

CABINET21 October 2025
5.00-6.30pm

Present: Councillors Holloway (Chair), Wade (Vice-Chair), Bird, Nestor, Smart, A. Smith, S. Smith, Thornburrow and Todd-Jones

Other Councillors present:

Councillors Baigent, Bennett, Bick, Dalzell, Porrer

Officers Present:

Chief Executive: Robert Pollock

Assistant Director, Development: Ben Binns

Director Economy & Place: Lynne Miles

Head of Legal Practice: Tom Lewis

Chief Financial Officer: Jody Etherington

Democratic Services Manager: Dan Kalley

Meeting Producers: Claire Tunnicliffe & Matthew Hussey

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**25/37/Cab Apologies**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Moore.

25/38/Cab Declarations of Interest

A non-pecuniary declaration of interest was made by Councillor Thornburrow in respect of item 25/42/Cab, as a Member the Planning Committee.

A non-pecuniary declaration of interest was made by Councillors Bird and S. Smith in respect of item 25/42/Cab as Members of the Cambridge Investment Partnership Board.

25/39/Cab Minutes of the meeting held 25 September 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

25/40/Cab Public Questions

Question 1

"In September 2023, my partner Taj and I opened the Tourist Information Centre as a 12 month trial, to test to see if reviving the lost service was viable. The results were a success.

In 2024, we built on the progress of the first year, improving our operation and digging into the numbers to ensure that it was self-sustaining with its revenue and costs.

At the end of the second year, we were in a strong enough position to pay for the third year in a single instalment and hire a new full-time salaried employee.

When I started this experiment, I did not know anything about the Civic Quarter plans, and it was only relatively recently, in the last 2 months or so, that the details of that development have really started to emerge, and I am now in a predicament, as it looks as though the success we have achieved is going to be driven over the edge of a cliff.

Since the old TIC closed in 2020, it is clear that the need and value of Tourist Information Services in general have been underestimated and overlooked, which is also apparent from the Civic Quarter plans.

And so, my challenge now is having to try to get the Council to recognise and understand what it is we do, and to make a plea to the decision-makers to incorporate us into the plans for the future of the Guildhall.

Can the members of the Cabinet who are the relevant decision-makers please let me know how and when I can make this pitch to them, and to open a constructive dialogue about how the Council can help us to continue throughout these upcoming changes?

I have been putting together the case for the TIC which includes: Cost/benefits to the Council and society, footfall generation, revenue generation, and data collection, in-person public services 7-days-a week, over 350 5-star google reviews, witness testimony and more.

We have added undoubted value to the visitor economy and experience, and want that to continue throughout and beyond the development.

As well as that, there is a case to be made that using the space for a TIC will create more revenue and overall benefit for the Council that converting it into an rentable office / meeting space, which I also examine in my presentation.

In the Cabinet papers from 25th September 2025 it was recommended that the Cabinet:

(page 9) 1.1. III: "agrees to develop technical designs with traders and stakeholders"

And that the plan is for:

(page 10) 2.1, 4: "opening up the Guildhall to the community".

There is now a strong community presence already alive in that area of the Guildhall, which was not there before September 2023, and we want to protect and nurture it.

I hope we can begin a productive process of collaboration over the TIC which will benefit the Council and let us continue providing the benefit to the community which we serve.

The Chair responded with the following:

- i. That the Tourist Information Centre (TIC) was thanked for the service it provides for the City of Cambridge.
- ii. That the Tourist Information Centre was a successful and profitable business.
- iii. Council Officers and the landlord Alia had directly made contact with the TIC in regard to the proposed date of November 2026 for decamp from the Guildhall.
- iv. That the TIC had been directed to Property Services for alternative locations during the refurbishment of the Guildhall, and it was suggest that the owners of the TIC sit down with officers to work through potential options.
- v. In addition, the TIC had also been put in contact with Market Operations, with an option to have a permanent stall and that details had already been passed onto the managing agent who would likely be appointed

in September 2026 and would be promoting the Guildhall to commercial users for office space once the refurbishment of the Guildhall was completed in January 2028.

- vi. It was important to note that Cabinet had to balance a lot of competing needs for the Guildhall and the Civic Quarter project as a whole with the Council having to generate enough income to fund borrowing costs and to ensure that there was a range of services available at the Guildhall.
- vii. That the TIC was encouraged to continue with dialogue with council Officer.

Supplementary

- i. That the TIC was continuing to look at every possible means they could to get onto the Councils radar and that the intentions of the TIC were completely clear.
- ii. Although contact had been limited, there had been some productive meetings with Council Officers.
- iii. That the TIC wanted to protect the business they had built and the service it provided and have that service potentially incorporated into the future plans of the Civic Quarter.
- iv. It was hoped that when an actual decision was due to be made that an assessment and review of the service provided by the TIC was undertaken.

The Chair responded

- i. The Cabinet appreciated the opportunity to liaise with the TIC and that it was a difficult period for anyone that was a tenant at the Guildhall.
- ii. Various areas had been marked for commercial office space and other uses and it was important to note that this was indicative and that each area had not been set in stone at this point.
- iii. Discussions would continue with tenants and on the Councils own review process as well.

Question 2

The North Cambridge Framework for Change is an important initiative which is indicative of the forward-looking approach of Cambridge City Council in the aim to provide residents with safe, secure and 'fit for purpose' housing and accommodation north of the City, an area which requires positive attention and a project for redevelopment.

1. Could Cabinet please confirm that the traders of Arbury Court will be supported in this project, for it is vital for residents to retain the current traders in situ. The butcher, baker and Budgens, along with the other small businesses – including the post office - making up Arbury Court, are vital to residents of Arbury, West Chesterton and Kings Hedges at least. Traders need firm and clear assurances in writing that in any requirement to remove from their current premises during rebuilding and refurbishment will enable them to continue trading and to return to Arbury Court to resume trading. In particular, where equipment is central to trading (eg butcher) there needs to be clarity on financial and other support, just as there are clear and firm assurances to residents of Arbury Court and Kingsway Flats that they will be provided with financial and other support during the transition period.
2. Could Cabinet please confirm that the oversight by the Council will be maintained at a level that ensures that this project, which involves a substantial public outlay, will not be left in the hands of the relevant officer in charge. The officer's qualifications are recognised, and at the same time the Council and Councillors engaged in the Council administration have responsibility for the deployment of finances and cannot leave oversight to one Cabinet member despite their substantial qualifications. There must be support from Councillors involved in the administration which is directed to ensuring positive oversight of the Project and residents will require confirmation of this.

The Cabinet Member for Housing responded:

- i. The Cabinet papers stated that the proposals will mean that the new commercial premises would be built first so that traders would be able to stay in their current premises.
- ii. The Council had committed to providing a support package which would be shaped by feedback from traders.

- iii. Traders were meeting council officers from both the Development and the Property Service Team on a regular basis, and that a liaison group would be established.
- iv. This is a commitment that follows the motion agreed at Full Council.
- v. In regard to the second part of the question, all development projects had a robust governance process. The Development Team had significant experience in regeneration projects and would work with teams across the Council including Property services, Communities, Housing Management and Assets.
- vi. The project sponsor was an Assistant Director who would oversee the Senior Development Manager and other Development Team Members who would run the day to day project management.
- vii. Progress was reported to a monthly project board, where any risks to the development would be escalated to a development board that consisted of the Directors of the Council.
- viii. The Cabinet report had been signed off by the Director of Economy and Place, with all drafts discussed with the Council's Leadership Team and Cabinet. In addition, there were also Ward Councillor briefings.
- ix. The Team reported regularly to Cabinet, especially to Cabinet Members for Housing and Finance and the Leader of the Council.

Supplementary

- i. In regard to climate change and the environment, traders and residents needed to be assured that these would be taken into account.
- ii. If there was a need for lifts, attention would need to be paid to the fact that they were notorious for breaking down.
- iii. The proposed playground should retain the same size as the existing facility.
- iv. The library should be expanded to include community rooms if possible.
- v. Concern was raised that the plan suggested that the supermarket would be smaller and that residents did not want an Express shop but wanted

Budgens to remain. Residents wanted 'the butcher, the baker, the bicycle maker and the greengrocer' as Arbury Court was a unique space.

- vi. It would be appreciated if the Cabinet Members Community and Open Spaces could be involved.
- vii. That regular updates should be given to both the residents and traders by the council.

The Cabinet Member for Housing responded:

- i. The next drop-in session was scheduled for Monday 3 November 2025 at the Meadows Community Centre.
- ii. All residents and traders would be kept informed of any updates and drop-in sessions.
- iii. Traders would be able to remain in their current locations whilst building works were being carried out. Once the new building had been completed, traders could move into the new premises. Traders would also receive support to help them relocate. Also, one to one sessions were available with Council Officers.
- iv. The Cabinet Members for Community and Open Spaces would also be involved in any discussions going forward.
- v. In regard to biodiversity, this would be included as part of the Planning process.

Question 3

Support for Traders

It is gratifying to see that residential tenants and leaseholders are to be offered considerable support in finding and transitioning to new homes including financial support and compensation where appropriate.

The report acknowledges the importance of the shopping centre as a vital part of the community but it does not seem to recognise the special role played by the small, independent shopkeepers which make it unique. If we lose them, the community will lose something special and they will lose their livelihoods.

It is therefore disappointing that no similar financial support seems to be on offer.

Will the traders:

- a) be guaranteed to have new premises which are comparable in size, cost and footfall to what they have currently?
- b) be assisted with the costs of having to fit out new premises?
- c) be compensated for business disruption, including disruption due to changes and delays in the project?

Will the building contracts include specific requirements to protect the traders' businesses and pay compensation if these are not met?

New Homes and Service Providers

The report envisages a doubling of homes from 205 to 410. At Arbury Court the number of homes will increase by 182 units.

Has an impact assessment been made to give assurance that there will be sufficient capacity in terms of doctors, pharmacies, dentists, schools and child-care facilities to support this?

Programme Management vs Project Management

Project management of building contracts is usually focussed on building to cost and time objectives, often at the expense of impact on the wider community. Residents, and businesses especially, experienced this during the Milton Road reconstruction.

On the other hand a Programme Manager has responsibility to ensure that a complex set of community benefits are achieved overall.

Will a Programme Manager be appointed with overall responsibility to ensure that community objectives are written into contracts and delivered?

The Cabinet Member for Housing said the following.

- i. In respect of Part A, the Council was committed to improving the same amount of commercial spacing as current.
- ii. The Council wanted the new Arbury Court to thrive and remain busy and be an attractive place for residents to visit.

- iii. In regard to Parts B & C, the Council was committed to providing a support package during the transition and rent reduction for the first two years to move into the new premises when they are built.
- iv. In regard to the impact on local services, if Cabinet approves the next steps, the planning process would mean that these questions would be considered by the planners, and the development would need to make contributions towards education, health and highways.
- v. In response to the question around governance, the development Team had extensive experience in dealing with complex regeneration projects working with officers across the Council.
- vi. As previously stated the project sponsor is an Assistant Director who oversaw the Senior Development Manager and other Development Team members who ran the day to day project management.
- vii. In response to Part C, Traders would remain in their properties until the new development was completed. At that point they would be moved into their new shops and would receive help should it be needed.
- viii. The Assistant Director, Development added that the Council would be committed to ensure that during construction, the shops were fully functional, with parking, deliveries and customers being unhindered. This would require liaison with traders and the contractor, once appointed to iron out the details.
- ix. The contract would need to be robust, as if there were any disruption, dust from the site or any delay issues, this would cause a problem to the Council and traders would need to be recompensed.
- x. There would need to be minimal disruption to both traders and Arbury Court whilst building works were carried out.

Supplementary

- i. There appeared to be an error to the Risk Register as it stated the risk identified was a risk of the delay to the program due to the design team not meeting the Planning submission target of January 2026. This date was quivered this date as the consultation was only being conducted in November and December 2025.

The Assistant Director, Development responded:

- i. The Planning submission date listed on page 27 of the report was incorrect and should read September 2026 as shown elsewhere in the report.

25/41/Cab HRA – Rent and Service Charge Policy 2025

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report.

The report and attached Rent and Service Charge Policy had been developed to set out how Cambridge City Council's landlord services would set their rents and service charges in Housing Revenue Account (HRA) owned and managed properties. It had been written in accordance with best practice, legislation and regulation to set out clearly and transparently to our tenants and leaseholders how the Council set their rent and service charges.

This policy ensured the Council set rent and service charges in accordance with the Regulator of Social Housing's Rent Standard 2020 and meets all relevant Housing Legislation.

Cabinet **unanimously resolved** to:

- i. Approve the Rent and Service Charge Policy, which will be implemented immediately.
- ii. Provide the Cabinet Member for Housing, Assistant Director Housing and Health in consultation with the Housing Advisory Board delegated authority to update the policy as required.
- iii. Provide the Assistant Director Housing and Health, Strategic Housing Management Lead and Housing Leadership Board delegated authority to develop all relevant procedures to support the implementation of this Rent and Service Charge Policy.

25/42/Cab Cambridge North Framework for Change

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented the report.

The report advised that the council had an opportunity to invest in one of the most deprived parts of the city and truly change people's lives through a coordinated place-making approach delivering new homes, new community facilities, and giving a new lease of life to a much-loved shopping centre. Up to 410 new homes were proposed including at least 206 council homes replacing sub-standard existing council homes – with the new homes built to meet modern space standards, and to be more energy efficient and cheaper for tenants to run.

The Assistant Director, Development gave a presentation in addition to the covering report.

Following questions, the Cabinet Member and the Leader said the following:

- i. The proposal to redevelop Library Court was due to homes requiring better insulation and energy efficiency.
- ii. Following the consultation, residents wanted a more affordable and diverse range of shops and a modernised library and community centre, with more social venues such as cafes and pubs needed in the area. Concerns had been expressed regarding antisocial behaviour, maintenance and accessibility.
- iii. Residents wanted regeneration but wanted to maintain the character of Arbury Court and support for existing traders.
- iv. The current homes were old and inefficient. It would not be cost effective to retrofit those properties, therefore they would need to be demolished and replaced with buildings of a high standard that residents deserved.
- v. The reason for the potential number of units was because the Council wanted to apply for Homes England funding, with the report setting out the minimum numbers of housing. However, the Council wanted to be able to get more social housing and needed to see what level of funding it could receive.
- vi. The package available to traders was important and an announcement had already been made and that the Council would continue to work with them if the development goes ahead and beyond.

- vii. A liaison group would be established as this was an important method of keeping people up to date and was also a means to disseminate accurate information.
- viii. Hard copies of the consultation would be available at the library and community centres for those without access to the internet.
- ix. In respect of empty shops, it was hoped that there would be an increase demand once the development was completed due to more people in the area.
- x. The structure of the existing homes was the issue and not the tenants. This was a great scheme and it was understood that residents would be upset in losing their family homes, but the current buildings were no longer fit for purpose.
- xi. There was still lots of work to be carried out before the development was approved with consultations, workshops, drop in events, webinars and direct contact with residents to be held.
- xii. There would be reprovision and enhancement of the existing open space at Arbury Court with provision to slightly increase the area. In respect of Kingsway, there would be a reduction in open space although there would be an enhancement made to offset any loss.
- xiii. Funding was HRA funded and not by the General Fund and included commercial premises and had been assumed in the financing. Also, the Council would continue to own the premises as this would unlock the regeneration.
- xiv. In regard to Homes England funding, the Council would be committing to a bid for strategic partnership that would allow more flexibility in the funding mechanism. If the Council was not successful in securing funding, it would apply for funding on a scheme-by-scheme basis. Alongside this, a number of government policies was being considered such as the Right to Buy, CPI Plus One and other technical aspects that would impact the thirty-year business plan which would demonstrate what levels of headroom were available.
- xv. This was likely to be a Cambridge Investment Partnership Scheme, which was a method of funding Council homes as most of the Councils developments were.

- xvi. There were six modular homes being installed at Woodhouse Way in partnership with It Takes a City.
- xvii. Every resident/trader that would be moved out during redevelopment, would have the right to return if they so wished to their new homes once in place.
- xviii. Although the final number of Council Homes at affordable/social rent that would be available was not known due to funding, a minimum number had been affirmed.
- xix. Cambridge City Council was one of the best providers of new Council homes, and it was only through the program that this had been sustained in recent years.

Cabinet **unanimously resolved** to note:

- i. The Council's corporate vision for North Cambridge – the Framework for Change – and the Consultation Report.
- ii. The analysis of the area, its opportunities and challenges, the council's strategic objectives, the Design Code, which is now a Supplementary Planning Document, and the outcome of the local consultation exercise carried out in May/June 2024.
- iii. The wide range of issues identified that will require co-operation across a range of Council teams and external agencies.
- iv. The steps proposed in the report to co-ordinate response to these issues. Different funding streams will have a role in meeting these objectives and financial constraints will affect the pace of progress. Localised development proposals will also contribute.
- v. The recommendations support increased council housing in the city and the council's bid for a Strategic Partnership with Homes England.
- vi. That a public consultation process will take place in autumn 2025 on the North Cambridge Framework for Change Report and in parallel the proposals for Arbury Court and Kingsway, parts of Brackley Close, Rutland Close and Verulam Way.

Cabinet **unanimously resolved** to approve:

- i. That the Arbury Court and Kingsway, parts of Brackley Close, Rutland Close and Verulam Way scheme be included in the Housing Capital Programme, with an indicative capital budget of £81,200,000 subject to Homes England Funding to cover all site assembly, construction costs, professional fees and further associated fees, to deliver a mixed tenure housing scheme which meets the identified need in Cambridge. Budget will be drawn down from the sum already approved for investment in new homes and not yet allocated.
- ii. Authorising the Assistant Director, Development in consultation with and approval of the Cabinet Member for housing to approve variations to the scheme including the number of units and mix of property types, sizes and tenure.
- iii. Delegating authority be given to the Cabinet Member for Housing in conjunction with the Assistant Director, Development to enable the sites at Arbury Court, Kingsway, parts of Brackley Close, Rutland Close and Verulam Way to be developed through Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP) or through an alternative procurement route subject to a value for money assessment to be carried out on behalf of the Council.
- iv. Authorising, subject to 3, the Assistant Director in consultation with the Cabinet member for Housing to approve the transfer of the land for Arbury Court, Kingsway, parts of Brackley Close, Rutland Close and Verulam Way shown edged red on the attached plan in Appendix 3 and 5 to a third party for redevelopment. The transfer will be at a value provided by a further independent valuation.
- v. Authorising, subject to 3, the Assistant Director of Development in consultation with the Cabinet member for Housing to approve an Affordable Housing Agreement with a third party for the purchase of 206 affordable homes. This agreement will be at a value provided by an independent valuer.
- vi. With effect from the submission of a planning application for Arbury Court, approve (a) the purchase of the leasehold and freehold properties and (b) the issue of Home Loss and Disturbance payments to qualifying Council occupiers and Home Loss, Basic Loss and Disturbance payments to qualifying owners at the addresses at Arbury Court,

Kingsway, Brackley Close, Verulam Way and Rutland Close detailed in this report.

- vii. Delegating authority to the Assistant Director of Development to make a Compulsory Purchase Order in respect of any leasehold interests at Kingsway, Brackley Close and Arbury Court and any of the 5 freehold households on Rutland Close and Verulam Way identified for possible redevelopment that cannot be acquired by private treaty within a reasonable timescale and at a reasonable cost subject to the Director of Place being satisfied that there is a compelling case in the public interest for the use of compulsory purchase powers, and that all legal and policy requirements for the making and confirmation of a CPO have been met.
- viii. Delegating authority to the Assistant Director, Development to serve initial Demolition Notices under the Housing Act 1985.
- ix. Delegating Authority to the Assistant Director of Housing and Homelessness to approve a local lettings plan for the proposed developments.
- x. That a budget of £10,000 be allocated out of the approved new build housing budget and the use of the land at the Woodhouse Way as a site for delivery of modular (pod) housing to serve former rough sleepers.
- xi. Delegate authority to the Chief Property Surveyor in consultation with the s151 Officer to approve the terms of lease of the land at Woodhouse Way to a third party charitable organisation.

The meeting ended at 6.30pm

CHAIR