

Cambridge City Council

Notice of Council

Date: Thursday, 19 October 2023

Time: 6.00 pm

Venue: Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Market Square, Cambridge, CB2 3QJ

Contact: democratic.services@cambridge.gov.uk, tel:01223 457000

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of Cambridge City Council will be held in the Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Market Square, Cambridge, CB2 3QJ on Thursday, 19 October 2023 at 6.00 pm and I hereby summon you to attend.

Dated 11 October 2023

Yours faithfully

Robert Pollock

Chief Executive

Agenda

- 1 Minutes (Pages 13 - 56)
- 2 Mayor's announcements
- 3 Public questions time
- 4 To consider the recommendations of Committees for adoption
- 4a Civic Affairs Committee 18 October 2023
As the Committee does not meet until the day before the Council meeting, the officer report will be circulated in the Information Pack and the recommendations will be published in the morning of 19

October 2023.

5 To deal with oral questions

6 To consider the following notices of motion, notice of which has been given by:

6a Councillor Bick - A Unitary Council

Council notes its past interest in reform of local government structure in our area, reflected in the motion overwhelmingly supported by members in November 2014* and the renewed public interest in it today.

Council notes that:

1. Although many important partnership relationships are in place between this and other councils, that the current fragmentation of responsibilities and decision-making presents an unhelpful hurdle to strategic focus on the big range of issues which bind the city of Cambridge and the south of the county, affecting lives and livelihoods of all our residents.
2. This fragmentation frequently leaves our residents confused about the location of responsibilities and accountability.
3. Past doubts about the critical mass required to justify unitary status are being dispelled by recent and projected population growth in our area.

Council re-affirms its belief that:

1. Power should reside as close to people as is consistent with effective decisions that impact them.
2. For purposeful, democratic government, we should aspire to a single tier council, framed around the logical community of interest within an economic subregion: a shared area of identity within which most people both live and work.
3. In our situation this would mean a unitary council for the southern part of Cambridgeshire.

In addition it affirms:

1. Its continue commitment to the many, complex partnership

arrangements of which it is a part as the best available current means of pursuing joined-up decision-making so long as local government structure remains as it is.

2. Its awareness that even with a unitary council, working co-operatively and supportively with our neighbours would remain mutually essential.
3. That the increasing expectations of change and economic growth that face us in this area make it no longer optimal that we have less dedicated local self-government than city areas such as Peterborough, York, Bedford, Reading or Bath.
4. Its belief that a unitary council would better connect our residents to their representatives and service providers, and improve joined-up decision-making, and strengthen our voice in dialogue with central government.

Accordingly, Council renews its call on the Leader and Chief Executive to participate in discussions with other Cambridgeshire authorities and government to build a consensus for a new single tier authority for the south of the county with appropriate solutions for the remainder.

*Motion passed on November 6 2014 by 37 votes to 0 with 3 abstentions from the minutes

Resolved (by 37 votes to 0, with 3 abstentions) that:

Council notes:

- i. The urgent need to increase the relevance of public decision making to people's daily lives and to rejuvenate our local democracy.
- ii. The opportunity to tackle this in an appropriate way in England following the Scottish referendum and the commitments made there for increased devolution from Westminster.
- iii. The recent report of the RSA City Growth Commission presenting just the latest evidence that city regions, if empowered to do so, can serve to boost national economic

growth.

- iv. The groundswell of support in the local business community for a single council providing coordinated, accountable leadership for the Greater Cambridge area.
- v. The welcome debate opened up at the County Council for alternative approaches to local government in our area, to which the City Council will be asked to participate.

Council believes that:

- i. The survival of the proud tradition of municipal innovation and enterprise, which historically transformed social conditions and enabled strides in prosperity is under threat from the control tendencies of all recent governments.
- ii. There is much to do in our area, yet too often our locally elected representatives are circumscribed from taking actions that local people expect of them.
- iii. Both the unwieldy structure of local government covering the city of Cambridge and the centralisation of the vast majority of revenues arising from the area are major sources of frustration with the democratic process.
- iv. Power should reside as close to people as is consistent with making effective decisions that impact them.
- v. Irrespective of demarcations between councils, voluntary collaborations between them are being shown to offer economies of scale and critical mass where needed for cost effective service delivery.
- vi. For purposeful democratic, local government we should aspire to a single tier council framed around the logical community of interest within an economic sub region: a shared area of identity within which most people both live and work;

Council calls on the Leader and Chief Executive to:

- i. Participate in discussions with other Cambridgeshire authorities and Peterborough to seek a consensus for a single tier solution of several unitary authorities including one for greater Cambridge, and a local referendum if supported in principle, including full involvement of residents, local community organisations, the business community and Universities.
- ii. Seek in the interim negotiations with central Government on the Greater Cambridge City Deal acceleration of the already proposed legislation to enable a Greater Cambridge combined authority.
- iii. Develop and articulate the case for:
 - a. The retention without strings of a majority of the public revenues arising in this area from business rates and other property based taxation, allowing for the remainder to be redeployed nationally for equalisation.
 - b. Local accountability to local people for setting business rates and council tax levels.
 - c. Clear devolution of powers from Whitehall, working in partnership with Cambridgeshire councils, Peterborough and similar city regions, to remove obstacles to sustainable growth for Greater Cambridge including
 - i. Lifting the Housing Revenue Account cap and transferring related housing powers
 - ii. Addressing additional strategic transport infrastructure that is essential but not covered by the City Deal or already agreed
 - iii. Increasing capital and revenue funding for schools and skills development
 - iv. Removing barriers to enable councils to tackle

inequality, and

v. Strengthening local planning powers for Greater Cambridge.

iv. A proportional voting system within a newly empowered local government.

v. A national constitutional convention to provide the stimulus for a new mindset in Westminster and Whitehall and a general framework for progress in all these respects.

6b Councillor Young - Short Term Lets in Cambridge

Council Notes:

Advertising a room on Air BnB and other similar platforms started off as a practical way to generate occasional income for a few, renting out a spare room or a whole dwelling for a few weeks of the year whilst on holiday, but the practice has grown hugely since the site was founded and is now enormously commercialised;

This has had the effect of taking out privately owned and rented property from the market for long term living, and putting it in the market for short term and holiday lets and other temporary use;

Currently, there are few or no proactive controls available to the Local Planning Authority or council to oversee such changes of use, particularly in smaller properties, and therefore no means by which neighbours can put forward their views on such changes, or where additional comings and goings from servicing of such properties can be properly assessed.

Uncontrolled changes of residential property to continuous short term lets have the effect of:

- Squeezing the housing market for people who want to live close to where they work;
- In particular, driving out young people at the lower end of the price range who want to live where they were brought up and raise children and thus reducing the long

term sustainability of communities;
-in some cases enabling a source of neighbourhood nuisance by virtue of the use of inappropriate buildings or locations;
- Turning Cambridge into a town with unsuitable or substandard accommodation for visitors to Cambridge;

Therefore, this council:

1. Calls on central government urgently to put in place regulation to enable local councils to control the practice of short term lets, as consulted on in the recent “Introduction of a Use Class for Short Term Lets and associated permitted development rights” (12 April 2023) and requests the Chief Executive to write to the Housing Minister to express this council’s support for this.

2. Calls on the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control & Infrastructure to work across the council to shape the emerging Local Plan to address these concerns, exploring the use of all the powers which are at our disposal now and in the future to improve the situation, such as:

-How best the Local Planning Authority could use current or future legislation to require a change of use permission to be obtained for any dwellings used as short terms lets on a permanent basis;

-Clarifying how many days a year a property could be let before reaching the definition of permanent (for example, 90 days per annum, as used in London);

-Applying minimum space and safety standards for short term lettings similar to those in use for existing HMOs (Houses of Multiple Occupation);

-Ensuring that impact on the long term sustainability of a neighbourhood is considered as part of any change of use application to a short term let;

-Ensuring that the comings and goings and associated deliveries and servicing of short term rented dwellings are considered as part of this change of use application to a short term let;

-Including a presumption that ancillary dwellings approved as such should not later be converted to short term lets;

-Considering whether it would be reasonable to include a condition for new build dwellings to require change of use permission for short term lets until national policy on this is clarified.

6c Councillor Flaubert - Inclusive play in Cambridge

This council notes:

Accessible and inclusive play provision is a vital part of any city. Under the current equality legislation, the council has to endeavour to make play areas facilities accessible and inclusive. In this context, inclusive means maximising opportunities for a range of differing children's abilities, especially children with disabilities;

That our Streets and Open Spaces team already work hard to ensure that any play equipment suppliers provide a range of inclusive play when bids are submitted and that bids are rejected if this criterion is not met;

That in the recent Cambridge Together Project's Resident and Community Engagement project, residents fed back that they would like to see a range of playground offers at free or low cost for families/children, young people and other adults;

That Streets and Open Spaces already provide listings of parks and their locations on the city council website but as yet, this does not state which inclusive play equipment is located at each park or playground. However, according to a recent national study playgrounds continue to be inaccessible for many disabled children because they are not designed for their needs and have limited choices;

That as yet, there is no city wide map of inclusive play equipment and a structured means of engagement with families when designing inclusive playgrounds;

That as yet, there is no city wide map of the play equipment suitable for different age groups;

That as yet there is no data on distances to travel for residents for inclusive and age appropriate play equipment.

Council calls for:

An addition to the existing city map of play areas

(<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/>) to include a function to allow residents to search for types of inclusive play equipment and different age ranges of equipment across the city so they can identify easily where they may wish to play with their families. This should include a function to allow families to understand layout, play equipment overall space facilities and possible barriers to ensure safety, as well as photographs of the site;

A gap analysis to identify areas in the city lacking inclusive play equipment and types of age ranges of play equipment;

Engagement with families of disabled children when making adaptations to increase accessibility and to identify areas with a lack of choices;

A commitment to secure facilities for those children that need to remain seated in their wheelchairs to tackle a current lack of choices;

Provision of sensory opportunities in playgrounds;

Scrutiny of play equipment infrastructure so it meets a variety of play needs for all children;

The council's future play strategy to ensure that these gaps are considered when play equipment is being updated or where S106 or other contributions to development are being agreed, to ensure that reducing the travel times to inclusive and age appropriate play is a priority.

6d Councillor Tong - Towards greater transparency and closer co-operation in Local Government

There have been public calls for replacement of our current governance structures by a small number of unitary authorities.

This motion does not call for the establishment of new unitary authorities.

However, it seeks to take some simple steps to allay some of the resident concerns behind those calls.

Residents find our convoluted local government system confusing. It makes it harder for them to find the help they need quickly and easily.

We propose that the council explores the possibility of establishing a

common smart portal, “localCamgov.org.uk” to provide a single internet front door to the main local government structures.

This simple step would make it easier for residents to access the services they need and provide a better resident experience.

We also propose that the leader of the council invites the chairs and chief executives of key local government bodies including but not limited to the Greater Cambridge Partnership, the Combined Authority and the Cambridge Delivery Group to address full council and answer councillor questions at least once a year.

We believe that greater transparency will help to restore public confidence in local institutions and help to dispel concerns over the perceived democratic deficit.

6e Councillor A.Smith - Debate not hate

This council notes the intimidation and abuse of councillors, in person or otherwise, undermines democracy; preventing elected members from representing the communities they serve, deterring individuals from standing for election, and undermining public life in democratic processes.

This council further notes that increasing levels of toxicity in public and political discourse is having a detrimental impact on local democracy and that prevention, support and responses to abuse and intimidation of local politicians must improve to ensure councillors feel safe and able to continue representing their residents.

This council therefore commits to challenge the normalisation of abuse against councillors and uphold exemplary standards of public and political debate in all it does. The council further agrees to sign up to the Local Government Association’s (LGA) Debate Not Hate campaign.

The campaign aims to raise public awareness of the role of councillors in local communities, encourage healthy debate and improve the response to and support for local politicians facing abuse and intimidation.

In addition, the council resolves to:

- Write to the local Members of Parliament to ask them to support the campaign

- Write to the Government to ask them to work with the LGA to develop and implement a plan to address abuse and intimidation of politicians
- Regularly review the support available to councillors in relation to abuse and intimidation and councillor safety
- Work with the local police to ensure there is a clear and joined-up mechanism for reporting threats and other concerns about the safety of councillors and their families
- Take a zero-tolerance approach to abuse of councillors and officers

7 Written questions

No discussion will take place on this item. Members will be asked to note the written questions and answers document as circulated around the Chamber.

Information for the public

The public may record (e.g. film, audio, tweet, blog) meetings which are open to the public.

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- Website: <http://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk>
- Email: democratic.services@cambridge.gov.uk
- Phone: 01223 457000

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Those wishing to address the meeting will be able to do so virtually via Microsoft Teams, or by attending to speak in person. You must contact Democratic Services democratic.services@cambridge.gov.uk by 12 noon two working days before the meeting.