

# Public Document Pack

Council

Cncl/1

Thursday, 13 February 2020

## **COUNCIL**

13 February 2020

6.00 - 8.45 pm

**Present:** Councillors Ashton, Baigent, Barnett, Bick, Bird, Cantrill, Chadwick, Collis, Dalzell, Davies, Davey, Dryden, Gehring, Green, Herbert, Hipkin, Johnson, Lord, Martinelli, Massey, Matthews, McGerty, McPherson, Moore, Payne, Pippas, Porrer, Price, Robertson, Sargeant, Sheil, Smart, Smith, Summerbell, Thittala, Thornburrow, Todd-Jones and Tunnacliffe

### **FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**

#### **20/50/CNL Minutes**

The minutes of the 17 October 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

#### **20/51/CNL Mayor's announcements**

##### Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors' Hadley, McQueen, O'Reilly and Page-Croft.

Councillors Gehring, Smith and Todd-Jones gave apologies for lateness.

##### Cambridge Chinese New Year Celebrations

The Mayor joined in three celebrations in various parts of the community to celebrate the Chinese New Year and stated it was a privilege to have been invited.

The Mayor also expressed her thoughts with those in the city with family and friends in China at this difficult time.

##### Mayor's Charity Quiz

Members were reminded the quiz was taking place on Wednesday 26 February and to contact Penny Jackson if they wished to enter a team.

##### Council Elections

As there was no Council meeting in April the Mayor took the opportunity to say

thank you to Councillors for their outstanding service to their wards and on Council committees. For those Councillors who were going to stand in the May elections the Mayor wished them well.

### Honorary Councillor Caroline Hart

The Mayor led a minute's silence for the Late Honorary Councillor Caroline Hart and County Councillor Christine Carter.

Members were invited to attend a remembrance gathering for Caroline on Thursday 5 March at noon in the Szeged Room.

### Declarations of Interest

Member	Item	Interest
Thornburrow	20/53/CNL	She was one of the applicants for the registration of Castle Mound as a Town and Village Green.

### **20/52/CNL Petitions**

#### **3a Park Street toilets**

A petition had been received containing over 500 valid signatures stating the following:

We the undersigned object to the scrapping of public toilets from the council's redevelopment in Park Street. We call on Cambridge City Council to amend its plans so that it continues to provide this basic public service at this location.

Councillor Porrer presented and spoke in support of the petition and made the following points:

- i. Public amenities were critical in our busy city.
- ii. A petition had been submitted for the reinstatement of the Park Street car park toilets as part of the proposed development. This was following repeated requests to the ruling group to reinstate public toilets as part of the Park Street development.
- iii. She was not criticising the Planning Committee decision, she understood why that decision was made on the application as submitted. This was a

- criticism of the ruling group who were creating a beautiful new building with no toilets.
- iv. She could not understand why profit was being put before public amenity. This was a council development which did not provide the thing that most people would want to see there.
  - v. There were two key issues: 1) there would be fewer public toilets in Cambridge because of this decision. The Quayside toilet upgrade would not increase provision. People travelling to Cambridge in cars possibly with carers and people with bicycles and cargo bikes would expect to find facilities on site. 2) One of the few disabled accessible toilets in the city centre was being removed. This was raised at the Council Disability Consultative Forum. The minutes to the meeting stated this was a major issue for disabled users and should be re-examined.
  - vi. She understood that Quayside toilets would be developed and include changing places provision, which was welcomed however this was not providing additional facilities and was a reduction in the overall toilet provision.
  - vii. It was 400m to walk from Park Street to Quayside but the briefing note provided at the council meeting stated this was 380m. 50m was the maximum blue badge holders would be expected to walk.
  - viii. £100,000 was proposed to be spent on a changing places toilet at Quayside, yet Quayside was probably the least accessible location in the centre for anyone with a disability.
  - ix. She noted there were hardly any disabled parking spaces close by. The three closest disabled parking places at Round Church Street were being taken away and located in the car park. Suggested the funding proposed for Quayside toilets should be used to provide a changing places toilet in the Park Street development so that people could access this from their cars.
  - x. She had been contacted by various residents who talked about hidden disabilities; toilets were essential in the city centre.
  - xi. At the Park Street Liaison Group it was discussed that the development could not have cycle parking and public toilets. She was not asking to reduce the amount of cycle parking. She had previously fought to have outside cycle parking which had not been included in the planning application back in May 2019. Parking spaces should be removed and replaced by public toilet provision.
  - xii. The Council's supplementary planning document talked about walking and cycling being a priority in Cambridge and yet this development was providing the opposite. This was not a grade II listed building where development would be restricted, the council had complete autonomy about what was provided. She understood there would be a cost and that

income would be lost from the loss of parking spaces. It was a cost that should be borne and should have been included at the outset.

- xiii. Asked for the public toilet provision to be reinstated as part of the development.

Councillors debated the issues raised for the allocated 15 minutes.

The Leader made the following comments in response to the debate:

- i. Councillors had been part of the liaison group and no comments had been made for how the toilet facilities could be accommodated.
- ii. Not all car parks in the city had public toilets.
- iii. Toilets which were built within car parks were vandalised. There were no staff on site in the car parks so they could not be protected. Public toilets in car parks were isolated.
- iv. For a city the size of Cambridge, there were far more public toilets than in other cities.
- v. Questioned whether councillors had visited other public toilets in the area. Quayside toilets were secure, staffed and in a visible public place.
- vi. Discussions had taken place with Camcycle regarding cycle parking provision at the Park Street development. There was a full floor for cycle parking.
- vii. The size of Park Street car park would be cut by a third.
- viii. All car parks would be assessed in the future to see whether the current capacity was required.
- ix. Public toilets were not open late at night.
- x. £100,000 was being invested in a quality changing places toilet because there were few across the city. There was one in the Lion Yard.
- xi. £10 million would be invested in affordable housing as a result of the Park Street development.

It was proposed that the issue should be referred back to the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee this was lost by 14 votes to 23.

### **3b Kings Parade Barrier**

The Mayor exercised her discretion to permit a member of the public to ask a public question regarding the Kings Parade barrier petition in advance of Public Question Time.

The member of the public raised the following points:

- i. She had a background in teaching Bikeability to children and adults in Cambridge and also did guided rides for British cycling.

- ii. She was shocked when she cycled through the Kings Parade Barrier, if she had to do a risk assessment on it, it wouldn't pass. She questioned if a risk assessment had been undertaken.
- iii. She questioned if the risks to cyclists were greater than the risk behind the reason why the barrier was put into place.
- iv. Any cycling infrastructure should be a positive provision and should reduce delays and risks to cyclists.
- v. Any single cycle track should be 1.5m, she had measured the track and this was 1.16m. It had arrows going both ways which indicated it was a two-way track. A two-way track should be 2.5m, this was 1.16m. Of the 1.16m, 48cm were cobbles, a drainage grill and raised kerb. Therefore the workable space for cycling was 1.05m. If she had to take children through this barrier she would have to walk them through.
- vi. This route was part of the national cycling route 11, which was a big route through East Anglia and it was blocked by this barrier.
- vii. Cyclists had to queue to come through the barrier.
- viii. The council would have to respond if anyone had an accident, it would be dealt with under 'slips and trips'.
- ix. The barrier was dangerous.

A petition had been received containing over 500 valid signatures stating the following:

The new anti-terrorist barrier which has been installed in Kings Parade is a hazard for cyclists and pedestrians and a blot on one of Cambridge's most iconic streets. When it is closed, it blocks a major cycle route and will lead to more conflict between pedestrians, cyclists and drivers.

While there is much support for an extension to the city centre traffic-free area, this barrier is a clumsy and heavy-handed way to achieve it. The project has shied away from prior scrutiny and challenge, from which a robust but sensitive, safe and proportionate solution could have been adopted. Given the time taken in planning this barrier, a sympathetically designed and functionally safer installation should have been sought to avoid the major problems that are now visible to all.

We call on Cambridge City Council to conduct an immediate review of the Kings Parade barrier in order to urgently commission alternative arrangements and replace the current barrier without delay.

Mr Levy presented and spoke in support of the petition and made the following points:

- i. Was not objecting to the principle of closing off Kings Parade, making it traffic free was in many ways a desirable objective. Acknowledged the impact on neighbouring properties as well as St Marys Church, this was a problem already faced by nearby premises and solutions had been found.
- ii. Did not disagree with the security services basic conclusion about the risks of terrorism. It was difficult to know the extent of the threat or to assess the proportionality of the solution adopted as the assessment had not been shared outside of the ruling group on the council.
- iii. The security services identified a threat to one of the most popular tourist attractions in the country. This was why it should have been addressed in a sensitive and thoughtful fashion.
- iv. A solution was required for all who continue to pass through whether they are visitors, workers, or residents on foot or on bikes.
- v. When the access from Trinity Street was closed off some years ago these factors were considered and a suitable solution being the barriers between Great St Marys Church and the Senate House were put in place. This was effective and relatively unobtrusive. It blocked access to vehicular traffic without impeding access for pedestrians and cyclists. These barriers were designed to control the flow of traffic and not terrorist incidents, however they only need an additional bollard to achieve that objective as well.
- vi. It appeared that a lot of time was spent considering a solution, presumably to include design work and assessments, including a full health and safety assessment.
- vii. Consideration must have been given to the large crowds which gather in front of the Corpus Christi clock.
- viii. Consideration must have been given to pedestrians and two lanes of cyclists using the gaps in the barrier.
- ix. He would like to see the health and safety report which must have considered the above concerns which were raised at the time and were apparently deemed to be unimportant.
- x. On the face of things, it looked like time was taken to come up with a good solution. Must have been aware that suitable barrier designs existed nearby and in many other places.
- xi. The Government Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure had published an integrated security guide which covered this issue and offered guidance on solutions.
- xii. Questioned the design of barrier in the unique location that it is in.
- xiii. Asked for the barrier to be looked at before accidents occurred.

Councillors debated the issues raised for the allocated 15 minutes.

The Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources made the following comments in response to the debate:

- i. The City Council were not the highway authority, this was Cambridgeshire County Council, the City Council had been working closely with them in preparing the installation. The County Council undertook a full road safety audit on the City Council's behalf and although concerns were raised regarding the unevenness of the road, the County Council said it was satisfactory.
- ii. He acknowledged that this was not the best solution and had already made a commitment to publicly engage on the long-term solution.
- iii. Other cities had installed this type of barrier particularly those with high numbers of tourists. This included York, Canterbury, Stratford, Windsor and Edinburgh because of the risk of a threat. The risk was of terrorists driving down pedestrians who were on pavements. This threat could not be ignored.
- iv. Inconvenience was not as important as public safety.
- v. Responding to the threat was the primary focus of action in installing the barrier.
- vi. Many local stakeholders wanted to see the protected area expanded. The area around the Corpus clock where crowds formed was a particular point which had been raised and was a valid point.
- vii. Removing the traffic travelling along Bennet Street, Trumpington Street to the junction of Silver street was a better ambition.
- viii. The needs of disabled drivers needed to be recognised. The delay in the installation of the barrier was due to the relocation of the parking bays on Kings Parade used by disabled drivers.
- ix. The barrier which had been installed was temporary, it was not embedded in the ground and because it was so big and strong it could withstand a terrorist attack.
- x. Committed to reviewing the need and design of the barrier.
- xi. The permanent barrier would have two gaps, one for each direction. The width of the barrier was limited to prevent vehicles being able to drive through it.
- xii. Were currently monitoring the impact of the barrier and were beginning to explore a permanent scheme with the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP).
- xiii. Committed to working with residents, businesses, residents and other stakeholders to design a better solution.
- xiv. Would bring the issue back to the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

The member of the public raised the following supplementary points:

- i. Lived in a cycling city this was not Edinburgh.
- ii. She was not interested in the political debate she was interested in safe cycling.
- iii. 1.05m was dangerous and not adequate. There were four sets of cobbles, grill and raised curb.
- iv. She would be interested to see the safety audit and risk assessment.
- v. There was nothing to say that bicycles cannot go backwards and forwards. There was nothing to say who had priority. Could plaster over the gap so it wasn't dangerous. Could stop people parking altogether and could put up a sign to say no motorcycles can go through the barrier.
- vi. Asked that this would be made safe before someone had an accident.

The Executive Councillor confirmed:

- i. The road safety assessment was available and he would ensure that it would be sent to the member of the public.

Members unanimously resolved that the Kings Parade barrier would be referred back to the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

## **20/53/CNL Public questions time**

Members of the public asked several questions, as set out below.

### Question 1

Friends of St Albans Road Rec raised the following points:

- i. Expressed concern at the loss of green open space concerning the Council's plans to build three blocks of flats and a new community centre on the recreation ground.
- ii. Referred to the Cambridge Local Plan (CLP) 2018 and Open Space and Recreation Strategy 2011 which noted how the green open spaces were to residents, particularly to those in the north of the city.
- iii. Quoted that in 2009 Arbury had a population of 9280 (taken from the Open Space and Recreation Strategy), with a total 7.55 hectares of protected space and that this was the lowest in the city. The population had since grown.
- iv. By comparison, Abbey Ward with a population of 9360 (taken in 2009), had 116.39 hectare of protected open space.
- v. Queried why an area with such limited open space had been chosen for development.

- vi. Policy 67 of the CLP stated that open spaces were protected; open spaces should be looked after and protected regardless of ownership.
- vii. A petition was currently circulating with residents to keep the open space which had over 1400 signatures to date and 549 members in the friends' group, demonstrating a strength of support.
- viii. If protected open space was being removed from residential areas, the space had to be enhanced. However, the proposed development did not enrich the area in any way.
- ix. Private amenities for the proposed flats and shared amenity areas were not being provided.
- x. The play area was being downgraded.
- xi. Asked if the Council could explain how the proposed scheme would enhance the area.

The Executive Councillor for Housing responded:

- i. The Council acknowledged and were aware of the concerns raised. Changes to the proposed scheme had been made in response to public comments.
- ii. As the proposed scheme was an active planning application which would be put forward to the Planning Committee for consideration no further comment could be made.

The following supplementary points were put forward:

- i. Reiterated that the development would be built on protected space.
- ii. The protected space had been agreed by Cambridge City Council when adopting the CLP.
- iii. Questioned why there was a need for the CLP if the strategies in the Plan were ignored.
- iv. Changes to the proposed scheme meant the flats were now higher.
- v. Acknowledged less protected space was being built on but the green open space being taken away was classed as a 'needy' space.
- vi. The planning consultation response acknowledged there was a requirement to address the potential negative impact of having many small single households with potentially high levels of need.
- vii. The area did not require any additional housing.

The Executive Councillor for Housing responded with the following:

- i. The Council could not predetermine the planning application so no further comment would be made.

- ii. Would encourage members of the public to make their written representations to the planning department.
- iii. The proposed scheme would bring much needed affordable housing to city.

## Question 2

The Pubs Officer for Cambridge & District CAMRA raised the following points regarding the Hopbine public house.

- i. In February 2019 the Hopbine public house on Fair Street closed, even though the landlord and landlady had run the pub for seven and a half years and were keen to continue running it.
- ii. Since the pub had closed there has been at least one attempt to break into the building.
- iii. A private individual bought the Admiral Taverns in 2011, they had no interest in running it as a public house themselves and instead leased it to the licensees of the Portland Arms on a rolling six-month lease.
- iv. The Hopbine was turned into a successful, thriving pub with a fine reputation for its food as well as its beer and won various awards. In 2012 it won CAMRA Most Improved City Pub Award, in 2016 and 2018 CAMRA City Local Ale Award for selling well kept, locally brewed beers. In 2018 it was also the Cambridge University Real Ale Society Pub of the Year.
- v. The landlord and landlady also took on the Alexandra Arms on Gwydir Street and have made a success too as they have been able to make significant investment in both the Portland Arms and the Alexandra Arms.
- vi. The landlord and landlady spoke with the owner of the Hopbine to ask for a reasonable length lease so they could investment money into the pub if this was not possible then they would have to close the pub. The request was refused so the pub closed.
- vii. Stated it was a ridiculous situation with a much-loved pub in a busy part of Cambridge sitting empty but not because it wasn't viable, or that no one was willing to run it or invest in it but because the owner was only willing to offer six-month leases.
- viii. Asked what the Council could do to resolve this situation?

The Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open Spaces said the following:

- i. The Hopbine was a safeguarded public house; therefore, had some level of protection, the building and the function and amenity it provided was important to residents.
- ii. Believed that protected public houses were an asset to the community when there was a landlord/ landlady who wanted to invest in the public house over a longer lease.
- iii. There was evidence that the Hopbine was viable despite the fact it had been shut down.
- iv. The planning policy position protected the use of the building but could not require its occupation. If a planning application was put forward for a change of use it would have to be considered against planning policy and would have to show that it had not been viable as a public house.
- v. The Council did not have the power to instruct the owner to bring the pub back into use.
- vi. If the building fell into a bad condition which impacted the local area officers could serve a notice under Section 215 of the Town and Planning Act. This would be used for occupation, insistence to open the public house or for the building to be resold.
- vii. Advised would be willing to meet the Ward Councillors on site to investigate the exterior.
- viii. Supported the campaign to keep the building as a protected public house and to get the Holbine reopened.

The following supplementary points were raised:

- i. Asked again if the Council representatives or the Executive Councillor could talk to the owner to resolve this issue.
- ii. Water ingress had been an issue for a number of years with no pump to clear the cellar out of water; therefore, the interior was probably deteriorating as the building had been left for a year.

The Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open Spaces responded:

- i. The Council did not have the means for their officers to speak with the owner; but suggested this could be done by a Ward Councillor with the support of the Executive Councillor.
- ii. As the building was privately owned the Council could not interfere with how that individual chose to lease the building.
- iii. If the building was being damaged and causing loss of amenity, then this could be looked into.
- iv. Offered to meet with the public speaker on site.

### Question 3

The following points were raised on private rented housing in the City:

- i. Suggested that the Council offers financial support to those landlords who could not afford to bring their property up to the required Council standard.
- ii. Believed he had experienced abuse of procedure from council staff when inspections had taken place and he no longer rented out his property to private individuals.
- iii. The Cambridge Evening News (03/02/20) reported that 271 city council houses had category one hazards (immediate risk to personal health and safety); who was prosecuting the Council on this matter?
- iv. As a landlord, he had kept the rent low for public sector workers who worked at Addenbrookes hospital and not exploited the system.

The Executive Councillor for Housing responded with the following:

- i. Thanked the public speaker for his time and the issues put forward.
- ii. He could not comment with regards to council staff as there was a pending court case with the public speaker and the Council and did not wish to prejudice the proceedings at a future hearing.
- iii. The Cambridge Evening News article was incorrect with the categorisation in terms of decent homes and those in category one.
- iv. The City Council appreciated those landlords who provided good quality homes in the private sector; there were many ways the Council engaged with private landlords such as the landlord forum and events throughout the year.

The following supplementary points were made:

- i. Asked if it was likely that the Council would consider financial support to those landlords who provided low rents to those working in the public sector.
- ii. Stated that the individual who had rented out the public speaker's property was now paying double the rent having had to move out.
- iii. The Council were creating unattainable high standards.

The Executive Councillor said the following:

- i. Agreed it was fact there were some private rentals which were unattainable to people in Cambridge.

- ii. The City Council were planning on building 500 Council homes with 1500 people on the Council waiting list.
- iii. Acknowledged there were some people who were not eligible for Council housing due to their net income but could not afford to get on the housing ladder. The City Council were working on this issue with a city housing company which had several properties for affordable rent.
- iv. Demand exceeded supply and there was a variety of rental options throughout the city.

#### Question 4

The following points were made regarding the Castle Mound and the grassed forecourt area between Shire Hall and Castle Mound to be made a town and village green.

- i. Noted that Suffolk County Council, had been delegated the decision by Cambridgeshire County Council as to whether Castle Mound should be designated as a town and village green. They had advised that they would be advertising the application and calling for submissions or objections this week (second week of February).
- ii. The mound was integral to the history of Cambridge; was of scientific, botanical and archaeological significance.
- iii. The space should be kept as a public space for residents and visitors to the area.
- iv. Asked if the City Council would be making a submission to Suffolk County Council in support of the town and village green application?
- v. Enquired if the area was declared a town green, and if at some point Cambridgeshire County Council sought to make an arrangement with Cambridge City Council for it to maintain and upkeep the town green, whether the City Council would be prepared to enter into discussions with the County Council in this regard?

The Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open Spaces responded with the following:

- i. The City Council had no objection to the application and would be willing to make this representation to the Suffolk County Council when invited to do so.
- ii. Confirmed the Council was prepared to enter into discussions with the County Council regarding the maintenance of the area on a non-prejudicial basis if asked to do so.

The following supplementary points were made:

- i. Asked if the Council would include a request that a public meeting or hearing take place in Cambridge before any decision was made.

The Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open Spaces responded with the following:

- i. The City Council would not be able to follow up with the supplementary request.
- ii. The registration authority was required to follow a legal process which included formally advertising the application and notifying interested parties.
- iii. The Council would support Suffolk County Council and assist with local communication around Cambridge.

#### Question 5

A representative from Extinction Rebellion put forward the following points:

- i. Stated there were issues in the City and the wider area which needed to be addressed concerning the climate emergency.
- ii. While the City Council had met with Extinction Rebellion representatives on previous occasions the work agreed had not been undertaken; there had been offers of public engagement, but these should have been voluntary.
- iii. Stated the Council had not given the public enough of a voice; and had not excluded those who had a vested interest in the destruction of the environment or the oppression of workers.
- iv. The Council needed to hold a citizen's assembly on climate change that was representative and was able to use devolved powers to make changes as time had run out.
- v. People were dying now due to the impact of the climate emergency which had not been addressed; time had run out.
- vi. Climate justice was needed not just for the city but across the world.
- vii. Stated the Council had shown they were not capable of decision making as they did not have the power required to make the changes needed.

Due to the continued disruption by some members of the public that followed the Mayor declared the meeting was adjourned at 7.45pm.

Members of the Council met at another location within the Guildhall at 8.20pm. the membership concluded that the meeting would not formally re-convene, and the Mayor reaffirmed the adjournment to a future date which would be confirmed in due course.

This meeting reconvened on the 25 February 2020, please follow this link to minutes for the rest of the meeting.

<https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=116&MId=3896&Ver=4>

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm

**MAYOR**

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