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Community Services Scrutiny Committee

CmSrv/1

Thursday, 9 July 2015

## COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9 July 2015  
2.30 - 4.00 pm

**Present:** Councillors Sinnott (Chair), Ratcliffe (Vice-Chair), Austin, Baigent, Bird, O'Connell, Reid and Sarris

Executive Councillor for Communities: Richard Johnson

Executive Councillor for City Centre and Public Places: Carina O'Reilly

### Officers:

Director of Customer and Community Services: Liz Bisset

Director of Environment: Simon Payne

Head of Community, Arts and Recreation: Debbie Kaye

Head of Streets and Open Spaces: Joel Carré

Head of Planning Services: Patsy Dell

Community, Sport & Recreation Manager: Ian Ross

Senior Accountant: John Harvey

Committee Manager: James Goddard

## FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

### 15/25/Comm Apologies

No apologies were received.

### 15/26/Comm Declarations of Interest

Name	Item	Interest
Councillor Austin	15/32/Comm	Personal: Governor at Buchan Street Nursery.
Councillors Ratcliffe and Reid	15/32/Comm	Personal: Director of Cambridge Live.

### 15/27/Comm Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 March and 28 May 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**15/28/Comm Public Questions**

A member of the public asked a question as set out below.

**Mr Lucas-Smith raised the following points:**

- i. **The Cambridge Cycling Campaign welcomed the Cambridge City Centre Accessibility Review Action Plan.**
- ii. **The Cambridge Cycling Campaign were happy to work with Rangers and Officers to aid city centre accessibility.**
- iii. **As noted in the Officer's report, certain areas of the city were affected by the following issues:**
  - **Blocked pavements.**
  - **The design of buildings led to pavements being obstructed.**
  - **Street furniture causing obstructions.**
- iv. **Asked for clarification on the progress of the third city centre cycle park and its location. Suggested that providing spaces where bikes could be parked would clear pavements (eg where bikes were locked to objects).**
- v. **Asked for Regent Terrace to be included in the Accessibility Review Action Plan to resolve issues associated with cars parking there.**

The Executive Councillor for City Centre and Public Places responded:

- i. Greater provision of cycleways and parking facilities would improve city centre access.
- ii. Offered to liaise with the Cambridge Cycling Campaign regarding cycle facilities.
- iii. Undertook to liaise with Councillor Blencowe as Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport regarding the third city centre cycle park.

**15/29/Comm Cambridge City Centre Accessibility Review Action Plan****Matter for Decision**

In 2014 a review was commissioned to gain a fuller understanding of the issues affecting ease of access in and around the city centre for a range of users but particularly pedestrians, disabled and wheelchair users. The review report was considered at the March 2015 Community Services Scrutiny Committee and the next step in this process was to develop a plan to support action on the conclusions of the review, to maximise the effectiveness of existing actions by partners and to inform future investment decisions that impact upon the accessibility of the city centre such as City Deal and other

initiatives. The Officer's report set out the action plan and suggested next steps.

### **Decision of Executive Councillor for City Centre and Public Places**

- i. Agreed the action plan as set out in Appendix A of the Officer's report, the identified future stages and timetable for implementation.
- ii. Asked officers to provide a progress report for Community Services Scrutiny Committee in early 2016.

### **Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

### **Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

### **Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Head of Planning Services.

The Executive Councillor for City Centre and Public Places said January 2016 was the deadline for action in the City Centre Accessibility Review Action Plan such as removal of inappropriately located 'A' boards. She hoped owners would have voluntarily removed the 'A' boards before then, if not, Officers would take enforcement action.

Councillor Bird made the following comments in response to the Officer's report:

- i. Welcomed working with the Cambridge Cycling Campaign.
- ii. Asked that an appropriate typeface and format was used for the Accessibility Review Action Plan. As this was an access strategy, it should be readable/accessible for all.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

## **15/30/Comm 2014/15 Revenue and Capital Outturn, Carry Forwards and Significant Variances - City Centre and Public Places Portfolio**

### **Matter for Decision**

The Officer's report presented a summary of the 2014/15 outturn position (actual income and expenditure) for services within the City Centre & Public Places Portfolio, compared to the current budget for the year. The position for revenue and capital was reported and variances from budgets highlighted,

together with explanations. Requests to carry forward funding arising from certain budget underspends into 2015/16 were identified.

### **Decision of Executive Councillor for City Centre and Public Places**

- i. Agreed the carry forward requests, totalling £78,300 as detailed in Appendix C of the Officer's report, be recommended to Council for approval.
- ii. Agreed to seek approval from Council to fund re-phased net capital spending of £973,000 in respect of capital schemes.

### **Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

### **Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

### **Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Senior Accountant.

In response to Members' questions the Director of Environment said the following:

- i. Some reasons for capital variance (ie the difference between outturn and final budgets) were set out in Appendix D of the Officer's report.
- ii. There had been some variance with environmental improvement projects due to the large number of small scale projects that needed to be delivered, this had caused a backlog. The situation had been exacerbated by staff turnover.
- iii. There had been on-going capital variance over a period of years. A report was being taken to Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee 13 July 2015 setting out mitigation suggestions.
- iv. Issues regarding s106 delivery (Appendix D) had been raised with the Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport plus Opposition Spokesperson; they had now been resolved.

The Executive Councillor for City Centre and Public Places undertook to liaise with Councillors at a briefing with Officers if they had any specific queries regarding projects with capital budgets. The Committee welcomed this proposal. Councillor Baigent specifically asked for information regarding PR030e - 38258 Cavendish Rd (Mill Rd end) improvements to seating, paving and public art (S106), PR030h – 38255 Romsey 'town square' public realm

improvements (S106) and PR030f – 38259 Bath House Play Area improvements (S106).

In response to Members' questions the Senior Accountant said the following:

- i. The project variance fund filled the gap between original budgeted figures and the actual final cost.
- ii. The fund was set up to distribute capital so any unused monies were returned to the general fund. Officers had delegated authority to action this.

Councillor Reid asked for specific details in future Officer reports to explain budget variances between 'original' and 'final' budget figures. She also asked for a review of report figures/format in future so councillors could scrutinise non-technical reasons for variance. Councillor Sinnott suggested that the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee would be a more appropriate forum to look at variances. The Executive Councillor for City Centre and Public Places said a number of variances had occurred due to rebasing issues (eg the Community, Arts and Recreation budget becoming the Communities budget), which were not expected to arise again in future. The Senior Accountant said the Head of Finance was looking at ways to amend the report to explain significant variances if they arose again in future. Should variances occur due to major savings/costs, these would be reported in the Mid-Year Financial Review or Budget Setting Report. There were none for the City Centre and Public Places Portfolio in 2014/15. Councillor Reid re-iterated her point that the variance process needed to be transparent in order for Opposition Councillors to scrutinise it. The Executive Councillor for City Centre and Public Places undertook to liaise with the Head of Finance regarding the format of reports.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

### **Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

### **15/31/Comm Oral Report From the Executive Councillor for Communities**

The Executive Councillor for Communities gave an oral report on his portfolio priorities:

- i. The portfolio had expanded to include health responsibilities.
- ii. There were no lead Councillors for this portfolio.

## **15/32/Comm 2014/15 Revenue and Capital Outturn, Carry Forwards and Significant Variances - Community, Arts and Recreation Portfolio**

### **Matter for Decision**

The Officer's report presented a summary of the 2014/15 outturn position (actual income and expenditure) for services within the Communities Portfolio (formerly Community, Arts & Recreation), compared to the current budget for the year. The position for revenue and capital was reported and variances from budgets highlighted, together with explanations. Requests to carry forward funding arising from certain budget underspends into 2015/16 were identified.

### **Decision of Executive Councillor for Communities**

The Executive Councillor agreed:

#### Revenue and Capital Outturn, Carry Forwards and Significant Variances – Communities Portfolio (formerly Community, Arts & Recreation)

- i. The carry forward requests, totalling £162,000 as detailed in Appendix C of the Officer's report, be recommended to Council for approval.
- ii. To seek approval from Council to fund re-phased net capital spending of £3,911,000 (of which £3,539,000 relates to Clay Farm Community Centre) in respect of capital schemes.

#### Buchan Street Community Centre - New Roof Replacement

- iii. To approve the refurbishment of the tiled roof and thermal insulation replacement at Buchan Street Community Centre, as detailed in the attached appendices, which has been properly planned and is ready for implementation, subject to any feedback from the Capital Programme Board
- iv. To recommend that Council approve capital funding of £60,000 for the refurbishment of the tiled roof and replacement of thermal insulation project.

#### Ross Street Community Centre - New Boiler system

- v. To approve the replacement of the boiler system at Ross Street Community Centre, as detailed in the attached appendices, which has been properly planned and is ready for implementation, subject to any feedback from the Capital Programme Board.
- vi. To recommend that Council approve capital funding of £36,000 for the replacement boiler system project.

### **Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

### **Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

### **Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Senior Accountant. He referred to an addendum (as per paragraph 3.7 of the Officer's report) that incorporated the recommendations set out on pages 52 and 60 into those on P41 of the agenda 2014/15 Outturn Report:

#### 2. Recommendations

##### Buchan Street Community Centre - New roof replacement

- c) To approve the refurbishment of the tiled roof and thermal insulation replacement at Buchan Street Community Centre, as detailed in the attached appendices, which has been properly planned and is ready for implementation, subject to any feedback from the Capital Programme Board
- d) To recommend that Council approve capital funding of £60,000 for the refurbishment of the tiled roof and replacement of thermal insulation project.

##### Ross Street Community Centre - New Boiler system

- e) To approve the replacement of the boiler system at Ross Street Community Centre, as detailed in the attached appendices, which has been properly planned and is ready for implementation, subject to any feedback from the Capital Programme Board
- f) To recommend that Council approve capital funding of £36,000 for the replacement boiler system project.

In response to the Officer's report the Committee stated the launch of Cambridge Live had gone well. This had been a difficult project to manage.

Councillor Reid asked for specific details in future Officer reports to explain non-technical reasons for budget variances between 'original' and 'final' budget figures. She also stated that historically, if savings arose in one part of the portfolio, Officers used to ask the Committee's permission to move elsewhere. Councillor Reid asked if this practice would happen again in future.

In response to Members' questions the Director of Customer and Community Services said the following:

- i. She appreciated the need for budgetary transparency.
- ii. Unusual circumstances had arisen with the budget due to the launch of Cambridge Live and the reconfiguration of central support costs.
- iii. The budget had not been in the position Officers would like over the last year as there had been a lot of variances, this was due to historic financial issues and an agreement to clearly identify and track them as the services migrated to Cambridge Live.

In response to Members' questions the Head of Communities, Arts and Recreation; Senior Accountant plus Community, Sport & Recreation Manager said the following:

- i. The Equalities budget (P44 of the Officer's report) had £0 funding under the budget heading as a single member of staff had been incorporated into a team. The budget heading had not been removed for accounting reasons. The Head of Communities, Arts and Recreation undertook to clarify further details with Councillor O'Connell.
- ii. The Senior Accountant undertook to inform Councillor Reid about the capital value of The Junction.
- iii. The whole Buchan Street building, except for the new extension, would be re-roofed. This would address maintenance issues such as leaks.
- iv. Officers from across the council had liaised to take the opportunity to retrofit energy efficiency measures as part of Buchan Street building repair/maintenance work. The Climate Change Officer had advised that funding could be applied for when work required had been identified such as insulation and boiler replacement. The viability of photovoltaic panels was being reviewed.
- v. If a bid was made for energy efficiency measures funding, this would cover a few thousand pounds. The remaining cost of the £60,000 project would have to be funded by the capital budget.



- vi. The Community, Sport & Recreation Manager was liaising with the Neighbourhood Community Development Manager and contractors to minimise the impact of Buchan Street building work on the nursery. The Community, Sport & Recreation Manager was developing a business case to go to the project board to look at the impact of building work on operations and how to mitigate this if work was deemed appropriate to go ahead.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

### **Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

## **15/33/Comm Appointments to Clay Farm Management Committee**

### **Matter for Decision**

The City Council appointed two Councillors to the Clay Farm (Joint Venture Company) as directors of the company. The third director is a County Councillor.

The decision to appoint Directors was deferred from 28 May 2015 so that officers could take advice on how to address the change in circumstances now that Andy Blackhurst was no longer a city councillor. Advice had now been received and the Executive Councillor decided to replace him as a director with another appointee. Former Councillor Blackhurst had been informed of this intention. The ruling group wished to have two Labour City Councillors as directors.

### **Decision of Executive Councillor for Communities**

Approved that Councillor Johnson be the City Council representative on the Clay Farm Management Committee, together with Councillor Robertson in place of former Councillor Blackhurst.

### **Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

### **Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

## Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee received an oral report from the Executive Councillor for Communities.

In response to Members' questions the Executive Councillor for Communities said the following:

- i. Undertook to provide a copy of his introductory statement to committee members.
- ii. Councillor Johnson (as Executive Councillor with the relevant portfolio) and Councillor Robertson were proposed as City Council appointments to the Clay Farm Management Committee.
- iii. Councillor Robertson was proposed due to his project management and scrutiny committee experience.
- iv. The Clay Farm management structure would be decided in August 2015. It was important to choose the correct option to ensure the sustainability of the Centre and protect the interests of Trumpington residents. The Executive Councillor re-iterated the City Council was a significant budgetary contributor, therefore the ruling group wished to have two Labour City Councillors as directors to retain financial control.

The Director of Customer and Community Services added that it was a Council decision as to how funding was spent. Directors managed how the Clay Farm Centre operated.

Liberal Democrat Councillors made the following comments in response to the oral report from the Executive Councillor for Communities:

- i. The political affiliation of the County Council appointed director should not influence the City Council's appointees.
- ii. Appointees to the Clay Farm Management Committee should be multi-party representatives, preferably including a local Ward Councillor.

Councillors requested a change to the recommendations. Councillor Reid (seconded by Councillor Austin) formally proposed that Councillor O'Connell be the City Council representative on the Clay Farm Management Committee in place of former Councillor Blackhurst, together with Councillor Johnson.

This amendment was lost by 5 votes to 3.

The Committee resolved by 5 votes to 3 to endorse the recommendation that Councillor Robertson be the City Council representative on the Clay Farm Management Committee in place of former Councillor Blackhurst, together with Councillor Johnson.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

**Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any  
Dispensations Granted)**

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

The meeting ended at 4.00 pm

**CHAIR**

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