

Oral Questions and Answers Given Post Meeting

20 October 2016

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

9 Councillor Bird to the Executive Councillor for Housing:

Question to the Executive Councillor for Housing: What plans are in place to spend the £70m devolution money?

The £70M devolution money will be spent on delivering new affordable homes for people in need locally, and we will add to it our own Housing Capital Fund of monies from homes sold under the Right to Buy. We expect to be able to deliver up to five hundred homes using the money, and we have already identified sites where these homes can be built. Our Housing Development Agency is working on these plans now, so that the first phase of new developments can start quickly once the devolution deal is agreed, and people can move in.

Where possible, we will build homes on land owned by the Council, to create new Council housing for rent, but in order to achieve our targets and deliver all the homes within the five year timescale, we may also build on other development sites locally. We have agreed with government that homes delivered using the £70M will be in addition to other affordable homes already planned by developers for the period

10 Councillor Ratcliffe to the Executive Councillor for Communities:

Can the Executive Councillor update Council on plans for the Bonfire Night celebration on Midsummer Common?

This year's Fireworks event takes place on Saturday 5 November on Midsummer Common and for the second year is produced by Cambridge Live on behalf of the City Council.

The event will take the usual form consisting of a spectacular fireworks display at 7.30pm followed by the lighting of the bonfire. Stanley Thurston's Funfair will be providing rides for all the family and a variety of catering stalls will be present to cater for everyone's needs. This event continues to be free to attend and remains one of the largest firework displays in the region regularly attracting over 25,000 people.

Cambridge City Council has worked closely with Cambridge Live to make sure that plans for the event are robust and, above all, safe, so that everyone can enjoy the traditional bonfire night event. We have assessed Cambridge Live's plans and we are confident that it will be a successful event.

The event is again financially supported by many local business and organisations. Event goers are encouraged to make a voluntary donation to the costs of the event either by a collection bucket or a "text to donate" system giving £3 per text from their mobile phone – Text BANG to 70500.

11 Councillor Sinnott to the Executive Councillor for Communities:

What are the Council's plans to mark Living Wage week?

The main event of the week will take place on the afternoon of Wednesday 2 November at Anglia Ruskin University in the presence of the Mayor and yours truly. The purpose of the event is to celebrate the latest new accredited Living Wage employers, including Anglia Ruskin University and Cambridge Live, and the fact that we have now reached over 50 accredited employers operating in the city (51 to be exact). There will be a Living Wage "marketplace" where some of the accredited

organisations will exhibit their range of goods and services. The results of the Living Wage Champions awards will be announced (Cambridge City Council has been shortlisted for the East of England region award).

The city council will share information about Living Wage Week on social media and on its website, particularly around the announcement of the new rate on Monday 31st October.

All accredited organisations operating in Cambridge have been sent resources including flyers and stickers and will have them on display during the week. Some organisations (such as GLL and the CAB) will display “Proud to be Living Wage employer” banners at reception desks.

We will be displaying Living Wage Week banners on the Guildhall and have commissioned a mobile poster to tour the city centre on 31 October celebrating all the accredited Living Wage organisations in Cambridge by name.

There will be displays at libraries and several community centres for the duration of the week.

And on 2 November, the Council’s Living Wage Coordinator, Theresa Bateman, will speak at a meeting on the “Gender Pay Gap” organised by the Women’s Officer of Cambridge University Students Union.

12 Councillor R Moore to the Leader:

What are the consequences of the Ministry of Defence agreeing to pay damages to two of the victims of violent attacks by unsupervised Libyan

soldiers in central Cambridge in October 2014, during the Ministry of Defence training programme at Bassingbourn?

In December 2014 a meeting was held with Cambridge City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and the Libyan General Purpose Force Training Report Team, as part of an MoD review initiated by the Prime Minister into the circumstances behind the assaults in Cambridge by Libyan cadet soldiers.

Cllr. Lewis Herbert, Leader of the Council requested an independent inquiry surrounding the actions of the MoD in bringing the Libyan soldiers to the County without the knowledge of the local authorities and raised concerns about the MoD's ability to "investigate itself".

The meeting was followed up with a joint letter from the 3 councils, to the Secretary of State for Defence, including asking for the review's initial report to be made public at Christmas.

A news release giving details of the City Council's views as expressed at the meeting are at M:\Safer Communities Section\Lynda\Bassingbourn incidents\14 Dec

There is a report from Libyan General Purpose Force Training Report Team dated 19 December with recommendations from their findings on page 10. I have attached the report to the email sent with this briefing as it cannot be copied and pasted.

In November 2015 in response to a request for funding to improve lighting in the city, following the assaults, the MoD said they were unable to provide any funding for improvements but that in time if they could recover some expenses from the Libyan government, they may be able to reimburse the City Council for any damage caused to the council.

13 Councillor T Moore to the Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport:

Does the Executive Councillor share concerns about the draft Planning Bill 2016 giving developers the right to challenge pre-commencement planning conditions imposed to protect the archaeological record?

Response:

The Queen's Speech of 18 May announced Government proposals to introduce a power in the [Neighbourhood Planning Bill](#) which would ensure that pre-commencement planning conditions are only imposed by local planning authorities where they are absolutely necessary (Section 7 of the Bill). However, concern was expressed by some that the use of planning conditions to require archaeological excavations would be curtailed by the Bill.

Although the Council considers that archaeological pre-commencement conditions would still be applied by the Council when necessary in an archaeologically rich area such as Cambridge, it is of concern that the Government is diluting the importance attached to the nation's heritage through the National Planning Policy Framework. The Government's consultation on *Improving the use of planning conditions* closes on 2 November 2016. The Council will be making a consultation response to the Government to address concerns around the wider issue of pre-commencement conditions in terms of processing applications in a timely manner and the potential impacts on a range of issues such as archaeology, drainage, flood risk, and environmental health.

Background:

This question appears to relate to a petition on the UK Government and Parliament petitions website, which is entitled *Stop Destruction of British Archaeology. Neighbourhood and Infrastructure Bill*. The petition currently has over 18,000 signatures. The level required to trigger a parliamentary debate is 100,000.

The Government has proposed this part of the Neighbourhood Planning Bill to address the potential overuse of 'pre-commencement' conditions which prevent development, including new homes, from starting until the local planning authority has approved certain details. The Government considers that the measure will not restrict the ability of local planning authorities to propose conditions that are necessary. In the event that an applicant refuses to accept a necessary pre-commencement condition proposed by a local planning authority, the authority can refuse planning permission. This will maintain protection for matters such as

archaeology and protection of other heritage assets, as well as the natural environment, green spaces, and measures to mitigate the risk of flooding.

The Government is not proposing that all pre-commencement conditions are removed; rather that they are used proportionately and provide the applicant with an opportunity to agree to them before they are attached to planning permission. The process envisaged by the Government is that the local planning authority will notify applicants of any proposed pre-commencement conditions before the determination of an application. Most applicants are already aware of likely conditions through early engagement with the authority, at which point they can challenge any pre-commencement conditions which may be unnecessary or can be fulfilled at a later date (i.e. during build); ensuring construction can go ahead without delay.

The Neighbourhood Planning Bill is at committee stage in the House of Commons (18 October 2016). There are eight more formal stages prior to Royal Assent.

14 Councillor Barnett to the Leader:

What progress is the council making in welcoming and settling refugees from Syria?

- The City Council pledged to resettle 50 Syrian Refugees under the Home Office scheme
- 25 people have been resettled since December last
- 6 families - 12 adults and 13 school age children or younger

4 homes have been provided from Council housing, 2 from private landlords and 2 will be provided by a housing association for the next intake in December around 10 more people. A further 2 homes have been offered by private landlords which we hope to utilize in the new year.

Working across City Council services and in partnership with the County Council the families have been helped with applications for benefits, acquiring school places for the children, registering with GPs, Dentists and other medical arrangements. They are supported regularly by an

Arabic Speaking Support Worker and the Community Cohesion Officer together with support from County Council family workers. They have been provided with English Speaking classes, and are being helped with CV and job finding opportunities. The school children that arrived in the first phase last December can now hold a conversation in English.

Help with extra items of furniture, tvs, clothing and extra English classes have been provided by volunteers from Cambridge Refugee Resettlement Campaign, The Mosque, and Churches. They have also been befriended by local Arabic speaking community with help to integrate and to get to know the city.

All of the requirements under the SVPR scheme have been met within the required deadlines.

15 Councillor Smart to the Executive Councillor for Communities:

What activities will be provided for children and families from the Council during half-term week?

The City Council will be putting on a range of activities for children and families during the half-term break, provided by our Children's and Young People's Participation Service and Sports Development Team.

This Saturday there is the Big Draw at Brown's Field Centre between 1 and 4pm. This is part of the Big Draw Festival and will include scientists from the Wellcome Genome Campus. The theme at the event will be 'Steam Powered'.

On Monday Chypps are running a 'Have Your Say Day' at Trumpington Pavilion from 2 to 4.30pm. This will provide young people aged 9 to 13 with an opportunity to say what they like and do not like about their local area and to suggest what could be done to make their area better.

Chypps will also be running activities at Nun's Way Pavilion from 2-4pm.

On Wednesday Chypps are supporting the Abbey Pumpkin Festival at the Margaret Wright Community Orchard off Whitehill Road from 4-7.30pm. This will be a celebration of all things autumnal with Abbey

People, Historyworks and Cambridge Sustainable Food. Activities will include pumpkin carving, and other Halloween arts & crafts.

To round off the week there is a Spooky Boat Party on Friday from 3.30pm to 5.30pm. This will be at the Play Boat that is moored at Jesus Green. Spooky story telling, treats & craft activities, Spooky dress up is optional!

Chypps will be supporting the Council's Holiday Lunches programme with children's activities provided alongside the lunches. All these activities are FREE.

As referred to at the start of my answer we will also be running a series of sports sessions for children over the age of eight and their families during half-term in venues across the city. They will be able to play badminton, table tennis, short tennis and squash in a relaxed 'come and play' environment, with all abilities welcome and no previous experience needed. All sporting equipment will be provided.

One of the sessions will see the council's exciting new Glow Sports project launched. Glow Sports involves playing badminton, table tennis, netball, basketball and volleyball but with one big difference – it all happens in the dark.

UV lighting and special glow-in-the dark equipment – including t-shirts, glowsticks and fluorescent body paint will all be provided. The aim of Glow Sports to create a more sociable and fun approach to sport.

The cost for these sports sessions is £5 per family. No advance booking is needed – people can simply turn up and play. For further details visit www.cambridge.gov.uk/sport