

WEST / CENTRAL AREA COMMITTEE1 March 2012
7.00 - 10.20 pm

Present: City Councillors Kightley (Vice-Chair), Bick, Cantrill, Hipkin, Reiner, Rosenstiel, Tucker and Brooks-Gordon

Also present: The Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources, Councillor McGovern

Officers present:

Safer Communities Manager: Lynda Kilkelly

Green Spaces Manager: Alistair Wilson

City Development Manager: Sarah Dyer

Head of Tourism and City Centre Manager: Emma Thornton

Principal Planning Officer: Toby Williams

Committee Manager: Toni Birkin

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**9 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Smith (City), Reid (City), Nethsingha (County) and Whitbread (County).

10 Declarations of Interest (Planning)

Name	Item	Interest
Councillor Rosenstiel	12/11a/WAC	Personal interest: Granddaughter was a playmate of the applicant's child had therefore been to the house. Took no part in the decision.
Councillor Reiner	12/11a/WAC	Personal interest: Shares a mutual friend with the applicant.

11 Planning Applications**3a 11/1482/FUL 1 Hoadly Road**

The committee received an application for a rear of house extension, part single storey and part two storey, to 1 Hoadly Road.

Dr Whaley addressed the committee and made the following points in objection to the application:

- I. This property is already the largest in the street.
- II. Neighbours would suffer from loss of light and privacy.
- III. The proposal is overbearing and would result in neighbours feeling hemmed in.
- IV. Changes made to the application do not address the reasons for the original refusal.
- V. Additional material had been introduced very late and objectors had not has time to respond to those.
- VI. Other extension in the area are on a much smaller scale.
- VII. The phased extensions to this property would result in a foot print of more than double the original.

The applicant, Mrs Zaffaroni, addressed the committee in support of the application.

Members discussed the application and made the following points:

- I. The extent of evening shadowing was debated.
- II. The changes to the original design had been an improvement.
- III. The existing side extension was in keeping with the original design and accounts for much of the increased footprint.

RESOLVED (by 4 to 1) to approve the application in accordance with the officer recommendation.

Drafting of an additional condition regarding development hours was delegated to the officer.

3b 11/1585/FUL Rear of 82 - 94, Richmond Road

The committee received an application for the erection of 4no four bed link detached units to the rear of 82 Richmond Road.

The applicants architect, Mr Haysom, addressed the committee in support of the application.

Members agreed that the new design was much improved.

RESOLVED (Unanimously) to approve the application subject to the removal of condition 15, in accordance with the officer recommendation.

12 Declarations of Interest (Main Agenda)

Name	Item	Interest
Councillor Cantrill	12/18/WAC	Personal Interest: Trustee of Wintercomfort
County Councillor Brooks- Gordon	12/18/WAC	Personal interest

13 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 5th January 2012 were agreed as a correct record subject to the following correction:

12/8/WAC (Q7 response to read

Councillor Bick responded and stated that he had requested a presentation from the Police on the subject at the December meeting of the Community Safety Partnership. This has occurred and had been attended by Mr Taylor.

14 Matters and Actions arising from the Minutes

12/7/WAC - Councillor Smith action on cycle signage.

Councillor Smith had contacted the County about road markings. The initial response was not encouraging but she had yet to have a detailed discussion with them.

All other matters arising to be covered later in the minutes.

15 Open Forum

(Q1) Richard Taylor

Had the Police asked to take a greater part in these meeting? If, yes why had this been refused?

Councillor Kightley responded. He was unaware of any request of this kind in recent months. However, this had happened in the past when it was deemed necessary.

(Q2) Barry Higgs (Hon Sec Friends of Midsummer Common)

At the previous meeting Councillor Reid expressed regret at the failure of the computer system designed to allow organisations such as Friends of Midsummer Common to be informed of planning applications in its area. We understand that the system has been referred back to its designers but, in this respect. It still isn't working. Unfortunately officials have not reverted to the previous procedure whereby they used their common sense and kept the likes of FoMC informed. Will the Committee please exert its influence to deal with this problem?

Sarah Dyer the City Development Manager responded. One part of the IT system is still not fully functional and work was ongoing to resolve this issue. However, most of the Public Access system is functioning and residents can register for a ward update or download a copy of the weekly list. She emphasised that customers were encouraged to self-serve because consultation in other ways was more difficult to resource.

(Q3) Barry Higgs (Hon Sec Friends of Midsummer Common)

Friends of Midsummer Common has been kept informed of progress in dealing with the illegal driving and parking of vehicles outside the Fort St George and Midsummer House Restaurant. A further briefing is to be held next week but can anything be said to this meeting?

Councillor Cantrill responded. He understood the concerns and frustrations expressed at the last West Central meeting. This matter is a key issue and as such had been added as a priority to his Portfolio Plan, as Executive Councillor for Arts, Sport and Public Places. He had met with the Ward Councillors and the Friends of Midsummer Common. He had also had discussions with the Legal department and the Open Spaces teams. More action will follow in due course.

The gate signage to had been improved. However, there was still room for improvement regarding the day to day operation of the gate.

(Q4) Mr Waller

Punt touting in the City Centre continues to be a problem. It had been suggested that some residents avoid the Kings Parade area as it is no longer a pleasant experience.

Councillor McGovern responded. Punt touting had been a problem for some years and a number of actions had been taken. Funding was in place for a

Warden to monitor and enforce the regulation from May 2012. Research had established the ownership of Garret Hostel Lane allowing greater controls of this area in future. Further controls on punt touts were being investigated.

(5) Richard Taylor

Did the Neighbourhood Action Group approve the priorities recommended by Councillors at the last meeting? Have members had any feedback on actions taken?

Councillor Bick responded. No feedback was expected unless there was a problem with a priority. The Police would be in attendance to give feedback at the next meeting.

(6) Mr Higgs

In reporting the work of the The Cambridge Sport Network in setting up table-tennis facilities in various parks, on Wednesday the Cambridge News wrote that 'if storage facilities can be found close to big parks such as (inter-alia) Midsummer Common tables may be set up there. Friends of

Midsummer Common welcomes the work of the Network but points out that Midsummer Common is not a park or playground. It is a common comprising unimproved rough grazing and is only used for events and casual, but not organised, activities that require no equipment or preparation of the grass. Would the committee please endorse this distinction and bear it in mind when proposals such as this come up?

Councillor Cantrill confirmed acknowledged that Midsummer Common was not a sport ground. The work is on-going to find a permanent location for the sports facilities.

(7) Member of the Public

Are resources in place to water the new trees mentioned later in the agenda?

Alistair Wilson responded. Resources were in place to allow for weekly watering of new trees. Licenses were in place to allow for abstraction of river water if this was needed.

(8) Dick Baxter

Government Circular 05/2005 states quite clearly that "the process of setting planning obligations policies and negotiating planning obligations should be conducted as openly, fairly and reasonably as

possible and members of the public should be given every reasonable assistance in locating and examining proposed and agreed planning obligations which are of interest to them". Berkeley Homes are about to give the Council £429,999 for informal open space and the Council's current policy is to direct half of this s.106 money into the local area. Yet I cannot discover how this money will be spent; transparency is lacking. FoMC had asked for some of this money to be spent on improvements to Midsummer Common but this is ignored in the proposed Environmental Improvement Programme. Can Councillors explain how community groups might get their proposals recognised and discussed?

Councillor Cantrill responded. A recent decision, made at Community Services Scrutiny Committee, delegated decisions to Area Committees. In future decisions would be more transparent and open to public input. Officers do not yet have full details on how this will be delivered. An Area Needs Assessment would be completed to allow a more systematic approach to be adopted.

(9) In 1930 the Council gave part of Midsummer Common to Jesus College. The College gave some of its land in return. The Minister approved this exchange subject to the College land becoming "common land" and forming part of Midsummer Common. The Minister also insisted that the buildings on this land be demolished, which they were. Last year the Council sold part of this land and gave planning permission for building on the site. The Ministry has made it clear that the site in question remains "common land" and building on such land is unlawful. How do Councillors think this mistake should be rectified?

The land in question is not common land. The sale of this land would ensure that it stays of benefit to the community. Executive Councillors would monitor the situation.

16 Update on Improvements to Cambridge Market

The Committee Received a briefing note from the Head of Tourism and the City Centre Manager regarding the Market Square. Councillor McGovern, the Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources (portfolio holder for this area of service) was in attendance. He stated that the Market was a valued historical feature of the City.

Mr Lawton

(Q1) Sound levels in the Market Square during the Christmas lights switch on day on were too high and environmental health took no action.

The sound levels were reduced in the early part of the day following complaints that were received. This would continue to be monitored carefully next year.

Mrs Stobbs

(Q2) The Market area was dead space at night. Could we have a European approach to the Market and have flexible use and increased seating?

A Café would create licensing problems. However, the fountain area had been improved and cleaned in recent months and the planting had been improved. Further improvements, such as lighting, that could be delivered within existing resources were being investigated. Changing the use of the space outside Market trading area would be difficult, as the Market furniture would need to be removed on a daily basis. The current system allows traders to bring very little with them.

The Local Plan currently being developed would include aspirations for the Market Square.

Penny Heath

(Q3) Cambridge Past, Present and Future are pleased to see that their pressure has resulted in improvements to the Market Square. However, the area could benefit from more investment.

17 Tree Planting Project - Parks and Open Spaces 2011/15

The committee received a report from the Streets and Open Spaces Manager regarding the tree-planting project.

In response to member's questions the officer confirmed the following points:

- I. The funding is for additional trees and there would be no loss of existing trees.
- II. It will not be clear until the spring, when the trees come into leaf, which of last years planting had not survived.
- III. Watering and aftercare was included in the budget.
- IV. The first year of planting would include replacing some trees which had already been lost.

- V. The long term plan is fluid to allow decisions to be made as needs develop.

RESOLVED (unanimously) to:

- I. Approve the four-year planting schedule at 4.5 to 4.8 of the Officer's report; and
- II. Consider, adapt and approve the list of proposed sites on an annual basis.

18 Proposal to Introduce a Section 30 Order

The committee received a report from the Safer Communities Manager seeking to gauge opinion from the West/Central Area Committee on the possible implementation of a Dispersal Order under section 30 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 to cover the centre of the City and the Grafton Area.

Inspector Poppit addressed the committee and raised the following points:

- I. There had been an increase in anti-social behaviour related to street life in the Grafton Centre area.
- II. A dispersal order would allow both Police and PCSO's to take action.
- III. The order would be part of a larger strategy designed to "ensure that street life does not flourish in the area".

Councillor Bick stated that such orders require both the Council and the police to agree. They had been used in the past and had achieved results. However, this paper is not requesting a S30 order; it was an invitation to members to debate the issues. A S30 order was a significant move and would not be taken lightly.

Councillor Hipkin argued that the tone of the report suggested that the problems were confined to street life and the homeless community. He further suggested that young drinkers in the City Centre on a Friday or Saturday night were a bigger problem. Commercial pressures and the development of a night-time economy had caused the problems. Additional cameras and increased policing would be a better solution. An S30 order would displace the problem rather than resolving it.

Members raised the following points:

- IV. The statistics used in the report would be more useful if they covered a longer period.

- V. Street life may be unsightly, however, the evidence suggested that only a small minority were problematic.
- VI. A map of the proposed area would be helpful.
- VII. Why was Willow Walk excluded?

Inspector Poppit responded. The exclusion area was based on available evidence. Any final proposal would include wider evidence. If the powers were in place they would be used to address any issues that arose.

(Q1) Mrs Stobbs

Residents of Cambridge show compassion for the homeless and were concerned that attitudes were changing. The homeless should not be victimised.

Councillor Cantrill stated that there was no evidence of increased rough sleeping and that the City Council invests in services for the homeless.

(Q2) Richard Taylor

The tone of the report implies treating the homeless in a different way to other citizens. The lack of a map is problematic, as is the Willow Walk area. Those living in the hostel in Willow Walk cannot be excluded from their homes. S30 was an authoritarian approach which would give considerable powers to low level Police Officers and PCSOs.

Inspector Poppit responded. The S30 would be another tool and Officers would use their professional judgement about its use. If people behave properly there would be no problem.

(Q3) Member of the Public

What happens at the borders of the dispersal area such as Midsummer Common? Resolving one problem creates another somewhere else.

The aim of a dispersal order is not to displace the problem but rather to stop large groups forming and to change the dynamics of the area.

Councillor Bick summed up the debate. There is no request for a S30 at present. Any use of a S30 would be based on the situation and behaviour patterns and not the class or status of those involved. He thanked members of the committee and the public for their comments and reminded them that should an S30 be deemed necessary, the decision would need to be made quickly.

RESOLVED

- I. To note the debate; and
- II. That the views of the Committee would be used to inform the decision of the Executive Councillor for Community Safety, prior to a formal submission from the Constabulary to the Council and any decision being taken.

19 Environmental Improvement Programme

The committee received a report from the Project Delivery and Environment Manager regarding the Environmental Improvement Programme.

(Q1) Anthony Martinelli

Can the lighting on Parkers Piece be improved? Students from both Universities find the dark paths daunting.

Councillor Bick responded. This issue had been raised by the students unions of both Universities. He was happy for it to be added to the list of projects subject to caveats. Any lighting would have to respect the character of the open space of the area. In addition, the space was used by a variety of people for a range of events and sports. Any additional lighting would have to accommodate those uses. An imaginative solution would be needed but he was keen that one should be found as this was a legitimate concern on the part of the student community and others.

(Q2) Mr Lawton

What progress had been made with the 20mph signage improvements?

A decision on funding was expected later this month. The wider project of a City-wide 20mph limit had not received County Council funding and an alternative source was under investigation.

(Q3) Mr Higgs

The footpath improvements to Midsummer Common and Jesus Green are on hold. A Lottery funding bid had been submitted and the results would be known in June. Can the Officer give any other update?

The Project Delivery and Environment Manager responded. The paths are classed as highways and therefore, a County Council responsibility. Some remedial work had been carried out. S106 funding was restricted to capital projects and could not be used for maintenance.

The following matters were discussed:

- Richmond Road Residents Association had requested a City-wide scheme for public noticeboards.
- A bench at the bus stop at the corner of Huntingdon Road and Sherlock Road had been requested.
- Lammas Land access was discussed. The traffic lights needed to be improved as motorists currently stop too far away from the activation point.
- Improvements to the pavement outside the Doctors surgery had been passed to the County Council for action.

RESOLVED (Unanimously)

- I. To approve the list of schemes in section 5.0 of the Officer's report for further investigation into their feasibility and estimated cost.

20 Start Time and Format of Meeting

Members were asked to consider if they wished to continue with the current arrangements of a 7.00 pm start time and taking planning items first. There was general agreement for this proposal.

Members suggested that additional, workshop style meetings would be needed to assist in the development of an Area Needs Assessment.

RESOLVED to continue with the current arrangements of a 7.00 pm start time for planning with substantive agenda item not being considered before 8.00 pm. Additional workshop meetings to be arranged as needed.

The meeting ended at 10.20 pm

CHAIR