

**COUNCIL**

3 April 2014  
6.00pm - 10.15 pm

**Present:** Councillors Saunders (Mayor), Pippas (Deputy Mayor), Abbott, Ashton, Benstead, Bick, Bird, Birtles, Blackhurst, Blencowe, Boyce, Brierley, Brown, Cantrill, Dryden, Hart, Herbert, Hipkin, Johnson, Kerr, Kightley, McPherson, Meftah, Moghadas, O'Reilly, Owers, Pitt, Price, Reid, Reiner, Roberts, Rosenstiel, Smart, Smith, Stuart, Swanson, Todd-Jones, Tucker, Tunnacliffe and Ward

**FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**

**Request to film the meeting**

The Mayor gave permission for Mr Taylor to film the meeting. It was confirmed that if members of the public or speakers expressed a desire not to be filmed filming would cease.

**14/15/CNL To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meetings held on 13 February 2014 and 27 February 2014**

The minutes of the meetings held on 13 February and 27 February 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

**14/16/CNL Mayors Announcements**

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Gawthrope and Marchant-Daisley.

It was noted that Councillors Cantrill and McPherson would be arriving late.

**2. REACH FAIR**

The Mayor confirmed that the annual Proclamation of Reach Fair would take place on Bank Holiday Monday 5 May. Newly minted pennies would be available from the Civic Office from 16 April.

### 3. TWINNING

The Mayor confirmed that the City would host the annual Cambridge-Heidelberg Easter Festival and a civic reception for participants on Thursday 17 April at 7pm.

### 4. ELECTIONS

The Mayor expressed sincere appreciation to those Members who had decided not to stand at the next election on 22 May for the service they given to the City of Cambridge.

### 5. CITY COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING

The Mayor confirmed that the Council's annual meeting would take place on Thursday 12 June. Members were asked to let the Civic Office know if they required guest tickets.

### 6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor	Item	Interest
Ward	14/21/CNLb	Personal: Runs a website that introduces landlords to potential renters.

### 14/17/CNL Public Questions Time

Mr Rogers addressed the Council and made the following points:

- i. In April 2010 the Council started publishing almost all its responses to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests on its website.
- ii. This was a great thing to do because it meant that people doing web searches for that information had a chance of finding it. It makes public a lot of information about what the Council is doing, often on topics that there's a lot of interest in.
- iii. Unfortunately in June last year the Council stopped publishing its FOI responses almost entirely.
- iv. Asked why the Council had stopped publishing them, and requested that they start again.

The Leader responded:

- i. There was no policy decision to stop publishing FOI responses. Publication had temporarily ceased because:
  - The volume of FOI requests had increased, by 35% in 2013 alone.
  - A lot of time and energy had been put into providing timely and high quality responses.
  - Effort had gone into proactively publishing information identified as being of interest to many parties.
- ii. The intention was to publish FOI responses again in future.

Mr Rogers supplementary point was to welcome the intention to publish FOI responses again in future. Other organisations such as the Police and the County Council published this information.

Dr Baigent addressed the Council and made the following points:

- i. Asked about the student accommodation planned for Mill Road and the amount of students located in Romsey in purpose built accommodation and in houses of multiple occupation (HMO's).
- ii. Queried if the Executive Councillor agreed with text in Mill Road Development Brief 2007 (P20) and Local Plan 2006 sections 7/10 and 7/50.
- i. Queried the amount of accommodation specifically allocated to students in Cambridge.
- ii. Queried the amount of accommodation specifically allocated to families in Romsey.

The Executive Councillor for Planning and Climate Change responded:

- i. Officers had provided some statistical information regarding properties occupied by single adults and all student households via Council Tax records.
- ii. The planning status was that no formal application had been lodged for the site. An application for approximately 300 student units connected to Anglia Ruskin University on the remainder of the current allocated site was expected in May/June of this year.
- iii. The site is allocated in the Cambridge Local Plan (2006) as part of the mosque site adjacent for 'mixed use housing development and community facilities'. A rider to the allocation suggests that development could include a student hostel for Anglia Ruskin University (ARU) on part of the site in lieu of affordable housing.

- iv. Relevant guidance and appraisal documents include the Mill Road Area Conservation Area Appraisal 2011 and the Mill Road Development Brief (Robert Sayle Warehouse and Co-Op site) 2007.
- v. The site forms part of proposal site R21 for mixed use residential and employment as part of the Cambridge Local Plan: Proposed Submission (2014) which now includes Brookfields Hospital and excludes the mosque site.
- vi. In short, the Cambridge Local Plan 2014 proposed submission does not contemplate student housing on the site.
- vii. Any application would be determined in accordance with the policies in force at the time when the decision was being made and any other material considerations. IE the amount of weight given to 2006 and 2014 Local Plans depends on the date of application submissions.
- viii. Under existing planning policy, accommodation on site was for ARU students only, in lieu of affordable housing. This criteria has been changed in the 2014 Local Plan.
- ix. There were no criteria in planning policy to stop student accommodation coming forward; applications would be judged on their merits.

Dr Baigent made the following supplementary points:

- i. There was a lot of student accommodation on the Varsity House site.
- ii. There was a need to monitor and enforce the restriction on student accommodation, to stop general housing becoming student accommodation by becoming housing in multiple occupation.

The Executive Councillor for Planning and Climate Change undertook to respond to any specific questions that Dr Baigent wished to raise after the meeting.

Ms Sinnott addressed the Council and made the following points:

- i. The Shadow Home Minister warned that action to address domestic violence had reduced over the last 3 years.
- ii. Domestic violence was a national scandal.
- iii. 481 cases were reported in Cambridge 2013.
- iv. It is suggested that only 1 in 5 cases are reported, of which only 30% are investigated by the Police.
- v. Domestic abuse is a civic concern as it impacts on many people and costs the tax payer money.
- vi. Domestic violence has been trivialised and should be better reported.

- vii. Queried why the Cambridge Community Safety Partnership (CCSP) had not:
  - Made domestic violence a priority for action.
  - Complied with the County Group's requests on actions to take.
- viii. Took issue with the way CCSP:
  - Responded to Ms Sinnott's efforts to raise the profile of domestic abuse.
  - Tried to address domestic violence.

The Leader responded:

- i. Domestic abuse is a serious matter.
- ii. Observed that whilst the emphasis was on encouraging the reporting of domestic abuse (based on concern at general under reporting), caution should be applied to interpreting increases in incidents.
- iii. CCSP had funded projects to support domestic abuse victims since 2007.
- iv. A strategy was in place at county level to address domestic abuse and CCSP subscribed to it. At city level it was appropriate to adopt it as an 'operational' priority which is what it had done. Its only 'strategic' priority was to explore the impact of mental health on crime; 'strategic' because the aim was to formulate a new strategy in relation to it.
- v. Referred to the HM Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) report raising concern that Cambridgeshire Constabulary were not adequately supporting domestic abuse victims. The Leader would raise this point with the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Ms Sinnott made the following supplementary points:

- i. The public profile of domestic violence needed to be raised ie greater awareness.
- ii. CCSP actions were not effective in tackling domestic violence.
- iii. Domestic abuse should not be 'played off' against mental health.
- iv. CCSP included a Police representative, who should be aware of concerns that Cambridgeshire Constabulary were not adequately supporting domestic abuse victims.
- v. The increase in Cambridge domestic abuse figures was due to an increase in the number of incidents.

The Leader responded:

- i. CCSP responded to different criminal activities in different ways and despite the gravity of domestic abuse, it was not the only crime type to which the CCSP needed to respond.
- ii. Undertook to respond to any specific questions that Ms Sinnott wished to raise after the meeting.

### **Re-ordering of the agenda**

As colleagues from South Cambridgeshire District Council had expressed an interest in hearing the discussion on Agenda Item 4a the Mayor explained that he would use his discretion, under paragraph 4.2.1 of the Council Procedure Rules, to alter the order of the agenda at the appropriate time.

However, for the ease of the reader the minutes will follow the order of the printed agenda.

### **14/18/CNL To consider the recommendations of the Executive for Adoption**

#### **Greater Cambridge City Deal - Government Offer (The Leader)**

**Resolved** (unanimously) to:

- i. Agree the principles of the Greater Cambridge City Deal as summarised in paragraphs 3.6 – 3.22 of the officer's report.

### **14/19/CNL To consider the recommendations of Committees for Adoption**

#### **Constitution - Recording Votes on Budget Decisions**

**Resolved** (unanimously) to:

- i. Agree to the changes to Part 4A of the Constitution set out in the Council agenda.

## Review of Standards Regime

**Resolved** (unanimously) to:

- i. Amend the Code of Conduct by incorporating the seven principles of public life set out in section 3 of the officer's report and the additional changes set out in the Council agenda.

### **14/20/CNL To deal with Oral Questions**

#### **1. Councillor Rosenstiel to the Executive Councillor for Public Places**

**Can the Executive Councillor update the Council about the new lights on Parker's Piece?**

The Executive Councillor for Public Places responded that:

- i. The intention was to switch the lights on as soon as possible once the power supply has been connected.
- ii. She would ensure that the new lighting is installed as soon as possible.

#### **2. Councillor Moghadas to the Executive Councillor for Housing**

**Does the Council have a record of how many residential homes in Cambridge are occupied by students, single persons and families for Romsey ward, and other Cambridge wards, to help effectively plan future community need and development?**

The Executive Councillor for Housing responded that:

- i. The Council Tax database provides information related to properties occupied by single adults and all student households.
- ii. Information relating to families would not be included in the database.
- iii. There were a total of 3870 properties in Romsey ward.
- iv. 8.5% of these are occupied by students. This is compared to 23.74% in Market and 0.85% in Cherry Hinton.
- v. There were a total of 1081 properties with single person discount in Romsey ward.
- i. Many properties that attract a single person discount may have additional occupants that are disregarded for Council Tax purposes.

Figures reflected the number of claimants, not the number of occupants as a single adult claimant could share a house with others who were not eg children and students.

- vi. Additional information can be found via 2011 Census data.
- vii. Agreed to forward full data summary to Councillors.

### **3. Councillor Pitt to the Mayor**

#### **What is proposed to congratulate Cambridge United FC about their spectacular FA Trophy win?**

The Mayor responded that:

- i. Discussions had been held with officials at Cambridge United Football Club with regard to the best way to recognise the Club's FA Trophy win.
- ii. Understandably, the Club, over the coming weeks, wished to focus their efforts on reaching the play-offs with a view to gaining promotion to the Football League. Their preference was to delay their FA Trophy celebrations until towards the end of May.
- iii. Cambridge United was planning a series of end of season events at the R Costings Stadium over the weekend of 24/25 May. A civic event would be held at the Club on Saturday 24 May when it was hoped there would be a double celebration.
- iv. The Mayor had written, on behalf of the City Council, to the Chairman of Cambridge United Football Club to congratulate them on winning the FA Trophy.

### **4. Councillor Bird to the Executive Councillor for Housing**

#### **How many Tenants are claiming the Discretionary Housing Payments and how many tenants are finding it hard to pay their rent because of the bedroom tax**

The Executive Councillor for Housing responded that:

- i. 720 awards of Discretionary Housing Payment had been made in 2013/14, with 475 of these for claimants affected by the removal of the spare room subsidy.



- ii. This covered all social sector tenants, both registered social landlords and City Homes tenants. A claimant may have more than one award within a financial year, due to changes in their circumstances.
- iii. With regard to those finding it hard to pay their rent, the Council did not have any information for registered social landlords. For City Homes tenants, as at the end of December, approximately 20% of the 450 tenants affected had arrears.

## **5. Councillor Dryden to the Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources**

### **What action is being taken against unauthorised punt operations at Garret Hostel Lane Bridge, including their apparent dumping of rubbish?**

The Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources responded that:

- i. Whilst this issue cuts across Executive Councillor portfolios the lead officer was the Head of Property Services, hence the Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources was answering.
- ii. Acknowledged that the issue had dragged on for too long.
- iii. The City Council was working closely with the Cam Conservators the County Council and the Police to find a long term, legally binding solution.
- iv. Imposing sanctions against the punt touts was difficult as they were not registered by the Cam Conservators. A confidential briefing note on pending legal actions would be circulated to Councillors after Council.
- v. A number of punt touts had been prosecuted.
- vi. The slipway ownership issue had now been resolved.
- vii. Bins would be provided and people who dumped rubbish would be prosecuted.

## **6. Councillor Herbert to the Leader**

### **Are the Liberal Democrats considering abolishing the New Home Bonus?**

The Leader responded that:

- i. There was no formal opposition to the scheme from the Liberal Democrats.
- ii. According to recent press reports it was the Labour Party that was opposed to the New Homes Bonus.

## **7. Councillor Kightley to the Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services**

**The Executive Councillor has hinted a couple of times about a Keep Britain Tidy project relating to dog fouling. Could she explain what has been happening?**

The Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services responded that:

- i. During January and February the Council, in partnership with Keep Britain Tidy (KBT), took part in a social experiment to tackle dog fouling.
- ii. Based on KBT's research it had been identified that dog fouling tends to occur more at night time and during winter, and it was believed that some dog owners act irresponsibly when they think they aren't being watched.
- iii. The theory that people behave better when they think they are being watched was the basis of the experiment, and to test this, posters with 'watching eyes' that were visible after dark were positioned in areas where dog fouling had been identified as a problem.
- iv. Eight different problematic locations where dog fouling regularly occurred were selected from across the whole of the district.
- v. Areas had been selected in Arbury, Kings Hedges, Queen Edith's and Trumpington where there had been a history of dog fouling problems.
- vi. After a period of monitoring to establish the baseline of fouling in the area, a number of different posters with glow in the dark watching eyes were displayed. KBT's theory was that the dog fouling problem would be displaced to a nearby area when people believed they were being watched.
- vii. An appropriate displacement location was also monitored near to the target area to identify if the theory was correct. Monitoring was carried out over a seven week period to understand the effect the posters had on dog fouling in the area.
- viii. Following the conclusion of the experiment there was a decrease in dog fouling in 6 of the 8 areas ranging from a 4% to 71% decrease over the 7 week period.
- ix. The sites were monitored for a further 7 weeks and the eye posters have been left in place at the request of residents.

## **8. Councillor Todd-Jones to the Executive Councillor for Housing**

**Does she agree with the person who said "The bedroom tax is tough, I am not a fan of it, I think it should just go, and it should go quickly?"**

The Executive Councillor for Housing responded:

- i. She felt "Bedroom Tax" criteria did not distinguish between spare bedrooms that were a luxury, and those that were necessary. As such, it seemed unfair – all disabled people should have been excluded.
- ii. Future arrangements were unclear.

## **9. Councillor Price to the Executive Councillor for Housing**

**Does she accept the conclusions of the BBC's latest research of 331 social housing providers across England, Scotland and Wales that the bedroom tax has caused too much misery to too many people?**

The Executive Councillor for Housing responded that:

- i. Acknowledged that the bedroom tax had caused misery to many people.
- ii. However not all of the misery has been caused by the bedroom tax itself, but by incorrect management of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP).
- iii. Many District Council's had not given DHP where maybe they could have done, and this had added to the misery.
- iv. Many of the examples in the media were likely to have received discretionary payments if the residents had lived in Cambridge.

The following Oral Questions were also tabled, but owing to the expiry of the period of time permitted, were not covered during the meeting:

## **10. Councillor Johnson to the Executive Councillor for Planning and Climate Change**

**Will the Executive Councillor for Planning and Climate Change give a clear commitment that a site for the essential and proposed new secondary school for Abbey and the surrounding area will be delivered despite there being no reference to it in either Cambridge City or South Cambridgeshire District Council's Local Plans?**

**11. Councillor Tunncliffe to the Executive Councillor for Planning and Climate Change**

**Is the Executive Councillor able to report any progress on his negotiations with the County Council about the re-establishment of the Area Joint Committee to cover transport matters?**

**12. Councillor Owers to the Leader**

**What action is the Leader of the Council taking to address the massive underspend in the council's training, seminar and conference budgets?**

**13. Councillor McPherson to the Leader**

**Will the joint CCTV service with Huntingdonshire deliver at least the same quality of service to the police that enabled them to respond to local situations as rapidly and targeted as the Cambridge City Council's award winning CCTV team have enabled them to do over many years?**

**14. Councillor Saunders to the Executive Councillor for Public Places**

**Could the Executive Councillor for Public Places please update Council on the status of the recent consultation regarding Coldham's Common?**

**15. Councillor Herbert to the Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services**

**Can she confirm that the Council will be submitting an in house tender with its staff for the building cleaning contract?**

**14/21/CNL To consider the following Notices of Motion, notice of which has been given by:**

**14/21a/CNL Motion A**

Councillor Price proposed and Councillor Johnson seconded the following motion:

“This Council is concerned by the warning in March 2014 by the Citizens Advice Bureau that the lack of an effective welfare safety net for those in crisis means that people who need emergency help are facing a grim choice between a payday loan, a food bank or a loan shark.

It notes:

- i. That a primary cause was the decision of the coalition government to scrap Crisis Loans replacing them with the far less well funded Local Assistance Scheme from April 2013, which in Cambridgeshire is the Cambridgeshire Local Assistance Scheme managed by the County Council.
- ii. The 'Nowhere to Turn' report from the Children's Society which expressed concern that the tight criteria for many such schemes, including Cambridgeshire, would mean that they were inaccessible to those in dire straits.
- iii. That in Cambridgeshire the scheme, which was set up following consultation with partners including the City Council, requires on line applications by referral agents including the City Council, a decision time of up to ten days, a maximum of one claim a year and no cash crisis loan.
- iv. That the coalition government has now decided to scrap the funding for local welfare assistance schemes altogether from April 2015.

The Council therefore asks the Director of Customer and Community Services to bring a report to the October meeting of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee on:

- i. The operation of the scheme in the City, including the number of referrals by the City Council since April 2013 and comparison with emergency crisis loans in 2011-12 and 2012-13.

- ii. The views of key partners such as Cambridgeshire Citizens Advice Bureau, The City food banks, the Credit Unions and frontline City Council staff in Housing and other departments on the impact of the loss of the scheme on those at crisis point in the City
- iii. Options, including working in partnership with others, for mitigating the impact of the loss of this welfare safety net.”

Councillor Bick proposed and Councillor Smith seconded the following amendment:

Delete all after paragraph 1 and insert:

“Council calls on the County Council to initiate an urgent scrutiny exercise on the impact of the replacement of the Department of Work and Pensions’ Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans schemes by Cambridgeshire’s Local Assistance Scheme last April, in particular

- i. Examining changes in take-up, and the effectiveness of the scheme criteria and delivery mechanisms in targeting need, especially taking account of the working poor and those resident in the county for less than a year;
- ii. Adequacy of budgetary provision for 2014-15 based on comparison with 2013-14 when the scheme was not fully established.
- iii. Plans for the scheme after the expiry of the initial 2 years of continued DWP funding.
- iv. Involving the 5 district/city councils and consulting key partners such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, Food Banks and Credit Unions.”

On a show of hands the amendment was carried unanimously.

Councillor Price proposed and Councillor Pitt seconded the following amendment:

Add at the end:

“The Council also asks the Director of Customer and Community Services to bring a report to the October meeting of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee.”

On a show of hands the amendment was carried unanimously.

**Resolved** (unanimously) that:

This Council is concerned by the warning in March 2014 by the Citizens Advice Bureau that the lack of an effective welfare safety net for those in crisis means that people who need emergency help are facing a grim choice between a payday loan, a food bank or a loan shark.

Council calls on the County Council to initiate an urgent scrutiny exercise on the impact of the replacement of the Department of Work and Pensions' Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans schemes by Cambridgeshire's Local Assistance Scheme last April, in particular

- i. Examining changes in take-up, and the effectiveness of the scheme criteria and delivery mechanisms in targeting need, especially taking account of the working poor and those resident in the county for less than a year;
- ii. Adequacy of budgetary provision for 2014-15 based on comparison with 2013-14 when the scheme was not fully established
- iii. Plans for the scheme after the expiry of the initial 2 years of continued DWP funding
- iv. Involving the 5 district/city councils and consulting key partners such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, Food Banks and Credit Unions

The Council also asks the Director of Customer and Community Services to bring a report to the October meeting of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee.

**14/21b/CNL Motion B**

Councillor Owers proposed and Councillor Roberts seconded the following motion:

“This Council notes

- i. That the private rented sector plays an increasingly crucial role in providing for the housing needs of Cambridge residents, particularly students and young people, but also families.
- ii. That rents in this sector in Cambridge are high and ever-increasing, going up by 8% in 2013, which means that rent costs are eating up an increasing percentage of the income of private tenants.
- iii. That many private renters are hit by unfair management and administration charges and fees levied by lettings agencies.
- iv. That many private renters are also at risk of some lettings agencies and landlords insisting on tenants having rent guarantors, or unfairly withholding deposits.
- v. That those in receipt of Local Housing Allowance or Housing Benefit find many landlords and letting agencies increasingly reluctant to accept them as tenants.

This Council welcomes the setting up of Town Hall Lettings, a social lettings agency which helps homeless individuals and families get a private sector tenancy by taking away some of the risks that stop landlords renting to them.

However, this Council also recognises that, welcome as this is, it will not do anything to help the many individuals and families who find themselves hit by high rents and the problematic practices of letting agents, but who are not homeless. This Council accepts that this intermediate group, who are not poor enough to get help from Town Hall Lettings but not wealthy enough to be secure in the Cambridge housing market, need help too.

This Council therefore resolves to request a report to be brought to Community Services Scrutiny Committee to examine the possibility of the remit of Town Hall Lettings being expanded in future to help a wider range of renters, or



another Social Lettings Agency being set up, either by this Council alone or in partnership with other councils in Cambridgeshire, to help this 'intermediate' group of renters within the private sector."

Councillor Smart proposed and Councillor Blackhurst seconded the following amendment:

Add at the end:

"The Council also resolves that work already being done to consider the composition, needs and aspirations of those in the intermediate housing market, should be summarised into a report to Community Services Scrutiny Committee along with options to address their situation, taking into account the opportunities opened up by the City Deal."

On a show of hands the amendment was carried by 37 votes to 0.

**Resolved** (unanimously) that:

This Council notes

- i. That the private rented sector plays an increasingly crucial role in providing for the housing needs of Cambridge residents, particularly students and young people, but also families.
- ii. That rents in this sector in Cambridge are high and ever-increasing, going up by 8% in 2013, which means that rent costs are eating up an increasing percentage of the income of private tenants.
- iii. That many private renters are hit by unfair management and administration charges and fees levied by lettings agencies.
- iv. That many private renters are also at risk of some lettings agencies and landlords insisting on tenants having rent guarantors, or unfairly withholding deposits.
- v. That those in receipt of Local Housing Allowance or Housing Benefit find many landlords and letting agencies increasingly reluctant to accept them as tenants.

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This Council therefore resolves to request a report to be brought to Community Services Scrutiny Committee to examine the possibility of the remit of Town Hall Lettings being expanded in future to help a wider range of renters, or another Social Lettings Agency being set up, either by this council alone or in partnership with other councils in Cambridgeshire, to help this 'intermediate' group of renters within the private sector.

The Council also resolves that work already being done to consider the composition, needs and aspirations of those in the intermediate housing market, should be summarised into a report to Community Services Scrutiny Committee along with options to address their situation, taking into account the opportunities opened up by the City Deal.

### **14/22/CNL Written Questions**

There were no written questions.

### **14/23/CNL Special Urgency Decisions**

#### Lion Yard Toilet Refurbishment

Noted.

#### Tour De France, Cambridge 2014

Noted.

The meeting ended at 10.15 pm

**CHAIR**

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