

## **CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL ANNUAL STATEMENT 2014**

### **BUILDING ‘ONE CAMBRIDGE – FAIR FOR ALL’**

The Annual Statement translates Labour’s 2014 manifesto into additional Council objectives and delivery for the coming year and beyond. It also amends Portfolio Plans accordingly.

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## **1. Our Vision for Cambridge**

The Council has a clear vision to lead a united city, ‘One Cambridge -Fair for All’, in which economic dynamism and prosperity are combined with social justice and equality. It is a vision we will share and develop, working with our citizens and partner organisations.

### **‘One Cambridge – Fair for All’**

- A city which believes that the clearest measure of progress is the dignity and well-being of its least well-off residents, which prioritises tackling poverty and social exclusion, recognising that greater social and economic equality are the most important preconditions for the city’s success.
- An international city which celebrates its diversity and actively tackles discrimination on gender, race, nationality, ethnic background, religion, age, disability, gender identity, and sexual orientation.
- A city in which all citizens feel that they are listened to and have the opportunity to influence public decision making, and which values, supports and responds to individual and community initiatives.
- A city where all citizens and organisations appreciate their duties as well as their rights, where people are free to enjoy themselves but also show consideration for others, and where the community works together to reduce harm and nuisance including by education and, where needed, robust enforcement of the law.
- A city where ‘town’ and ‘gown’ combine, and where mutual understanding and partnerships are developed through joint working, community initiatives and volunteering.

### **Cambridge - a great place to live, learn and work**

- A city which strives to ensure that all local households can secure a suitable, affordable local home, close to jobs and neighbourhood facilities.
- A city which draws inspiration from its unique qualities and environment and its iconic historic centre, and retains its sense of place across the city through positive planning, generous urban open spaces and well-designed buildings, and by providing quality council services.
- An entrepreneurial city with a thriving local economy, in which businesses are assisted to build on their global and national pre-eminence in learning, discovery and production, and develop a full range of local employment and skills development, while also recognising and delivering on their social responsibilities.
- A city where getting around is primarily by public transport, bike and on foot.

### **Cambridge - caring for the planet**

- A city that takes robust action to tackle the local and global threat of Climate Change, both internally and in partnership with local organisations and residents, and to minimise its environmental impact by cutting carbon, waste and pollution.

## 2. Introduction

‘It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.’

*Charles Dickens, ‘A Tale of Two Cities’*

Cambridge’s story is a tale of two cities.

For those who have a well-paid job, own their own home, and live in a prosperous and pleasant part of Cambridge, it is the best of times. Cambridge’s population is one of the best educated and most highly skilled in the country. This underpins its status as a leading centre of science and innovation. Many sectors of the local economy are growing fast and unemployment is relatively low.

However, there is another story. House prices and rents are the highest of any city in the UK outside London. Many of those who work in the city do not earn enough to live here comfortably, or indeed at all. Those who do manage to find somewhere to live often find themselves at the mercy of letting-agents, insecure tenancies and extortionate rents. Cambridge has recently suffered the biggest drop in real wages of any city in the country. Much of King’s Hedges and Abbey, and parts of Arbury and East Chesterton, register among the most deprived areas in Cambridgeshire, and suffer higher levels of environmental degradation and anti-social behaviour than the rest of the city. Life expectancy is 8.7 years lower for men and 10.5 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Cambridge compared to the least deprived areas. Some 2,500 people annually are forced to resort to using Cambridge’s food bank. The policies of the current Coalition Government have exacerbated these problems. For some of our residents, it is the worst of times.

In short, although Cambridge is in many ways a success story, it is not equally so for all. Many feel that they are missing out on the opportunities and wealth that others take for granted. The Council understands that many in this city are facing huge challenges, and the Council needs to take a proactive role in sharing our prosperity more fairly. The overriding priority of the next year of council business will be to make a start on tackling the inequality of two-tier Cambridge. The council’s vision is of ‘One Cambridge – Fair For All.’

This will be in the context of harsh government-imposed economic austerity and difficult financial choices. This council will take the necessary transformational measures – including in terms of service reviews, shared services, and minimising internal costs and bureaucracy – in order to fund our ambitions while at the same time meeting the necessary savings targets. In order to combine financial prudence with socialist ambition, the council will marshal underused earmarked reserves, target existing underspends, adopt a more ambitious approach to commercial property investment, and use a more imaginative treasury management strategy.

In order to share prosperity better, we also have to support the continued sustainable economic development of the city. We will work with business interests, the Universities and other partners in order to maximise growth, encourage socially responsible businesses, and ensure that expansion is supported by the requisite infrastructure, particularly in terms of housing and transport provision. Our aim is to ensure that Cambridge gets the benefits of growth while working to ensure that we do not compromise our quality of life or social solidarity in the process.

Many of the wider problems require a long-term, strategic approach. Partnerships with other organisations, such as South Cambridgeshire District Council, the County Council, the Local Enterprise Partnership, and the Cambridge Business Improvement District will be crucial to such an approach, as will the successful implementation of the Local Plan and Greater Cambridge City Deal. In order to respond to the key challenges Cambridge faces, all of us must work together, with a particular focus on the provision of affordable housing.

The first year will only be the start of this strategy. The council will be realistic about is achievable in the short term while also beginning to develop a vision of the medium-term steps that will need to be taken to ensure that Cambridge remains a city for all, not just for a fortunate elite.

### **3. Protecting Essential Services**

Cambridge City Council is facing a tough economic climate. Cambridge City Council's central government grant has been slashed by 13% between 2013/14 and 2014/15, and a similar cut is likely next year. In this context, the Council will be pragmatic, and, in order to protect key services, will attempt to squeeze as much value as possible out of every pound. We will do that with the intention of protecting those crucial services that local residents rely on. Our foremost priority will be to safeguard initiatives that are there to help those who are struggling the most.

#### *In 2014/15, the Council will:*

- **Reverse the cut to the pest control service.** It is a crucial public service that ensures that low-income families can treat rat and bed-bug infestations for free. Cutting it is a false economy that puts public health at risk.
- **Protect community development grants** to crucial organisations that help those who are really struggling, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, Centre 33 and the Women's Aid Refuge.
- **Refine criteria on all discretionary grants and funding support to ensure that it prioritises the most disadvantaged.** We do not want to reduce any grants where they fund activities or projects that have a positive impact on the community, but grants to organisations directly helping those struggling with the essentials must take priority.
- **Prioritise the crucial services that the public values most**, especially street-cleaning, waste collection and recycling, public realm enforcement, benefit and welfare advice, community development and anti-poverty policies, private and council housing, and community safety.
- **Begin a social audit of all Council spending** to ensure that we direct scarce resources to the policies and services which do most to help families and individuals who are struggling economically, and the most vulnerable.

### **4. Sharing the City's Prosperity and making Cambridge a Living Wage City**

The Council's core priority will be to share Cambridge's prosperity in order to ensure that the benefits of growth are enjoyed by all, including those who clean and staff Cambridge's shops, offices and restaurants, those who work in low-paid jobs at Addenbrookes or in the colleges, and those young workers and professionals starting out in life who are struggling

with high rents. That is why we propose to re-direct £500k from the 'Keep Cambridge Moving Fund' to set up a 'Sharing Prosperity Fund', which will underpin the funding for our anti-poverty strategy.

The Council will continue to implement 'Living Wage' commitments first proposed at Council by the now majority party in their 2012 Annual Statement, that the Council will:

- Tackle low pay in the city by making the council a certified 'Living Wage' employer, with the aim of also applying this to our main contractors
- Consult with other Cambridge public sector or public funded organisations to persuade them where possible to offer a 'Living Wage'.  
(<http://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/documents/s11902/Labour%20-%20Annual%20Statement.pdf>.)

*In 2014/15, the Council will:*

- **Expand work towards the 'Living Wage' becoming a reality in the wider Cambridge economy**, especially in the education, retail and catering sectors. The Council will employ a part-time officer who can assist the Cambridge Living Wage Campaign in its research and advocacy. (In the medium term, we will also look at introducing a local 'Living Wage Kitemark' scheme to give accreditation to local businesses that pay the living wage.)
- **Expand its Apprenticeship Programme** – Although unemployment is low in Cambridge, in certain areas youth unemployment in particular is still an issue. We will work in conjunction with Cambridge Regional College to open up as many apprenticeship opportunities in the Council as possible, with a target of 20 by year three, focussed on young people from poorer parts of the city.
- **Assist Credit Unions** – Those who struggle with living costs in Cambridge often have to resort to pay-day loan companies who charge extortionate interest rates. Building on a previous motion to council, the Council will work with Cambridge credit unions to ensure that residents are helped to use credit unions, democratic organisations run to provide affordable credit to those in need. We will look into using European or other funds to ensure that the credit unions get a city centre shop-front, are better integrated into services and advice offered by our own welfare team and the Citizens' Advice Bureau, and are given all other necessary support.
- **Promote Energy-Saving Schemes** – The County Council's Collective Energy Switching scheme will seek to use the collective bargaining power of Cambridgeshire residents to negotiate cheaper energy prices for residents. The more who take it up, the more it will save. We will significantly bolster promotion by paying for greater publicity and marketing in the city. We will also provide an extra project budget for the private sector energy officer aimed at enhancing information, publicity and uptake of existing/new energy efficiency and other insulation schemes, such as the Green Deal and the Energy Companies Obligation, which will work in conjunction with the newly announced county-wide funding.
- **Help Households with Water Bills** - There are many households in Cambridge still paying over-the-odds for their water based on rateable values, where no meter has been fitted. Households could also save on their bills from other economy measures, which are often offered by water companies but rarely taken up. The Council will introduce a scheme to assist residents review their water bill and establish if they would benefit from changing to a meter, moving to the assessed charge basis, or taking up other water

efficiency schemes, together with information and help to make any changes identified. It will focus on areas of the city where people are having a tough time paying the bills.

- **Set up a Chesterton Co-ordinator** – Sharing prosperity is also includes helping small and independent traders. Some areas of the City with a lot of shops and other businesses are not covered by the BID area, but also need help in the current climate – an obvious example being Chesterton. The Council will fund a two-year trial post for a part-time small business/community group/trader co-ordinator post on the model of the current successful Mill Road Co-ordinator, but for shops and businesses, especially independent ones, in the Chesterton area. The co-ordinator will work with local traders and community groups to identify and capitalise on opportunities and bid for extra funds for the area.

In the medium term, we will also:

- **Set up an official Cambridge Community Fair** - Cambridge has a rich civil society, full of volunteer organisations. Cambridge also has many public-minded citizens, including thousands of students, who want an opportunity to get involved in the community and help out those less fortunate than them. A community fair, facilitated by the Council using existing resources, will give voluntary and charitable organisations an opportunity to recruit like-minded citizens.
- **Begin negotiations with Cambridge University and the colleges to open up sports facilities and playing fields** – There are a wide range of such facilities that are under-used by residents, and should be open, when possible, to all. We will start to negotiate with Cambridge University and the colleges with a view to opening up access.
- **Improve welfare advice** – We will review and, where possible, enhance the provision of advice services provided by the Council's own staff, the Citizens Advice Bureau, and other agencies, to ensure that in the face of the Government's cuts in benefits, the prevalence of low pay, and the high cost of living in Cambridge, our residents can easily access the best advice possible.

## 5. Tackling the Housing Crisis

Cambridge faces a housing crisis. This crisis will not be resolved by the new Local Plan alone. The Council will develop further initiatives to build new homes, in particular more new affordable homes. The Council also needs to do more to look after existing council tenants, who have been hit by years of high rent rises and a lack of investment in crucial areas, such as fencing and housing estate environmental improvements.

The housing crisis also manifests itself in terms of a dysfunctional private market. House prices and rents are the highest in the country, and some letting agents profiteer, charging people unnecessary and exploitative hidden fees. Tenancies are often very insecure and short-term.

### **Building for the Future**

The Council's overall housing objectives will be to:

- **Maximise new council and affordable house building** – Building new council properties and maximising the supply of social and affordable housing overall is one of our top priorities. We will thoroughly investigate all potential Council-owned housing development sites. For example, we will look carefully at housing-owned garage sites and underused land which can appropriately be built on and conduct

proper feasibility studies to establish the suitability of such sites for further council housing. We will also consider the possibility of setting up a new Council 'housing development company' to lead in delivering quality, new social housing for Cambridge residents, both social rented and intermediate, with the Council continuing as the social landlord when new housing is delivered.

- **Expand partnerships to deliver and fund a greater supply of social housing**  
Key partners, including within the context of the City Deal framework, will be South Cambridgeshire District Council, developers who want to partner with the Council as their affordable housing provider, Housing Associations, and other stakeholders, including housing co-operatives. The heart of this partnership will be to investigate the possibility of forming a joint venture, and add expertise in development, planning and project delivery. Any projects with partners will address:
  - The potential to jointly develop land with ready access to the city.
  - A fair allocations policy, including the 'choice' element for tenants.
  - Cost effective delivery, and quality housing management arrangements.
  - Limiting, where possible, social rent levels to 60% or less of market level.
  - Funding options, including external sources.
- **In redeveloping current social housing, 'demolish and rebuild' existing sites only as a last resort.** In such cases, we will also ensure that existing council tenants (and leaseholders) are properly consulted and genuinely given the opportunity to return if they wish to. Demolition schemes currently under consideration that the Council is not contractually committed to – that is, the unconfirmed proposals for new projects on Lichfield Road and Campkin Road - will not proceed.
- **Not accept commuted sums in lieu of affordable house-building in new private sector housing developments of 10 or more dwellings,** and commit to a target of at least 40% affordable housing in new developments in Cambridge, except where undeliverable, with a determination to obtain 75% of these for affordable rents.

### **Improving how the Council manages its housing**

#### *In 2014/15 the Council will:*

- **Review the ring-fenced housing budget** (the Housing Revenue Account or HRA) to ensure all funds are effectively allocated and identify if there is an opportunity for a lower rate of rent increase in the 2015 year than the government formula recommends, as we proposed in 2014.
- **Adopt a target of ensuring that Council-owned housing land remains in Council ownership for social rented homes** – The Council will not do future deals with developers that maximise private profit at the expense of our residents.
- **Double the fencing repairs budget to £200,000 per year,** making a start on tackling the estimated £1million backlog of works, giving people pride in where they live.
- **Begin a thorough review of the Council's external capital spend on homes and estates, investing funds to set up a new City Homes Improvement Programme to focus on fixing the external environment,** such as broken footpaths, repainting doors, refitting communal stairwells, and reallocate underspent budgets to best effect.
- **Review the 'small repairs service'** to investigate the policy of expanding the service, possibly opening a new revenue stream while keeping the service free for those on low-incomes.

- **Increase the number of repair apprentices**, giving employment to local young people and giving them skills that will benefit them and the Council, and encourage our contractors to do the same.
- **Ensure no City Homes tenant will be evicted solely because of the ‘bedroom tax’**, and review relevant Council properties to see if it is possible in some cases to alter the designation of bedrooms to mitigate the impact of the policy.
- **Commit to delivering a better way of decision making and service provision**, by creating a strong, single Housing Committee, and integrating housing delivery within the Council. The new arrangement will carry over the rights of elected tenant representatives on Council stock management decisions.

### **Building a Fair Private Rental Sector**

*In 2014/15 the Council will begin work to:*

- **Review the Council’s policies towards the regulation of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)**, with a view to recognising the crucial role HMOs provide in allowing people to afford to live in the city and balancing this with the need to improve the quality and safety of HMOs.
- **Implement the policies in respect to HMOs once the new Local Plan is adopted**, which includes the power to refuse any planning application for new HMOs unless they have in place a proper management plan to monitor and minimise anti-social behaviour and the impact on local residents.
- **Enhance the Landlord Accreditation scheme**, with targets set for each property’s safety and minimum standards put in place, ensuring tenants can live in safe and high quality accommodation.
- **Investigate the possibility of forming a social lettings agency**, to serve the intermediate market (those struggling with rents but not at risk of homelessness) with the intention of increasing and improving the choice of private rented accommodation in the city for those in housing need. We will also support existing and new tenants in tackling the small minority of rogue landlords involved in problems such as unjust registration fees and unfair deposit arrangements.

### **Supporting the Homeless**

In the medium term, the Council will:

- **Review Council policies on tackling homelessness**, focussing on prevention, mitigating its impact on the individual and families, and enabling reintegration back into permanent and secure housing.
- Work with the County Council with the aim of boosting the supply of short-term lodging places available within the city and surrounding area for young homeless people.
- Improve and strengthen the Council’s partnership with the voluntary sector, neighbouring councils, and public authorities who work in homelessness outreach and support.
- **Review the Emergency Cold Weather Protocol**, which gives shelter to rough sleepers in freezing temperatures. This review will investigate whether to widen the definition and terms of the protocol to cover other severe weather conditions.
- **Review and reform, where necessary, the Council’s Housing Options and Advice Service** with the aim of improving the level of support and assistance to those at

threat of homelessness or in need of emergency housing. In addition we will accelerate preparations for the introduction of Universal Credit, enabling the Council to be in a position to effectively deliver support for those private sector tenants negatively impacted by it.

- Improve the dialogue and partnership working with private sector landlords and housing associations, by **re-launching the City Council's Landlord Forum**. This will aid the City Council's preparations for Universal Credit and its impact on tenants in the private sector, prevent eviction, and help with the aim of reintegrating as many long-term homeless back into secure and permanent accommodation as possible.

## 6. Safety and Quality of Life

Cambridge is a beautiful, historic city, a wonderful place to live. However, some find that they cannot enjoy it as much as they would like. Congestion often brings gridlock, which will need to be addressed by greater emphasis on public transport, cycling and walking. The elderly and disabled struggle to get around, particularly in the city centre, due to poor pavements, obstructions such as advertising boards, and 'pavement-grabbing' by businesses.

In some areas, residents feel ill-at-ease or unsafe, especially due to the behaviour of some street drinkers, who can be threatening. The Council recognises the need to balance an educative and caring approach with 'tough love' and stronger action on the side of local residents who have to live with the problem.

### Making Cambridge Safer

*In 2014/15 the Council will work to:*

- **Introduce targeted Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs)** in areas where problem drinking and the behaviour of street drinkers is proving to be a public nuisance, subject to consultation. This will give police the powers to confiscate alcohol when judged necessary. We will also assess the suitability of other new legal powers available.
- **Introduce a 'Reduce the Strength' campaign.** High-strength, low-cost lagers and ciders are legal but lethal. They steadily kill street drinkers and lead to unacceptable disorder. The Council will introduce a voluntary code of conduct, on the model of that of Ipswich, which aims to persuade retailers to stop stocking high-strength beers, lagers and ciders. This will be done within existing staffing resources.
- **Work with the police to proactively use Licence Reviews** - Stopping the supply of alcohol to the already-drunk and the underaged is crucial to preventing further problems. The Council will work with the police to ensure more licence reviews occur on premises that sell irresponsibly, with a view to altering or even suspending their licences if necessary.
- **Value and defend diversity** - Cambridge is one of the most diverse, integrated and relaxed cities in Britain. However, both the Council and community have more work to do, and the Council is committed to further measures to increase equality and promote diversity. Residents and visitors need to be free to live their lives in our city whatever their race, religious beliefs or sexuality and without fear of intimidation from groups like the English Defence League. We will work to defend any sections of our communities who are threatened by organisations preaching racism or

discrimination, and work to promote mutual understanding and integration. We will also ensure our consultations reach all significant communities in Cambridge.

- **Investigate options for tackling domestic violence** - Domestic violence and abuse are horrific crimes that still largely go undetected. Building on our work to get domestic violence included as a priority in the Cambridge Community Safety Partnership's 2014-17 plan, we will review policy options available to the Council to develop further initiatives to tackle this issue. This will be with a view towards gaining 'White Ribbon' status, in line with more than 50 other UK cities seeking to address the issue. As part of this, we will continue to ensure that the Council supports the Women's Aid Refuge.
- **Review action taken against punt touts** – Punt touts can be intimidating and annoying. The Council will review current action against punt touts and strengthen it if necessary, as well as pressing Cam Conservators to take effective action.

### **Investing in Transport and Our Quality of Life**

The Council will:

- **Support transport investment via the City Deal** – The 'City Deal' will allow us, in partnership with other local authorities, to invest in infrastructure, particularly transport infrastructure, in conjunction with the County transport strategy. It is essential to shift incoming and outgoing car traffic in new growth areas to non-car alternatives given that growth, not the A14 upgrade, is likely to be the major future traffic generator that threatens the city's quality of life, if not managed properly. It will involve joint decision making with South Cambridgeshire District Council, the County Council and other partners, and we will propose to partners a single delivery plan to integrate the two Local Plans and county transport strategy. In the longer term, the Council supports a single unitary authority for Greater Cambridge. Our emphasis will be on innovative public transport solutions as well as improving cycling facilities. This will help to alleviate congestion and make the city more accessible for all. If the promised City Deal is significantly cut or delayed, we will have to examine a new strategy for filling the city's infrastructure gap.
- **Support the A14 upgrade and keep £700,000 in the Keep Cambridge Moving Fund** – The A14 upgrade needs to proceed despite years of delays by the Coalition Government. We will press for the early delivery of the upgrade by the next Government. Congestion is a big issue, and, although growth is likely to be the bigger issue with regards to traffic generation, the effect of the A14 upgrade will need to be monitored. The Council will retain a substantial amount in the fund, with the option of adding more in the future, if one-off or fixed term monies are available and the need is identified.
- **Support 20mph for residential streets** – The Council supports citywide 20mph residential street speed limits, where residents approve of them in consultation. We will need to address issues relating to the lack of implementation planning in the last two years, including our concerns that:
  - the County Council should have been asked to contribute
  - inadequate provision has been included for re-engineering some unsafe roads, and
  - a clearer police commitment is needed to enforce the new speed limits from the start.
- **Complete the City Centre Accessibility review** – Labour Councillors have been highlighting the difficulties of navigating the city centre for several years now. The Council's review will consider issues such as advertising boards and street cafes blocking pavements, poor and uneven pavements, the location and availability of disabled parking bays, and particular issues faced by some groups such as the deaf and

blind. It will require partnership working with the planning department, the County Council, the Cambridge BID, the city centre management team and local business to identify the problems and suggest or negotiate solutions. We will also look to ensure that the Council's own buildings are made fully accessible, where possible.

- **Introduce improvements for cyclists and pedestrians** – The Council looks forward to working with the County and the City Deal partners to direct new national funding towards improving cycling safety and towards strategic infrastructural projects such as the Chisholm Trail, providing it does not have an unacceptable environmental impact, and proves deliverable. We will support increasing secure cycle parking spaces in the city centre, and implement measures to increase the removal of derelict bikes. We will also prioritise additional public secure cycle parking at community facilities, pubs and other cycling destinations, looking to ensure that the County contributes, in addition to work to ensure that hosting the Tour de France has a positive impact on cycling rates in the city. In addition, we will look to give higher priority to the protection of the rights and interests of pedestrians.
- **Support Community and Council-run events** - We will continue to support a high quality and diverse range of cultural events including the Big Weekend, the Arbury and Chesterton carnivals, the Cambridge Folk Festival (which will shortly celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary), and other local community events.
- **Review community centre provision** - We have some great local community centres. However, some areas of south Cambridge don't have enough, and this will be one of our long-term priorities for capital funding. We will also continue to look for efficiencies and savings in the operation of existing community centres where they will not detrimentally impact on service.

## 7. Making Cambridge Greener and Cleaner

Parts of Cambridge are too dirty. Neglect is felt in outlying residential areas, but parts of the city centre are a disgrace. The previous administration's policy of zero public realm enforcement has meant that a small anti-social minority has been able to act with impunity. The Council believes in helping people to do the right thing, but there will always be a hard-core of people who will respond only to sanctions. There has to be a stick as well as a carrot.

We also believe that action needs to be taken on the environment. Part of this is through reducing consumption by encouraging re-use, repair and recycling, but tackling climate change through reducing carbon emissions and mitigation also needs to be at the forefront of the agenda.

*In 2014/15 the Council will:*

- **Double the Public Realm Enforcement team** – Currently, the public realm enforcement team has just three officers, which is simply inadequate. More enforcement officers are needed to conduct visible patrols, and if necessary warn, educate or fine those who drop litter, fly-tip, drop cigarette ends or fail to pick up after their dogs. The Council will double the team to six. Enforcement policy also needs to be reviewed to ensure that it is more proactive and to ensure that officers can engage robustly with those who create problems.
- **Carry out a 'Clean it Up' anti-dog fouling campaign** – In some parts of Cambridge dog mess is a real hazard, creating a danger for children and degrading the environment. The Council currently has an overstretched part-time dog warden. will

make that post full-time, and conduct an extensive publicity campaign against dog-fouling, in conjunction with our tougher enforcement approach.

- **Double the programme of ‘Community Clear Out Days’** – Many residents struggle with bulky waste disposal charges. The existing ‘Clear Out’ days, involving skips to dispose of large items and community activities to clean up areas, are successful. The Council will double the number of these days, focussing on City Homes and mixed-tenancy areas.
- **Implement a ‘Cleaner Cambridge Blitzes’ campaign** – The Council will use the City Rangers, the Rapid Response Team, the Public Realm Enforcement team and the Street Cleaning team to co-ordinate ward-based ‘blitzes’, tackling one ward every month in rotation, working within existing budgets. This will involve focussing on wards in a concentrated fashion, conducting high-visibility enforcement sweeps on littering and dog fouling, gum removal, leaf collection, graffiti removal in certain areas, deep cleans, and educational visits.
- **Tackle cigarette litter** – In some parts of Cambridge, cigarette ends are a real issue, especially outside pubs and in the city centre. The Council will work to ensure that the public realm enforcement team, working with BID ambassadors, proactively distribute portable ashtrays. The Council will also work to encourage pubs to provide ashtrays and clear up cigarette ends from outside their premises.
- **Improve maintenance and cleanliness standards in public places and parks** - At the moment, this is not good enough. Certain areas such as Jesus Green are often left in a disgraceful state due to misuse in summer. We will investigate what action to take to deal with this problem.

In the medium term, the council will:

- **Work closely with Cambridge BID, including for a cleaner City Centre** - We will seek closer links with the BID, review the demarcation of responsibilities such as with cleanliness, and look to clarify and integrate the service we offer the public, lending our support and expertise to projects to clean up the city centre.
- **Implement a review of grass verges** - Many grass verges in the city are churned up by irresponsible parking. We will review the city’s streets with grass verges, and make a systematic attempt to review how to fix the problem on a situation-by-situation basis, taking into account possible solutions and examining integration with existing sources of funding.
- **Expand Green Fingers** – Green Fingers is an important service which helps those who are too elderly, infirm or disabled to continue working on their garden to keep it up to scratch. However, it has not been open to new customers for a while. The Council will review the service to see if it can be revitalised and opened up to new customers in a low-cost or cost-neutral way through partnership working.
- **Expand the range of recyclable material in blue bins** – The contract for blue bin commingled recycling expires soon, and negotiations for a new contract are ongoing. The Council will look to ensure that the new contract expands recyclable material to include plastic bags and to broaden the range of materials at recycling centres to include items such as small electrical devices, textiles, and shoes. We will also examine the viability of a separate food waste collection.
- **Review our Climate Change Strategy** – The Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources will lead council initiatives to tackle climate change and reduce carbon emissions, and ensure these objectives are integrated into every department’s routine way of thinking. This not only makes environmental sense, but usually also saves

money by reducing bills and saving energy. We will work with Transition Cambridge, local residents, and local employers, including in the private and public sectors, to comprehensively review our strategy, with an aim of becoming more outward-facing on the issue.

## 6. Transforming the Council

The Council needs to develop ways to interact more directly with its citizens. Area committees can be a useful tool for public engagement, but they are currently dominated by planning applications, which are of very limited interest to most people.

We also appreciate that in order to maintain our levels of service and respond to the challenges that Cambridge faces, we will have to find new savings, change the way we deliver services, and be imaginative and innovative in finding new methods of delivering the same, or better, for less.

- **Consultation** – We will actively engage with social media but are aware that many residents prefer traditional methods of communication. The Council will conduct a more extensive budget consultation in our first year in order to get a better view of what residents want in the context of reduced resources, including more sophisticated methodology.
- **Improve Area Committees** – We want area committees to be focussed upon the issues that the public wants to talk about, not what we impose on them. We want to give the public forum more prominence, and focus area committees around issues of public concern, more on the model of single-issue public meetings when necessary, though also including current items such as police priorities. We will return planning to a single central committee, while keeping the scheme of delegation the same so that residents will retain their current ability to have their say on planning applications. This will allow ward councillors to be advocates for their residents rather than being stifled by the risk of predetermination. We will review the possibility of webcasting planning meetings as an option for residents to be able to more easily view them.
- **Implement short-term savings to fund the first year's agenda - Labour**  
Councillors have already identified a wide range of savings to help fund immediate policy and priority changes. They focus on back-office savings and underspends, not on changes that impact on frontline services. These include:
  - Redirecting New Homes Bonus money to the Sharing Prosperity Fund, and fund a new 'Fixed-term Project Priority Fund'.
  - Redirecting funds from the training, conferences and seminar budget that has been routinely underspent.
  - Extra commercial property income from increased investment.
  - A range of other smaller savings including as identified in Labour's 2014/15 budget amendment.
- **Organisational transformation and medium-term savings** – In order to continue to provide the best services possible with fewer resources and implement our medium-term ambitions, while meeting our savings targets in a time of austerity, we will look at new ways of delivering services, working with our quality staff team, including:
  - Sharing services with other district councils or the County (e.g. the potential for shared waste services with South Cambs, shared ICT, Legal and Property Services with them or other districts, etc.)

- Alternative Delivery Models – such as a cultural trust for running the Corn Exchange, an arms-length tourism delivery vehicle, and a new model for Bereavement Services. Non-profit and other methods of transformation will be our preferred options, rather than contracting out or privatisation.
  - Service reviews – We will continue with existing service reviews where appropriate, as well as investigating the possibility of new ones, for example on the Sports Development service.
  - Reviewing our existing resources – We will review historic underspends and treasury management, rationalise historic cost-centre budgets, scrutinise the resources in earmarked reserves and other funds, and review re-charges and overheads in the context of organisational change, to see if resources can be freed up.
  - Income generation - The Council needs to ensure that, when it is consistent with our wider social goals, we fully utilise the value of our skills and services, become more entrepreneurial, and maximise income generation provided that other objectives are also delivered. For example, we will look to increase, tastefully and pragmatically, our sponsorship and advertising opportunities across the Council.
- **Review Public Art** – There is public concern about expenditure on public art projects that are based upon an undemocratic and opaque process. The Council will review the use of Section 106 monies to fund public art projects, and ensure that the process is transparent and that the public receive value for money.
  - **Commercial property** – Commercial property – The Council needs a successful and well managed commercial property portfolio to raise the income needed to support crucial services like street-cleaning and waste disposal. The Council will make a sensible and low-risk additional investment in commercial property, funded by reviewing our treasury management strategy and examining, on a risk basis, the resources available in earmarked reserves such as the Repair and Renewal Fund. This will create a significant additional income stream for the Council.

### **Conclusion**

The Council faces some massive challenges, and it is only by working with our hardworking and talented staff that we will be able to continue to deliver the services residents need in the context of massive funding reductions.

Continuing change in the way we operate is inevitable in order to allow the Council to deliver more for less, and ensure that this never compromises our principles of public service and fairness. The Council is determined to deliver for all residents while prioritising projects and policies that will make a real difference to those who need our help the most.