

WEST / CENTRAL AREA COMMITTEE

28 October 2010
7.30 - 10.05 pm

Council Members Present:

City Councillors for:

Castle (Simon Kightley, Tania Zmura)
Market (Tim Bick, Mike Dixon, Colin Rosenstiel)
Newnham (Rod Cantrill, Julie Smith)

Co-opted non-voting members:

County Councillors: Brooks-Gordon (Castle), Whitebread (Market)

Council Officers Present:

Cambridge City Council:

David Greening – Housing Options and Homeless Manager
Justin March – Recreation Officer
Peter Carter – Development Control Manager
John Evans – Planning Officer
Glenn Burgess – Committee Manager

Additional attendees:

Rachel Everitt - Street Outreach Team Leader (Crime Reduction Initiatives)
Jane Darlington – Chief Executive of Cambridgeshire Community Foundation

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

10/46/WAC Apologies

Apologies were received from City Councillors Hipkin and Reid, and County Councillor Nethsingha.

Councillor Rosenstiel arrived at 8.35pm and was present for the voting on items 10/51WAC, 10/52/WAC, 10/53/WAC, 10/54/WAC

10/47/WAC Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Item	Interest
Cantrill	10/51/WAC	Personal: Trustee of Winter Comfort
Dixon	10/52/WAC	Prejudicial: Lives near to the proposed new skate park at Donkey Common.
Smith	10/54/WAC	Personal: Employed by Cambridge University

10/48/WAC Minutes

26 August 2010

The minutes of the 6 August 2010 meeting were approved and signed as a correct record.

23 September 2010

Councillor Smith asked for the following correction to her response to question 18 (10/45/WAC - page 5):

“Councillor Smith confirmed that shortly before she became the Executive Councillor for that portfolio a tree survey had been undertaken. Prior to that, maintenance of trees on open spaces was entirely reactive. Following the survey, quite a lot work had been undertaken but the expectation was that this would reduce once the main issues had been resolved.”

Councillor Cantrill (Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation) requested the following amendments to the agreed proposals (10/45/WAC - page 8/9):

Amendments underlined below:

The Committee agreed to vote on the final planting proposals for each area separately.

- Area H: Lower Park Street Walk – with the species of trees and maintenance of the views along Lower Park Street delegated to officers in consultation with the Chair and Ward Councillor and after consultation with

the school regarding retention of the memorial tree (by 8 votes to 0: unanimous)

- Area J: Cherry Avenue – the replacement of trees as necessary with the same species was noted (by 8 votes to 0: unanimous)

It was also requested that the vote for Area L (page 9) be recorded in the minutes.

Subject to these amendments the minutes of the 23 September 2010 meeting were approved. It was agreed that the Chair would sign the minutes outside of the meeting.

10/49/WAC Matters and Actions arising from the Minutes

26 August 2010

10/37/WAC - Huntingdon Road 30mph speed limit

Councillor Brooks-Gordon confirmed that a further meeting with County Council officers had been arranged to discuss this issue. The relevant Cabinet Member for this area had agreed to support any decision made at this meeting.

10/37/WAC – Preparations for cold weather

Councillor Whitebread confirmed that the County Council's 'Winter Policy Review' had been presented to a Cabinet Meeting on 26 October 2010. Copies were made available for the public and could also be accessed via the County Council website.

10/37/WAC – Hoarding around the bus station

The Chair confirmed that an email had been received from the County Council on 28 October 2010, which indicated that the work should be completed during the week commencing 22 November.

10/40/WAC – Safer Neighbourhoods: Increase in needle finds

Councillor Bick (Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health) confirmed that further multi-agency work had been undertaken on this issue.

The Cambridge Drug and Alcohol Group had designed two new posters – one instructing the public how to report needle finds, and one instructing drug users how to safely dispose of their needles. These posters would be displayed across the city in the coming weeks.

It was confirmed that Street Scene officers conducted inspections of playgrounds on a daily basis, and City Rangers and Estate Caretakers took an active role in reporting needle finds. There was also a commitment that, where possible, any reported needle finds would be dealt with and removed within 2 hours.

10/41/WAC – Environmental Improvement Programme: Cycle racks at Fisher Square

The Chair confirmed that the County Council were proposing the installation of seven new cycle racks in Fisher Square. However, the scheme would still be subject to further consultation with the Lion Yard and the Grand Arcade.

23 September 2010

Area D: North Terrace and Brunswick Cottages

The Chair read out the following update from the Environmental Improvements Manager:

“Further consultation with the residents of North Terrace and Brunswick Cottages will take place from Monday 1 November to Monday 15 November. A letter and drawings explaining the current proposals will be delivered to all residents of North Terrace and Brunswick Cottages with boundaries that border Midsummer Common. Residents will be invited to meet officers on the Common on Wednesday 10 November at 2pm to discuss the proposals and attempt to resolve any issues raised. Individual meetings with objectors may also be arranged separately. Any written objections will be collated and summarised for the Chair and Ward Councillors to review and determine whether the current proposal or any proposed amendments should be implemented in line with the Committee decision.”

Councillor Cantrill confirmed that the Friends of Midsummer Common (FoMC) would also be involved in this process.

Implementation of the Tree Protocol

The Chair read out the following update from the Environmental Improvements Manager:

“The trees proposed within the Areas approved by the Committee, which are not subject to the tree protocol procedure or further consultation, have been ordered and planting is planned to take place during the first two weeks of December.

The City Council Tree Protocol will begin shortly for the trees proposed for replacement. This will commence on Monday 15 November and end on Monday 29 November. Any objections will be presented to Planning Committee on 15 December 2010 to make a recommendation to the Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation.

Any trees approved for implementation following the outcome of the tree protocol process would be planted early next year”

In response to a question from a member of the public, Councillor Cantrill reiterated that all Council owned trees were covered by the Tree Protocol.

10/50/WAC Open Forum

1) Roger Chatterton: Now that winter is here, and the possibility of another cold spell, what provisions are in place to keep inner city paths and roads clear, with particular reference to pedestrians and cyclists?

A) The Chair noted that distribution of salt bags across the city was being considered and would alleviate the need for additional grit bins.

Councillor Whitebread further highlighted the County Council Cabinet Report of 26 October 2010 and also noted that the use of quad bikes for gritting pavements was being considered.

The Chair agreed to forward these concerns to the City Council’s Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services.

2) Wendy Andrews: When is enforcement of the 20mph speed limit on Maids Causeway going to happen?

2) Wendy Andrews: When is enforcement of the 20mph speed limit on Maids Causeway going to happen?

A) Councillor Bick confirmed that he had met with the Senior Police Superintendent to discuss this issue. He had been assured that, with some practical limitations, the Police could enforce the 20mph speed limit with hand held devices. Enforcement could not be done by Fixed Penalty Notices, but by summons to attend court. The Police said they would respond as well as they could to the enforcement of the limit being identified as a Neighbourhood priority. However, they would ideally like to see the County Council leading with some preparatory work on education and environment. Their understanding was that neither the County Council nor the Safety Camera Partnership regarded this area as a priority and would not support enforcement activity in the area.

Councillor Bick also confirmed that he had tried to arrange a meeting between the County Council, Police representatives and Ward Councillors to seek a more co-ordinated approach, but he regretted that the County Officer was not prepared to be involved.

Councillor Whitebread noted that, as this was an important bus route within the city, the County Council might be under pressure not to enforce the 20mph speed limit. She thanked Councillor Bick for pursuing this issue and agreed to liaise further with her County Council colleagues and officers.

3) Roger Chatterton: Regarding enforcement of the 20mph speed limit – signage may also be part of the problem. We need some clarity on this.

A) Councillor Dixon agreed that the signage on Maids Causeway was of some concern and could be made clearer.

4) Tim Brown: Are councillors aware of how much traffic congestion is caused by ineffective or badly designed traffic lights and pedestrian crossings? Of main concern are:

- **Victoria Road pedestrian crossing**
- **Traffic lights for turning left at top end of Victoria Road onto Castle Street**
- **Traffic lights on Gilbert Road**

A) The Chair agreed that this would be forwarded onto the County Council and a response requested for the next meeting.

5) Morcom Lunt: Licensing and ASB on local streets – could this be the specific topic of an Open Forum session at a future meeting?

A) As Chair of the Licensing Committee, Councillor Smith confirmed that as part of the Licensing Act 2003 the City Council was required to review its Licensing Policy every three years. Unless objections were received to a licensing application there was a presumption that it would be approved. It was noted that applications could be turned down on one of the following four issues:

- I. crime and disorder
- II. public safety
- III. public nuisance
- IV. protection of children from harm

If problems did occur, a request could be also be made for a review of the licence.

The Chair agreed to look into the possibility of a future Open Forum session dedicated to this issue.

6) Richard Price (Park Street Residents Association) – Park Street is a popular through route and residents are suffering from alcohol related anti-social behaviour. We regularly have to put up with vomiting in the street and people urinating on our properties. Whilst we acknowledge that by living within the city centre we have to expect increased noise and disturbance, the problem seems to have gotten worse since the introduction of the Licensing Act 2003 and extended opening hours. We understand the pressures on the local police force so are unwilling to waste their time unnecessarily every time there is an incident.

We responded to both the City Council's Licensing Consultation and the Home Office Consultation, and would welcome an Open Forum session dedicated to this issue.

A) These comments were noted.

7) Dick Baxter (FoMC) - CCF gave FoMC a grant to create the Community Orchard on condition that the tools and equipment be kept in a secure place. The Council kindly provided a locked store in the public toilet block on the Common for this purpose.

This is proving less than ideal. The store is a long way from the orchard making frequent transfers very frustrating; the key holder must always be present. As a result, some of the commonly used tools are being kept in volunteers' houses nearby. This only adds to the difficulties. It would be better to have a small shed in the orchard in which to store the tools and equipment.

FoMC has searched for a secure and vandal proof shed and found an ideal model costing about £500. Berkeley Homes have been approached and seem willing to buy one for us but need a letter from the Council giving permission for their contractor to deliver it to the site. Tentative discussions with officers made it clear that they need Councillor approval before they can proceed.

Time is of the essence, so FoMC is asking this Area Committee meeting to approve the placement of a small shed in the Community Orchard area of the Common.

A picture of the proposed shed, the required position and details on the legal position was distributed to the Committee.

A) Councillor Cantrill agreed to discuss this issue with the relevant officers and contact Mr Baxter as soon as possible.

Councillor Brooks-Gordon also suggested that the issue should be discussed with the Crime Prevention Officers. This comment was noted.

The Committee agreed that subject to approval by the Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation, they would be happy to approve this proposal.

10/51/WAC Information Report: Social care responses to street-based anti social behaviour

Councillor Bick introduced the item. He confirmed that the aim of the report was to highlight the role of the City Council and its partners in addressing street-based anti-social behaviour and to further highlight the root causes of the issue.

The committee received the report from the Housing Options and Homeless Manager.

The Street Outreach Team Leader read out the following statement from a service user:

“I am sorry that I am not here to say this to you myself – and hope you understand that it would have been difficult for me to come to something like this meeting.

I have had alcohol detox in the past which I have not been able to finish, the difference this time was that I was introduced to Malcolm (Alcohol CPN) by street outreach who I already know – they have helped me more than once – so I didn’t have to start at the beginning explaining myself again – also the detox was with my usual GP at the Access Surgery so again – the history was all there. This felt like the planned detox was about me – not me just being told I had to do it.

I felt like they listened to what I had to say – and explained everything properly so I knew where I was with it.

Malcolm came and saw me every day in my accommodation, and I was able to phone him up when I was worried – he didn’t always answer but always got back to me. I felt like he really wanted me to do well.

The other thing that has made a difference has been that the support is there afterwards as well – I now see Malcolm twice a week to help me avoid relapse and I know I can phone if I need to.

This if the first time I have felt I can move forward”

It was noted that a service specifically tailored to the needs of individuals resulted in better outcomes for service users.

1) Wendy Andrews: Is a service tailored to the needs of individuals more expensive, and is there a possibility that cuts will result in this service being reduced or lost?

A) The Housing Options and Homeless Manager confirmed that the service was funded through a partnership approach and that he was keen to move forward and secure continued funding.

2) Wendy Andrews: In the report it mentions ‘educating members of the public on begging and how to best support positive progress for those who choose to beg’. Would you advise that the public give to street beggars or not?

A) The Street Outreach Team Leader suggested that the public donate to homeless organisations as oppose to individuals. This would ensure that donations were spent in the most appropriate and beneficial way.

3) Richard Price (Park Street Residents Association): I would like to congratulate you on this valuable work. The inward migration of homeless individuals to Cambridge seems to increase the problem – why is this?

A) The Housing Options and Homeless Manager confirmed that some work had been undertaken recently to determine why Cambridge was prone to inward migration by homeless service users and those who exhibit a street based lifestyle. The main reasons included the amount of general accommodation and the high number of hostel bed spaces. It was noted the hostels in Cambridge were not initially set up based on migration patterns and that, whilst the Reconnection Policy has not stemmed the inward migration, it has helped to manage the numbers.

4) Councillor Smith: The report highlights two other university cities (Oxford and Brighton) and this could indicate that the presence of students is also a reason for inward migration by homeless service users.

In the report it mentions ‘the social responsibilities of off licences is important – selling alcohol to street drinkers, already inebriated, is a challenge for the enforcement authorities to address’. It is important to note that any concerns need to be reported back to the City Council so that they can be addressed. As the Licensing Authority we are unable to

appeal against our own licences, so it is important that others do so if there is an issue.

5) Street Pastor: Throughout our work we talk to many beggars. This inter-personal interaction and a service based on the needs of the individual is very important.

6) Richard Price (Park Street Residents Association): I feel it important to note that the alcohol related anti-social behaviour I discussed earlier is not as a result of the homeless or the street life community.

7) Councillor Cantrill: I would like to thank the officers for doing a great job in managing this partnership approach.

Cambridge currently benefits from high levels of donations and volunteers - for example 50% of the funding for 'Winter Comfort' comes directly from donations. However we need to be conscious that possible social changes as a result of the economic situation could put extra pressures on these services.

These comments were noted by officers.

8) Councillor Bick: As councillors and members of the public how can we help?

A) The Housing Options and Homeless Manager suggested further engagement with community groups and organisations such as the Street Pastors would be beneficial.

The Street Outreach Team Leader stated the continuation of public donations to the local homeless charities was essential.

Councillor Bick thanked the officers for their hard work and for presenting a very comprehensive report.

10/52/WAC Improve Your Neighbourhood

The committee received a report from the Recreation Officer.

It was emphasised that permission was being sought from the committee for officers to further investigate the viability of these projects and to then take out to full consultation with the public and relevant user groups.

The committee and members of the public were encouraged to access the 'Improve Your Neighbourhood' section of the City Council's website to get more information and to view updates on all of the current schemes across the city.

It was noted that the proposal for the new skate park on Donkey Common was incorrectly noted as a 'West Central' area project and should have been noted as a 'Citywide' project.

BMX/skate park or climbing bolders – Lammas Land play area

In response to a member's question the Recreation Officer confirmed that the proposal had been put forward by a local family with teenage children.

Slight concern was raised by members that, whilst there was a demand across the city for climbing bolders, Lammas Land might not be the most appropriate location. As new play equipment had already been installed on Lammas Land the available space for additional projects was also questioned.

The Recreation Officer noted these concerns.

Decision: APPROVED (by 7 votes to 0: unanimous)

Joint facility upgrade at Kelsey Kerridge & Parkside Pools

Concern was raised by members that a joint project between the current contract provider at Parkside Pools and Kelsey Kerridge could be difficult to manage.

Decision: REFUSED (by 0 votes to 5)

Sand beach volleyball court – in public car park

Decision: APPROVED (by 6 votes to 0)

Installation of Parkour outdoor sites

Members welcomed this idea, but felt one of the challenges may be to get young people to use this site instead of the current unauthorised sites in the city.

Decision: APPROVED (by 5 votes to 0)

Tree planting Scheme – Jesus Green and Midsummer Common

It was noted by Councillor Cantrill that, as S106 projects were only looked at on an annual basis, unfortunately this could not have been brought to committee any early. The proposed planting would therefore not be completed this year – but this, along with other resources and a co-ordinated management plan, could be beneficial for succession planting.

Decision: APPROVED (by 7 votes to 0: unanimous)

Cambridge Climbing Centre

Decision: APPROVED (by 7 votes to 0: unanimous)

New skate park – Donkey Common

Councillor Dixon left the meeting and did not vote on this item.

It was noted by the Recreation Officer that, whilst there was an existing facility on Donkey Common, ideas were being looked at to improve the site and to make it more accessible.

Members noted that there was an ongoing demand for this type of facility as many users still had to use facilities outside of the city.

Decision: APPROVED (by 6 votes to 0: unanimous)

Councillor Cantrill confirmed that, whilst the current S106 process was conducted on an annual basis, he was looking at ways that it could be done more frequently. It would also be beneficial to have more involvement with local residents and young people about the design and implementation of the

projects. A good example of this was the Jesus Green skate park that had involved user groups to influence the overall design and layout of the project.

10/53/WAC Community Development and Leisure Grants

The committee received a report from the Chief Executive of the Cambridgeshire Community Foundation.

St Augustine's Church

Grant of £1,500 to pay for various events in the autumn and spring, to be held at the church. Covering the cost of musicians and publicity.

Members of the committee noted that all previous events had been very well attended by the local community, and were wide-ranging and inclusive.

Decision: APPROVED (by 7 votes to 0: unanimous)

10/54/WAC Planning Applications

10/0822/FUL - Whittle Laboratory, Thomson Avenue

The committee received an application for full planning permission.

The application sought approval for the erection of two extensions to the Whittle Laboratory (laboratory extension to the west of the existing laboratory and office extension to the east of the current office block).

The applicant's architect (John Blair) addressed the committee in support of the application.

Resolved (by 6 votes to 0) to accept the officer recommendation and approve planning permission for the following reasons:

1. This development has been approved subject to conditions and following the prior completion of a section 106 planning obligation (/a unilateral undertaking), because subject to those requirements it is considered to generally conform to the Development Plan, particularly the following policies: Cambridge Local Plan (2006): 3/4, 3/6, 3/7, 3/11, 3/14, 4/4, 4/13, 4/15, 7/6, 8/2, 8/4, 8/6, 8/10

2. The decision has been made having had regard to all other material planning considerations, none of which was considered to have been of such significance as to justify doing other than grant planning permission. These reasons for approval can be a summary of the reasons for grant of planning permission only. For further details on the decision please see the officer report online at www.cambridge.gov.uk/planningpublicaccess or visit our Customer Service Centre, Mandela House, 4 Regent Street, Cambridge, CB2 1BY between 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday

The meeting ended at 10.05 pm

CHAIR