

COUNCIL

16 April 2015
6.00 - 9.00 pm

Present: Councillors Pippas, Abbott, Ashton, Austin, Avery, Baigent, Benstead, Bick, Bird, Blackhurst, Blencowe, Dryden, Gawthrope, Hart, Herbert, Hipkin, Holland, Johnson, McPherson, Meftah, Moghadas, Moore, O'Reilly, Owers, Perry, Price, Ratcliffe, Reiner, Roberts, Robertson, Sarris, Sinnott, C. Smart, M. Smart, Smith, Todd-Jones, Tucker and Tunnacliffe

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

15/69/CNL To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2015

The minutes of the meetings held on 26 February 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

15/70/CNL Mayors Announcements

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Cantrill, Pitt, Sanders & Reid.

REACH FAIR

The Mayor announced 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.

CITY COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING

The Mayor confirmed that the Council's Annual Meeting would take place on Thursday 28 May. Members were asked to contact Eleanor Reader-Moore or Claire Tunnicliffe in Committee Services if they required guest tickets.

DINNER AT ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

Councillors were advised that the Vice-Chancellor and members of Anglia Ruskin University would be hosting a civic dinner at the University on

Thursday, 17 September; further details would be circulated in due course.

ELECTIONS

The Mayor expressed sincere appreciation to those Members who had decided not to stand at the next election on 7 May for the service they had given to the City of Cambridge

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

15/71/CNL Public Questions Time

There were no public questions.

15/72/CNL To consider the recommendations of Committees for Adoption

15/72CNLa Planning Committee 04.02.15: Planning Code of Good Practice

Resolved (unanimously)

- i. To endorse the approval of the updated Planning Code of Good Practice.
- ii. That the Code be reviewed every two years

15/72CNLb Civic Affairs_18.03.15: Members Allowance Scheme

Resolved (by 37 votes to 0)

- i. That the existing Allowances scheme be continued for 2015/2016 municipal year.
- ii. To review the allowances scheme in 2015/16, noting that a report would be submitted to the June Civic Affairs Committee seeking approval for how this will be achieved
- iii.

15/73/CNL To deal with Oral Questions**1) Councillor Perry to the Executive Councillor for Community, Arts and Recreation**

Can the Executive Councillor update Council on the launch of Cambridge Live that happened on April 1st, and inform Council on the proposed summer event programme to be organised by the cultural trust?

The Executive Councillor confirmed that the launch was successful with free performances and entertainment throughout the day. Cambridge Live staff had been working hard to ensure that it “was business as usual” for the summer programme. The Cambridge ‘Big Weekend would be taking place in July, details were soon to be released and the headlining acts remained confidential but this weekend event would be the best the one yet. Regular events such as Midsummer Fair, Jazz and Brass in the Park had also been planned.

2) Councillor Sinnott to the Leader

Given that the 2012 national election of Police & Crime Commissioners cost tax-payers £50m and given that the budget for Cambridgeshire's PCC's office is £1.2m, would Cllr Herbert join me in welcoming Labour's plan to scrap PCCs and Labour's pledge to safeguard and strengthen Neighbourhood policing?

The Leader replied that he had two major concerns regarding the changes that had been made by Central Government. Firstly there was no longer a voice from each corner of Cambridgeshire. The Police & Crime Commissioner could not as an individual represent all parts of the County. In the process the accountability of the Chief Constable had also been lost.

3) Councillor Smith to the Chair of Civic Affairs

In light of the County Council's reluctance to accept signatures from an on-line petition, will the City Council review its provisions to ensure that petition signatures can be collected online?

The Chair advised that the petition referred to did not get submitted using the County Council's own e-petition scheme but another (namely “38

degrees”) which was difficult to validate on-line who lived, worked or studied in the County.

The City Council has a different e-Petition facility available on the website which is common to many local authorities. There is guidance set out in the Council's Petition Scheme on how to use the e-petition facility and officers will always work with petitioners whilst the petition is live.

However, with the other e-petition products available, it is possible they would not be validated easily or be somehow invalid if applying the current scheme and it would be appropriate to review the scheme and submit a report to Civic Affairs Committee. In the meantime the City Council will continue to take a pragmatic approach in its interpretation of its rules on petitions and public engagement at committee meetings to help ensure people have their say on issues that matter to them.

4) Councillor Catherine Smart to the Executive Councillor for Housing

Will the Councillor indicate which repairs are classified as emergency, which urgent and which routine? What proportion of each has been dealt with within the time limits during the last six months (or the latest available data)?

The Executive Councillor responded that the classification of information is set out on the Council's website, as are highlighted below. Performance in all categories are very good and having checked we are not aware of any significant issues about failures recently.

Responsive Repairs categories.

1. Emergencies
2. Urgent repairs
3. Routine repairs

1. Emergencies: response target within 24 hours but generally same day as reported and attended within 2-3 hours:

- blocked drains in certain circumstances
- serious electrical faults
- faulty smoke alarms, if they are council-installed and you cannot turn them off

- complete power failure
- burst or leaking supply pipes
- a toilet not flushing (if this is your only toilet)
- major overflows (when water is gushing out)
- major roof leaks
- broken heating systems - we will provide temporary heating within eight hours if needed
- broken lifts.

Sometimes we can only make safe (temporary repair) and then have to come back later to finish the work, for example out-of-hours repairs or if major work/specialist parts have to be ordered.

In the event of an emergency that is life-threatening or causing major damage to property then we always aim to attend immediately and can divert labour from other works.

OVERALL PERFORMANCE APRIL 14 – MARCH 15:

Total jobs reported	3703
Out of hours	1559
Total jobs attended / completed within 24hr target	99.89

2. Urgent Repairs: response target within three working days subject to tenant access

- emergency repairs that we have already made safe
- electrical faults where there is no risk of injury
- problems with the hot-water supply
- Leaking waste pipes
- taps that cannot be turned off completely
- minor roof leaks
- faulty entry phones
- broken heating systems (in summer)

Appointments can be made to suit tenants, but this may mean waiting longer.

OVERALL PERFORMANCE APRIL 14 – MARCH 15:

Total jobs reported	2062
Total jobs attended/completed	2040

within 3 day target	
% performance	98.9

3. Routine repairs: response target **20 working days**, or by later appointment if tenant preference.

- Fireplaces
- Roofs
- Gutters and drainpipes
- Noisy ball valves in toilets
- Broken vents and airbricks
- Minor re-pointing and rendering
- Sinks, baths, kitchen units and fittings
- Plastering
- Woodwork and minor fencing work

OVERALL PERFORMANCE APRIL 14 – MARCH 15:

Total jobs reported (includes approx. 2000 jobs by sub/contractors)	20146
Total jobs attended/completed within target	19551
% performance	97

5) Councillor Dryden to the Executive Councillor Environment, Waste and Public Health

Resulting in the Ruling Labour Group's programme on launching Ward Blitzes and introducing new eco-friendly waste bins, what has been the response up to now?

The Executive Councillor advised that the ward blitzes and the provision of litter and dog bins have been presented at area committee since October 2014 as part of the Environmental Data Reports (EDR). To date there had been ten EDR reports presented to committee; including summary reports detailing activity undertaken during 3 of the 5 completed ward blitzes to date (two reports were due at committee between April and June).

At the area committees there had been positive comments received from members and the public. Comments had included thanks for the work

undertaken by the street sweepers in the South area, thanks for the dog warden's work in the Coleridge area, vegetation cut back work completed in Cherry Hinton by the City Rangers and volunteers, the park deep cleansing at Green End Road undertaken by the Cleansing teams and the litter educational work undertaken by the enforcement team at Addenbrookes.

To date forty seven sets of litter and recycling bins and eleven dog bin requests had been received through the area committees and installed across the city. Bin requests continued to be received from both members and the public at the area committees and through direct contact with officers. These bins had been provided as part of the project for new and replacement bins on the city's streets and open spaces and are now mapped and available on the Council website.

6) Councillor Hipkin to the Leader

What progress has been made to set up the cross-party group recommended by the Civic Affairs Committee to consider ways in which full council meetings could be terminated at a time convenient to all members?

The Leader responded that the Civic Affairs Committee on 18 March (which Councillor Hipkin was present at and addressed the Committee) had agreed that a meeting would be convened to discuss Council meetings but this would not take place until after the elections. Those invited will be Group Leaders, the Chair and spokes of Civic Affairs Committee and the Mayor.

7) Councillor Baigent to the Leader

Given the importance of demountable CCTV in tackling serious anti-social behaviour and incidents at specific locations, how will arrangements be affected by the new lampposts being installed by Balfour Beatty for the County Council?

The Leader stated that he had been shocked to learn that on two occasions new streetlights poles provided under PFI could not hold CCTV cameras; one of these incidents was Castle Ward that had a wave of petty theft and damage to cars. This particular problem raised a separate issue with Balfour Beatty.

Due to this issue there would be periods of time when there would be no CCTV in certain areas in the City. There were a total of six cameras which could not fixed to the new streetlights. This was another example of why there should be a one council approach for the City.

8) Councillor Todd-Jones to the Executive Councillor for Housing

How many City Council homes will we be forced to sell off to fund the ill thought out Tory plans to extend right to buy to Housing Associations and what will that mean for our housing needs register?

The Executive Councillor for Housing advised that until much more detail behind the recent announcement is known, the impact can only be estimated. The announcement suggested that the Council would be required to sell, at market value, any relets that have a value above the median regional market value.

Using figures quoted in the Policy Exchange document “Ending Expensive Social Tenancies”, the following was an estimate of median house prices by bedroom size in the East of England at the end of 2013;

1 bed – £110,000

2 bed – £149,500

3 bed – £175,000

4 bed - £280,000

Using the stock valuations in the accounts at the end of March 2014 approximately 70% of the Council's stock at that time was above the median regional value.

If it is assumed that the Council relets approximately 350 of its properties each year that will fall under this initiative, the Council could lose approximately 245 properties a year.

It was not possible to quantify the impact on the Housing Register without thorough analysis. However, clearly with fewer properties available to let, waiting times for housing will increase. There were more three bedroom or larger properties above the median regional value than one or two bedroom properties. Therefore the impact would be greater on families.

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

9) Councillor Ratcliffe to the Leader.

Are the City Council cutting policing services in Cambridge?

10) Councillor Hart to the Leader What consultation and communication has taken place by the County Council with the City Council on potential plans to cut street lighting after midnight in the city?

15/74/CNL To consider the following Notices of Motion

Cambridge Central Library

Councillor M Smart asked for the Council's consent under Procedure Rule 26 to alter the original motion.

This request was carried **nem con**

Councillor M Smart then proposed and Councillor Ratcliffe seconded the following motion (alteration to text shown in italics).

Cambridge Central Library

The Council recognises the severe financial problems faced by all councils, including Cambridgeshire County Council being forced to make £30 million cuts in 2015/16 because of the latest annual 7% cut in Coalition Government funding, at a time of major pressures from rapidly rising adult care costs.

The Council considers that library provision is a key priority including for disadvantaged areas of the city and where use is greatest in the centre of Cambridge.

The Council welcomes the referral decision this week by the County Council and calls on the County Council to begin a fresh review on options for the Central Library, the Cambridgeshire Collection and the City Council archive, and to undertake a full consultation with residents, local organisations and the City Council before any final decisions are made, given that

- the planned 3rd floor changes were not properly consulted on, nor the risks of the proposed changes fully assessed

- usage of the space in Central Library is increasing, including for study by young people as the city's population grows
- decisions on plans for relocating the Cambridgeshire Collection to Ely have not been finalised, including the need to take account of public consultation there too
- other alternatives to increase income and increase business use, to compensate for the cuts to the libraries budget, need to be considered instead of the loss of a whole floor in the Central Library.

Councillor Austin proposed and Councillor Bick seconded the following amendment to motion (deleted text ~~struck through~~ and additional text underlined):

The Council recognises the severe financial problems faced by all councils, including Cambridgeshire County Council being forced to make £30 million cuts in 2015/16 because of the latest annual 7% cut in Coalition Government funding, at a time of major pressures from rapidly rising adult care costs.

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- decisions on plans for relocating the Cambridgeshire Collection to Ely have not been finalised, including the need to take account of public consultation there too
- ~~other alternatives to increase income and increase business use, to compensate for the cuts to the libraries budget,~~ need to be considered instead of the loss of a whole floor in the Central Library
- Council meantime requests City Council Officers to bring a report to the appropriate scrutiny committee on the city's interests in the future location of Cambridgeshire Collection and the City Council Archive, noting that the latter was only deposited in the County Archive on the condition it was kept in the city.

On a show of hands the amendment was supported by 35 votes to 0.

Resolved (by 36 votes to 0) that:

Cambridge Central Library.

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General Funds Investment

Councillors Avery proposed and Councillor Bick seconded the following motion:

General Funds Investment

Council calls on the Executive to reconsider the priority it has adopted to use the council's general funds to invest in commercial property and building more affordable homes for the people of the City.

Councillor Price proposed and Councillor Owers seconded the following amendment to motion (deleted text struck through and additional text underlined):

~~Council calls on the Executive to reconsider the priority it has adopted to use the council's general funds to invest in commercial property and building more affordable homes for the people of the City.~~ notes that the previous Liberal Democrat administration never properly scruti

Cambridge City Council's underlying financial position, particularly earmarked reserves. As a result, this council obtained a very poor return on millions of pounds of public money that could have been invested to produce revenue streams. Such income could have ameliorated national spending cuts voted through by Julian Huppert in Westminster and prevented the cuts to frontline services proposed by the last Liberal Democrat administration.

Council notes that Labour's 2015/16 budget proposal to invest in commercial property, rather than allow money to gain pitiful interest on bank deposits, will produce important income that will allow this council to protect crucial services, and that the Liberal Democrats' plans to invest necessitate swingeing cuts in future years that they have so far failed to identify.

Furthermore, Council recognises that over the fourteen years of the Liberal Democrat administration in Cambridge insufficient priority was given to the needs of the intermediate housing market. Their failure to address this has resulted in a lack of options for the significant number of 'intermediate market' residents who have no priority for social housing whilst rocketing private rents and unaffordable market sale prices have created an acute affordability crisis.

Council acknowledges that under the new Labour administration there has been a welcome step change in the Council's approach to tackling this including:

- i. An in-depth report on the Intermediate market considered by the new Housing Scrutiny Committee in September 2014
- ii. A comprehensive review of the City's Housing Strategy in 2014 to include full consideration of the Intermediate Market and private rental sector.
- iii. The creation of an £8,000,000 Invest for Income Fund in the 2015/16 Budget with a clearly identified priority for investment in General Fund housing, putting to good use the funds left previously unused by the Liberal Democrats.
- iv. Resourcing greater enforcement against bad landlords in the private sector and introducing a Cambridge Landlord Accreditation and Safety Scheme to work with good landlords.
- v. Appointing a permanent Empty Homes officer backed up by £200,000 of funding to bring empty homes back into use.

- vi. Considering options for a social letting agency to offer alternative to high fee high street letting and manage agencies, including looking at best practice from other councils such as Havering.

The Council also notes that the City Deal is enabling work with partners such as South Cambridgeshire District and Cambridgeshire City Councils, the University and business leaders to deliver at least additional homes to those already planned across the Greater Cambridge area, including considering options for both Special Purpose Vehicles and Joint Ventures for intermediate housing on sites in public ownership and investment opportunities with partners.

It therefore resolves to continue to seek every opportunity to tackle many years of Liberal Democrat neglect of this key section of the population and to ensure that Cambridge is a City where all households can have an affordable and good quality local home.

On a show of hands the amendment was carried by 25 votes to 11.

Resolved (by 25 votes to 0) that:

Council notes that the previous Liberal Democrat administration never properly scrutinised Cambridge City Council's underlying financial position, particularly earmarked reserves. As a result, this council obtained a very poor return on millions of pounds of public money that could have been invested to produce revenue streams. Such income could have ameliorated the national spending cuts voted through by Julian Huppert in Westminster, and prevented the cuts to frontline services proposed by the last Liberal Democrat administration.

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The Council also notes that the City Deal is enabling work with partners such as South Cambridgeshire District and Cambridgeshire County Councils, the University and business leaders to deliver at least 1000 additional homes to those already planned across the Greater Cambridge area, including considering options for both Special Purpose Vehicles and Joint Ventures for intermediate housing on sites in public ownership and investment opportunities with partners.

Asylum Seekers

Councillor Moore proposed (on behalf of Councillor Pitt) and Councillor Bick seconded the following motion:

Asylum Seekers

The Council notes that asylum seekers can still legitimately be in the United Kingdom following initial refusal of their claims, because they are appealing the decision or because it is not possible for them to return home. Many originally refused applications are then allowed on appeal. However while waiting for a final outcome they can be left with minimal or no support and in some cases in destitution. The cashless azure card scheme does not give enough money for people to live on, does not allow them to save or use public transport, and is dehumanizing.

The principles of natural justice would suggest that they should have decent support to live and assistance with the legal process to ensure they are heard fairly. Refugees who have been waiting for our processes should be expected and allowed to work to support themselves, both to improve integration and reduce the burden on the state, during the legal processes.

The Council further notes the long standing campaigning of the "Still Human, Still Here" campaign to raise this issue.

The Council should

- i. Bring a report to the relevant scrutiny committee to consider joining the "Still Human, Still Here" campaign and any impacts this may have on council activity as soon as reasonably possible.
- ii. Write to both Cambridge's MPs and to the Home Secretary and Immigration Minister, following the General Election, asking them to support those seeking protection from persecution.
- iii. Endorse the findings of the All Party Parliamentary Inquiry on Asylum Support for Children.
- iv. Ask group leaders to work through the Local Government Association to encourage other Councils to join the campaign.

Resolved (unanimously) to agree the motion as set out above

Conservators of the River Cam

Councillor Herbert proposed the following motion.

Conservators of the River Cam

The Council appoints three City Councillors to the Conservators of the River Cam. Following the resignation of Councillor Price, Council is requested to appoint Councillor Robertson to the vacancy so that she can attend the next meeting of the Conservators which is scheduled for 23 April 2015.

Resolved (unanimously) to agree the motion as set out above.

15/75/CNL Written Questions

The Mayor advised that no written questions had been received.

The meeting ended at 9.00 pm

CHAIR

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