be kept clear. The City Council was working with the County Council to keep channels clear.
- iv. A Working Group had looked at rolling out the herbicide free trial across all wards, but selected just two, due to conditions such as road surfaces. The trial was limited to two wards to avoid negative impact around peoples' homes eg perception of lack of maintenance which may lead to fly tipping.
- v. Referred to Appendices A and B in the Officer's report for details of actions taken and their effectiveness.
- vi. The trial would determine how to proceed in other areas. Some DEFRA guidance was expected in 2024.

The Committee resolved by 6 votes to 0 with 2 abstentions to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

**Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

**23/16/EnC Litter Strategy**

**Matter for Decision**

The Officer's report made recommendations on the approval and adoption of a Litter Strategy for Cambridge City (set out in detail at Appendix A of the Officer's report).

The Strategy was recommended for approval and adoption following extensive research and stakeholder engagement, including a public survey, focus group and series of officer task and finish groups.

The Strategy reflected public consultation results and identified areas for strategic action that included:

- i. Effective litter disposal infrastructure provision.
- ii. Awareness raising and education.
- iii. Enforcement.
- iv. Collaboration and partnership working.
- v. Civic pride and social responsibility.

The Strategy was intended to support positive change in behaviours, make it easy to dispose of litter, continue with enforcement activity, when it is proportionate and reasonable to do so, maximise the productivity of streets and open spaces waste management service and minimise the volume of litter.

### **Decision of Executive Councillor for Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity**

- i. Approved the adoption and use of the proposed 'Litter Strategy for Cambridge' (ref. Appendix A of the Officer's report).
- ii. Instructed Officers to format the Strategy for publication and to prepare a Communication Plan to support its adoption and implementation.

### **Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

### **Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

### **Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Development Manager, Streets & Open Spaces.

The Development Manager, Streets & Open Spaces said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Officers were undertaking a number of initiatives. Examples:
  - a. Working with the Keep Britain Tidy Campaign.
  - b. Different bins were provided for general waste and recycling.
  - c. Providing labels on bins listing how to dispose of waste responsibly.
  - d. Checking bins were in appropriate locations ie where people would use them instead of fly tipping.
- ii. No particular enforcement action was required regarding litter at present. CCTV could be used to catch culprits if required.
- iii. Litter was not always recyclable but the aim to do so could be included in Litter Strategy Policy LS2.
- iv. The Development Manager was working with the Waste Team on recycling policies to separate waste received into different streams (for reuse/sale) even if depositors did not. General waste and recycling bins were located together in tandem, but people usually put rubbish in the closest bin regardless of whether it was the most appropriate.
- v. Noted that Central Government proposed six different collection types in future. This would feed into the Litter Strategy.

The Executive Councillor said the City Council:

- i. Collected bins but recycling was undertaken by the County Council. If the Recycling Policy changed in future eg separating glass from paper, more bins may need to be provided and collected.
- ii. Was engaging partners such as RECAPP about the Central Government Waste and Resources Strategy. The City Council wanted to implement a deposit return scheme but not all partners wanted to. The Central Government Strategy would impact on the City Council Litter Strategy and Waste Strategy.

Councillors requested a change to the report text (recommendations unaffected). Councillor Howard proposed to add the following text to those in the Officer's report:

#### Litter Strategy (page 53) Policy LS2

To continue to build a knowledge base and understanding around litter and sources of litter to inform, direct, and drive all service activity and maximise our effectiveness.

We will:

- ☐ Continue our work with Greater Cambridge Shared Waste service to examine the causes of littering, including fly tipping, and so help us find solutions to deal with problems at source.
- ☐ Create campaigns and encourage businesses to design their products and packaging in ways which will reduce public waste, including **reuse before recycling** ~~recyclable~~ by default and stating clear methods of disposal.
- ☐ Ensure and support more recycling with media campaigns.
- ☐ Work with partners in the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning service to design bin infrastructure on new development sites.

The Committee unanimously approved this amendment.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

### **Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

## **23/17/EnC Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service Collection Changes**

### **Matter for Decision**

Greater Cambridge Shared waste service was responsible for collecting domestic waste from 127,000 households and Commercial waste from 4,000 businesses across Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire.

Due to the extensive amount of growth across both Districts, collection rounds had expanded at a significant rate since they were last reviewed in 2017, resulting in the need for review and optimisation now. The service was conducting a routine routes optimisation exercise due for completion in Summer 2023 to address this issue.

### **Decision of Executive Councillor for Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity**

Noted the Shared Waste Service was working on a route optimisation exercise that would result in collection day changes for residents during the Summer. Until the first phase of the exercise was complete the level of impact on residents was unknown, but It was anticipated there may be a period of

disruption to services whilst new rounds settled down and collection crews got to grips with changes.

**Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

**Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

**Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Head of Climate, Environment & Waste.

The Head of Climate, Environment & Waste said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. No details were available on how the four day working week would affect the service. A report would be brought back in future to a Cambridge City Council Committee. (Post meeting note: The report is expected to be presented to the Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting on 3 July 2023).
- ii. In order to recycle clothing and encourage people to do so:
  - a. Various recycling banks were available across the South Cambs and Cambridge City areas.
  - b. Repair shops could allow people to swap dirty clothes (eg paint stained ones) for clean clothes, or provide a cleaning service.

The Executive Councillor:

- i. Acknowledged that clothing and textile recycling could be an issue.
- ii. Two things were required to undertake recycling:
  - a. Collection points.
  - b. Someone who wanted to recycle paper, plastic, clothing etc.
- iii. Encouraged people to donate usable clothing to charity shops.
- iv. Non-wearable clothing should not go in blue bins, and preferably not to landfill. Suggestions on how to recycle it were welcome. People were cautious about accepting stained clothing for recycling.
- v. More could be done to promote recycling facilities. Noted the suggestion to promote clothing recycling campaigns through RECAPP (organisation).

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendation.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

**Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

**23/18/EnC Review of Alcohol Public Spaces Protection Order 2015****Matter for Decision**

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 ("2014 Act") gave local authorities the power to make Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs).

The Cambridge City Council Mill Road Cemetery, Petersfield Green and the front garden at Ditchburn Place, Cambridge Public Spaces Protection Order 2016 was due to lapse on 31st May 2023. This PSPO prohibited consuming alcohol or having an open container of alcohol in possession within the areas shown shaded red on the Order (see Appendix A-C of the Officer's report). At the time the PSPO was introduced, these areas were the focus of complaints for anti-social drinking of alcohol.

Before the orders lapse, Cambridge City Council must decide to either: a) extend the period of the order for up to three years, b) vary the order or c) discharge the order.

As per legislation this decision should be informed by consultation with:

- i. The Police and Crime Commissioner,
- ii. Cambridgeshire Constabulary (the local policing body),
- iii. Relevant community representatives,
- iv. Ward Councillors, and
- v. The owner/occupier of land the PSPO covers.

In addition to these groups, the Council sought the views of local people via the Council's Citizen Lab consultation platform. 61 people completed the consultation. The consultation questions could be found in Appendix D of the Officer's report.

The Council also collaborated with the University of Cambridge whose Geography students completed 300 in-person surveys with the public on ASB and public spaces.

The evidence and consultation results have been used to inform consideration about whether to a) renew the PSPO; b) vary it; or c) discharge it and adopt a

new approach to addressing alcohol related ASB. The report highlighted why options a) and b) were not recommended and how option c) is proposed to be implemented, as summarised in 3.18 of the Officer's report.

### **Decision of Executive Councillor for Recovery, Employment and Community Safety**

Discharged the PSPO and adopted a new approach to addressing alcohol related ASB.

The new approach would involve:

- i. A proactive and preventative council presence on the current PSPO sites through weekly patrols.
- ii. Better engagement and education with street drinkers, support services and local interest groups.
- iii. A greater ability to gather intelligence on alcohol related ASB, which will be used as evidence for enforcement action, such as Criminal Behaviour Orders.

Discharge was recommended on the grounds of:

- iv. A significant reduction in reports of anti-social drinking of alcohol on the sites covered by the PSPO. In 2022, the police and council received only 2 reports each.
- v. Low frequency of incidents identified in the consultation. 36 consultation respondents had witnessed anti-social drinking in the past 12 months. Of these who had witnessed anti-social drinking, almost half witnessed this 10 times or less (an average of less than once per month).
- vi. 65% (194 of 300) respondents to the University of Cambridge's in person surveys did not list alcohol as a core problem facing public spaces in Cambridge.
- vii. 80% of consultation respondents (49 people) supported the Council and Police managing anti-social drinking of alcohol as outlined in 2.1 – 2.3 of the Officer's report.

### **Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

### **Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

**Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Community Safety Manager.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Welcomed a joined up approach with partners to address street drinking, not just a punitive approach.
- ii. Queried work the Street Life Officer had undertaken.

The Community Safety Manager said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. The Street Life Officer engaged with street drinkers, and they supported proposals in the Officer's report.
- ii. Officers regularly engaged with the street life community and their support services such as Jimmy's (shelter).

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendation.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

**Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

**23/19/EnC Update on the Work of Health Partnerships****Matter for Decision**

The Officer's report provided an update on the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board and Cambridge Community Safety as a part of the Council's commitment given in its "Principles of Partnership Working".

**Decision of Executive Councillor for Recovery, Employment and Community Safety**

Agreed to continue to work with partners within the framework of the Cambridge Community Safety Partnership, identifying local priorities and taking action to make a positive difference to the safety of communities in the city.

**Decision of Executive Councillor for Equalities, Anti-Poverty and Wellbeing**

Agreed to continue to work with the Health and Wellbeing Board, and engage with the Integrated Care, and its sub-system to ensure that public agencies and others came together to address the strategic issues affecting Cambridge City and that the concerns of Cambridge citizens are heard, as the system developed.

**Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

**Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

**Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Neighbourhoods and Communities on behalf of the Strategy Officer.

The Director of Neighbourhoods and Communities said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Clinical factors only affected twenty percent of people's health. This (partnership working) was an opportunity to work on the social determinants of health such as housing.
- ii. Joining up with colleagues has led to funding for heating and health, community group engagement, joined up working with partner organisations to improve peoples' health.
- iii. Officers were looking to expand on this in future to develop a Health Equality Partnership. Historically there had not been an opportunity to join up to provide an integrated care system.
- iv. How health provision fitted into the planning process was one part of how the Health Equality Partnership/Strategy aligned with other strategies and city population growth.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

**Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

The meeting ended at 8.00 pm

## **CHAIR**