

# Public Document Pack

Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

SnR/1

Monday, 8 February 2021

**STRATEGY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** 8 February 2021  
5.00 - 10.04 pm

**Present:** Councillors Barnett (Chair), Robertson (Vice-Chair), Bick, Dalzell, Davies and Green

Executive Councillors: Davey (Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources), Herbert (Executive Councillor for Strategy and External Partnerships) and Massey

**Other Councillors present:** Executive Councillors: Johnson, Massey, Moore, Smith and Thornburrow Opposition Spokes: Martinelli, Matthews, Payne and Porrer

## **Officers:**

Interim Chief Executive: Andrew Grant

Director of Planning and Economic Development: Stephen Kelly

Strategic Director (FB): Fiona Bryant

Strategic Director (SH): Suzanne Hemingway

Head of Corporate Strategy: Andrew Limb

Benefits Manager: Naomi Armstrong

Head of Finance: Caroline Ryba

Head of Property Services: Dave Prinsep

Public Realm Engineering & Project Delivery Team Leader: John Richards

Committee Manager: Sarah Steed

Meeting Producer: Liam Martin

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

### **21/1/SR Apologies for Absence**

No apologies were received.

### **21/2/SR Declarations of Interest**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Interest</b>
Councillor Barnett	21/15/SR	Personal: Referred to fees and charges element of agenda item 15. Employer (Addenbrookes) may incur charges.

**21/3/SR Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**21/4/SR Public Questions**

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

## Question 1.

- i. Was the Chair of the Federation of Cambridge Residents and a Friend of Cambridge Market.
- ii. Referred to BSR bid S4759 which proposed cutting the graziers' pinder out of hours emergency service, noted that the graziers said that Cambridge City Council received all the agricultural subsidy payments for the common land and would have additional income from the grazing.
- iii. The BSR bid I14754 referred to creating new business opportunities on Cambridge's Parks and Open Spaces. Noted that residents were concerned that 'riverscape' opportunities may make some spaces honeypot destinations and increase footfall on unique green spaces which were already very fragile. Last year with more people outdoors on the commons CamCattle said they had 4 cattle in the river. A young heifer died after swallowing a plastic bag.
- iv. Last year the Council granted planning permission for a trail of plastic cows on the city's parks and open spaces, which trail organisers described as being 'inspired by the rare Red Poll cattle breed, which in the warmer months can be found grazing on Midsummer Common'. The cows were scheduled to be on the city's parks and open spaces from April to June. Concrete plinths had already been installed on Queen's Green on the Backs. The Council was one of the cow trail sponsors.
- v. An article in the *New York Times* in 2018 highlighted that Cambridge's famous 'rus in urbe style' of cows grazing on Cambridge Commons was admired all over the world.
- vi. Residents questioned why the council and businesses were sponsoring plastic cows on the city's Backs and Commons inspired by the red poll cattle at the same time as they were cutting financial support for Cambridge's real cows.

- vii. Traders, residents and shoppers, reiterated concerns at the recent Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee that there appeared to be little knowledge about the operational running of a traditional market and the need for business continuity. Over 7330 people signed a petition to keep the market open so that locally produced food could be sold outside at Cambridge market.
- viii. The Cambridge Independent reported that established market traders such as CamCattle, whose red poll cattle graze on Midsummer Common and Grantchester Meadows, were seeking support. Over 80 % of CamCattle sales were at the market.
- ix. Asked if there had been any assessment of environmental capacity and the impacts that a) increased visitor numbers and b) income generating activities would have on the cows and wildlife on Cambridge's parks and commons.

The Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open spaces responded:

- i. The cows were a very important part of the city's tradition. As the land was common land, people were able to bring cows on to the common land.
- ii. Had been in discussion with the graziers about their needs. Was aware of the issue of cows making their way to the river and the bid included a ramp which would make it easier to get cows out of the river.
- iii. Had consulted with the graziers and the bid was only concerned with 'out of hours' cover.
- iv. Would be looking for expressions of interest and ideas to be brought forward for new activities to take place on open spaces. Biodiversity would need to be protected. Could consider an outdoor cinema. Could look at repurposing redundant buildings. Any idea would have an environmental impact assessment.

The Executive Councillor for Climate Change, Environment and City Centre responded:

- i. The bid project could be a trail of anything, similar events had taken place across the UK. Local artists painted something which created a trail across the city.

The member of the public made the following supplementary points:

- i. Did not feel the Executive Councillor had addressed their question regarding environmental capacity.
- ii. Referred to Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee where the Director of Planning stated that the 'Making Spaces document' was not going to be a supplementary planning document (SPD) this was instead going to be replaced by a higher level more agile strategy.
- iii. Asked if the Executive Councillor was privatising the open spaces. Referred to issues Edinburgh had experienced with 'underbelly'.

The Executive Councillor for Climate Change, Environment and City Centre responded:

- i. Projects looked at so far included the improvement of toilets at Cherry Hinton Hall and the possibility of a café. This had a playground and there was a separate bid to improve the playground. This was about small projects to improve open spaces and provide better facilities to residents and visitors to the open spaces.

The Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Open spaces responded:

- i. Any proposals regarding the open spaces would be assessed to ensure there was no impact on biodiversity / to the cows. Consultations would also be carried out with 'Friends' groups.

#### Question 2

- i. Had been a resident of Cambridge for over 40 years and had worked for the City Council for over 20 years. As Historic Environment Manager for the City Council, finalised the 2006 Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal. Was a friend of Cambridge Market.
- ii. Sought public clarification of relationships between the projects for Cambridge Market Square, 'Making Spaces for People', and 'Cambridge Visitor Welcome'. These projects impinged on the public realm of the city centre, proposals for which are of concern to all who lived in Cambridge.
- iii. The brief outline of the 'Cambridge Visitor Welcome' project in Item 7 gave no detail of what was proposed or where. Referred to the Combined Authority Business Board's papers for the November meeting at which £710,000 was awarded to 'Cambridge Visitor Welcome' for Cambridge City Centre. Questioned why the key document was marked "Confidential" and why no details of the proposals had been made public since the decision.
- iv. Asked what was proposed. Asked if the proposals were only for the public realm, or if they used vacant shop units. Questioned their impact on the Market Square, on King's Parade, and other streets and spaces rated "Very High" or "High" significance in the Historic Core Conservation

Area Appraisal. Asked how it would be ensured that the Visitor Welcome project proposals were appropriate and of the quality essential for the historic city centre.

- ii. Asked where the proposed additional seating would go. Thought it would be good to clear out the bike racks on Peas Hill, which was paved and given back to pedestrians through the Historic Core Appraisal.
- iii. Noted the draft Market Square proposals showed cycle parking being displaced, not provided, within a city centre which had a very serious cycle parking capacity issue.
- iv. Asked what if any bids were being made for finance for long-term cycle parking solutions to free up space for people.
- v. Asked if the Executive Councillors would commit to:
  - a) ensuring that development of proposals for the city centre were subject to full transparency from now on, and
  - b) that there was full public involvement in the development of a long-term vision for the City Centre.
- vi. Noted that the Market Square was prime public space and that apart from the City and County Councils the entities involved in these projects were the university, corporate or private interests such as Cambridge BID and Cambridge Visitor Welcome. None of which were accountable to the public. Noted that it was the responsibility of councillors to ensure transparency and to safeguard the public interest for all the people of Cambridge.

The Executive Councillor for Climate Change, Environment and City Centre responded:

- i. It wasn't the City Council's decision to make documents confidential. The City Council applied for grant funding from the Combined Authority. The Combined Authority made the decision that the documents were confidential.
- ii. Applied for funding for the next stage of the market square project. The Combined Authority Business Board wanted something which could be put in place immediately as the fund was specifically to support businesses as a result of the Covid pandemic. The target was to have things in place for Summer 2021.
- iii. Last summer businesses were limited as to how many customers they could accommodate. This was meant to enable more businesses to be able to seat customers outside. That was the purpose of the grant. Felt that the City Council should apply for funding where it was able to do so and try and make the City Council's actions transparent. This was a work in progress, there was no grand plan for where the seating / heating

Pods would be located. This would be considered with city centre businesses.

The member of the public made the following supplementary points:

- i. Questioned if the climate change impact of external heating pods had been considered.
- ii. In relation to CAP 4787 for the Market Square project this sought approval for work on capital investment and procurement, asked how the Council would guarantee that further development of the project would be governed by what Cambridge people wanted rather than dictates of corporate finance.
- iii. Thought the scope of this bid needed to be revised. It wrongly assumed completion of RIBA Stage 2 (Concept Design) and moving on to Stages 3 and 4, when vital parts of Stage 1 had not been completed. The RIBA says that the outcome of Stage 1 should be "Project Brief approved by the client and confirmed that it can be accommodated on the site". The RIBA Plan of Work was designed for individual building projects, rather than major public interest schemes for public space in which the public was the end user and client. The Market Square Project brief had not received public approval. Nor had it been confirmed that the project's aspirations could be accommodated on the site. The incomplete feasibility study which had been undertaken did not consider the practicality and impacts of the proposed alternative uses.
- iv. The most fundamental issue, whether it was feasible to have removable market stalls, had not yet been established. As the Executive Councillor said at the Environment and Community Scrutiny meeting "The Council have asked for a prototype to be built, if lucky this will be available before the Committee date."
- v. The whole project depended on the viability and practicability of that prototype. Unless and until these had been established, it could not be confirmed that the project aspirations could be accommodated on the site, and the requirement of RIBA Stage 1 will not have been met.
- vi. The work needing to be done now on this project related to RIBA Stage 1, including full public consultation on the brief, and thorough feasibility assessment. The bid needed to be amended accordingly.

The Executive Councillor for Climate Change, Environment and City Centre responded:

- i. The aim of the project was to improve the market. The flooring was uneven. Access was difficult for those with mobility concerns or people with buggies. There was no specific area for hot food sellers who then had to be spread out around the market.

- ii. The fountain was in disrepair.
- iii. The stalls were fixed, it would have been useful during the Covid pandemic if the stalls could be moved and spaced out more.
- iv. The highway wasn't regularly used, it was visible and gave the feel of a road.
- v. The stalls need updating.
- vi. Thought the first stage of the project would have been through committee and a consultation underway.
- vii. If public opinion did not support the market proposals the Executive Councillor would have to explain why the budget bid had not been spent.

### Question 3

- i. Was a local resident and speaking on behalf of Friends of Cambridge Market.
- ii. Central SPD was to create a framework for streets and spaces in central Cambridge and to safeguard the character of existing spaces. Any market square project put in place before the SPD would be premature.
- iii. Expressed concerns regarding the amount of money spent and committed without public consent. Expressed concerns that the vision and concept designed had been concealed and was pulled from the last Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee.
- iv. The market square project was being a steam roller which was wrong.
- v. Asked how much money had already been spent on the BDP study. Asked what the £320,000 bid CAP 4787 would be spent on.
- vi. The equalities assessment for CAP 4787 reviewed the impacts on different ethnicities, people with children and disabilities but it was silent and said there was no impact on poverty ratings. Asked if current and future market traders were factored into the calculation. Asked about shoppers on low incomes. Questioned who benefited from this £320,000. Questioned if the council should spend this funding if there was no impact on poverty ratings.
- vii. The Market Square was public property, so its opportunities must be shared more and not less equitably. The Council should protect and steward this space, for the benefit of all Cambridge residents and not favour those with ample power, voice and influence.
- viii. To serve the urgent needs of individual Traders, not the market as an entity residents and visitors, the Council should provide proactive and supportive management of the traditional open Cambridge Market – focussing first on its essential infrastructure. Then the robust fixed stalls should be restored - and left exactly where they were, with renewed iconic striped coverings. Asked where the comparative cost benefit analysis of this approach was rather than one driven by private powerful

stakeholders. This should be prioritised over expensive cosmetic superficial changes in the interests of visitors.

The Executive Councillor for Climate Change, Environment and City Centre responded:

- i. Questioned who the powerful private stakeholders referred to were. Thought it might be the council itself.
- ii. £158,000 had been spent on this project.
- iii. The Market Square and the Market needed investment. It had cobbles, the fountain no longer acted as a fountain and had deteriorated over time. The drains and electrics needed work. Hot food stalls needed to be spread round the market; they couldn't all be in one place which meant there couldn't be a food area. If hot food was being cooked these stalls had to be dotted around the other stalls selling jewellery, books or clothing.
- iv. The cobbles were quite uneven, difficult to walk on and were sinking in places.
- v. The square itself had the highway around it. The current proposal in the concept design was to keep the access to the highway but stop it looking like a road, because this could make people feel unsafe.
- vi. The Market Team had created a little area with six picnic benches. More wanted to be made of this area so that there was space for people to dwell and to enjoy it.
- vii. The project needed doing and they felt that having moveable stalls would have been really useful in this time, to enable as many traders as possible to trade in a safe way. There were also times, although rarely, when it would be nice to have more space on the market, for example for night markets and film nights where the stalls could be moved to enable public events.
- viii. The proposals would be consulted upon and they encouraged members of the public to respond.

The member of the public made the following supplementary points:

- i. Expressed concerns that public money and assets should not be devoted to economically and socially misguided and divisive projects. The people in the city who had been asking for the market to be used for entertainment were not market traders or people who shopped at the market. What they wanted was better conditions and opportunities for those who worked on the market. That should be the priority for the City Council not the rare events for entertainment, fair and festivals.

- ii. The Friends of Cambridge Market would like to see the Council working to restore the market not just the essential services Councillor Moore mentioned.
- iii. Asked if the market could be operated on a two-shift basis; day and evening markets. So that twice as many traders had the opportunity to establish training employment and boost the economy. Asked if this had been considered. Natural surveillance would arise from this and prevent the stalls from being used for unsavoury practices and would be much safer and welcoming in the evening.
- iv. Wanted the market to be a diverse, welcoming and inclusive place for residents not just for visitors. The needs of traders and residents were different to visitors. The focus on Welcome Cambridge was alarming for residents. Wanted the Council to commit to respecting the market square as an urban common.

The Executive Councillor for Climate Change, Environment and City Centre responded:

- i. Better conditions for the market traders was at the heart of the project. The new stalls would be much improved, more water tight, slightly bigger and they would provide a covered area for shoppers if it was raining.
- ii. The project included the underground area; the toilets would be re-done. Would be getting rid of the compacter above ground and the bins would hopefully be located underground to improve the surrounding area.
- iii. If the market was more attractive to shoppers and a nicer place to be in, traders would benefit as it would be nice for the market traders and attract more people to the market. The area should be more accessible as the cobbles would be worked on so that they were flat. There would be better lighting.
- iv. A second shift was considered for the night market, there was no evidence that traders wanted to trade in the evenings. Officers worked hard to encourage traders to come to the night markets, but this turned into a free film for residents with a couple of food traders. Would be happy to hear from people if circumstances changed.
- v. There had been a number of discussions regarding how to encourage new market traders. Last summer there was meant to be a National Young Market Traders Winners event which was unfortunately cancelled due to the Covid pandemic.

## **21/5/SR To note Officer Urgent Decision**

### **5a Discretionary Self-Isolation Payments**

The Committee made the following comment on the self-isolation payment officer urgent decisions:

- i. Thought there had only been a few applications, which had resulted in grants being made. Questioned the role of the council in making grant payments. Asked if the council was just imposing further conditions on top of national criteria or whether they were two different schemes.

The Benefit Manager responded:

- i. The scheme was broadly a national scheme, with nationally set criteria. For people who were in receipt of benefits they could claim £500.
- ii. Local Authorities had been given a discretionary pot of funding to deliver a locally based scheme. There was only a short timeframe within which to devise the scheme.
- iii. Cambridge initially had low rates of infection and therefore there were few applications.
- iv. Officers had reviewed the criteria and had opened the scheme up to people on a specified income, which was broadly in line with criteria that other local authorities were applying.
- v. Central Government provided further funding in January 2021, officers reviewed the criteria and made changes. This decision was done by an urgent officer decision so that the funding criteria could be available to members of the public as soon as possible. When the criteria were reviewed, applications which were previously refused were reviewed to see whether applicants but then able to access the grant funding.
- vi. The Council had to exercise care when awarding grant funding as once the funding pot had been used no further Central Government funding was expected. There was therefore a balance to be struck between ensuring that members of the public had access to funding but also ensuring that the grant fund was not spent all at once.

The decision was noted.

#### **5b** Discretionary Self-Isolation Payments - revised

The decision was noted.

#### **5c** Addressing The Implications For Businesses And The City Centre In The Context Of The Coronavirus Restrictions

The decision was noted.

**5d Discretionary Self-Isolation Payments - revised 28.1.21**

The decision was noted.

**21/6/SR King's Parade - Vehicular Access Restrictions****Matter for Decision**

The report sought the Executive Councillor for Transport and Community Safety's support for work to enable the existing temporary barrier apparatus to remain in place from July 2021, whilst a more suited longer-term solution is developed.

**Decision of the Executive Councillor for Transport and Community Safety**

- i. Noted the outcomes of public and stakeholder engagement and consultation, and behavioural monitoring, on the interim scheme introduced from January 2020;
- ii. Noted the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on every-day life and visitor numbers to the city, and the limitations on undertaking a fully comprehensive evaluation of the scheme's effects, through 2020;
- iii. Supported a request to Cambridgeshire County Council for Traffic Regulation Orders to become permanent, enabling the existing controls and a fuller appraisal of their effects to continue beyond 13th July 2021;
- iv. Requested that officers continue to investigate and develop a more sympathetic and suited longer-term solution that addresses the primary limitations of the existing interim scheme and aligns with parallel work with partner organisations and groups to better manage access to the city-centre.

**Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

**Scrutiny Considerations****Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable

**Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Public Realm Engineering & Project Delivery Team Leader.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Noted that more people disagreed that the barrier improved safety and the environment. The current barrier needed to be replaced with something better. Expressed concern that the committee were being asked to make a restriction permanent and that the current barrier's location may not be the most suitable permanent location. Questioned why the County Council as Highway Authority were not leading on this project.
- ii. Noted that a minority of consultation responses felt that the barrier provided safety and environmental improvements. Noted that work could be done to see if the barrier could be located somewhere else, but a barrier needed to be present to protect the public. Noted that the visual impact was not good and a longer-term solution was needed. Disabled drivers needed to be considered.
- iii. Noted that the threat of terrorism needed to be taken seriously but also noted the impact the control would have on the architecture in the area.
- iv. Noted that cyclists felt the barrier made them feel less safe.
- v. Noted at section 6.9 of the officer's report that there was little change in the personal injury reports. Also noted that 2020 was an unusual year and the respondents to the consultation may not reflect those if it was undertaken in more usual times.

In response the Public Realm Engineering & Project Delivery Team Leader said the following:

- i. The interim scheme had shown potential benefits of the barrier controls. Noted the consultation responses provided mixed views on the barrier. It was hoped that the negative features of the temporary barrier could be addressed in any replacement scheme which came forward.
- ii. Temporary and experimental orders had a maximum duration of 18 months this being considered a reasonable period to be able to test the benefits of the controls. After 18 months the controls are removed or made permanent.
- iii. The County Council were a party to the discussions and were supportive of bringing the controls forward. The City Council would lead on the introduction of controls because the City Council understood the city's needs more than the County Council.
- iv. The number of personal injury accidents did fluctuate, and it was better to judge this based on 3-5 year period. Personal injuries in the area were running at 1-2 per year. Noted in 2019 there were 4 cases. The County Council did not have any personal injury cases recorded however was aware from a consultation response that there had been a cycling conflict

incident. It seemed that the personal injury rates were similar to the rates before the temporary barrier was put in place.

The Executive Councillor for Transport and Community Safety commented:

- i. Work was in place for a new barrier location, the current location was not fixed.
- ii. Kings Parade was identified as a high-risk area.
- iii. Work was on-going and the public would be consulted on the final design to ensure that it suited the city and the historic core.

The Committee voted on recommendations 2.1 (i), (ii) and (iv) these were endorsed unanimously.

The Committee voted on recommendation 2.1 (iii) this was endorsed by 4 votes to 0.

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.

## **21/7/SR Update on the Work of Key External Partnerships**

### **Matter for Decision**

This report provided an update on the work of the following partnerships:

- The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (including the Business Board)
- Greater Cambridge Partnership
- Fast Growing Cities
- London-Stanstead-Cambridge Consortium, and the
- Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford Arc.

### **Decision of the Executive Councillor for Strategy and External Partnerships**

- i. Noted the contents of the report and agreed to continue to work with the Greater Cambridge Partnership, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, Fast Growing Cities, London-Stanstead-Cambridge Consortium and the Cambridge – Milton Keynes – Oxford Arc, so that the Council and its partners can address the strategic issues and challenges affecting Cambridge City, to the overall benefit of citizens.

**Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

**Scrutiny Considerations****Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable

**Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Head of Corporate Strategy.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Noted the County Council had put a number of residents parking schemes on hold. Asked whether there was any progress on this. Noted a motion had been tabled regarding this at the last County Council Full Council meeting.
- ii. Asked for an update on the Combined Authority's affordable housing programme and Eastern Access project.
- iii. Noted the Combined Authority were running an e-scooter pilot and asked whether there was a public process for people to be able to provide feedback.
- iv. With regards to the Cambridge to Oxford Arc noted concerns regarding sustainability of water supply and that earlier reports of the Arc stated that water usage could double which could impact on ecological issues.

In response the Executive Councillor for External Partnerships said the following:

- i. Expressed disappointment regarding the County Council's decision to put residents parking schemes on hold. Noted funding was still available and that a couple of schemes had been implemented.
- ii. Had questioned the Mayor on what had happened to the £45 million of the £100 million affordable housing scheme. The Combined Authority Mayor had stated that the scheme was about to be approved however he was not persuaded that the Civic Servants were persuaded. There had been a good response to the Eastern Access Project consultation and the dialogue would continue. There were a range of issues affecting the eastern wards. Improvements were required on Newmarket Road.
- iii. The Cambridge to Oxford Arc wasn't a massive growth zone; there were issues regarding connectivity and different needs of specific sections. A document had been published looking at the impact on Chalk Streams which was also being considered as part of the Joint Local Plan. Noted

that the Liberal Democrat amendment regarding water conservation options for the existing housing stock had been supported at Housing Scrutiny Committee.

The Executive Councillor for Transport and Community Safety said the following:

- i. Would discuss with officers how information could be put on the City Council's website to advise members of the public to direct any feedback regarding the Combined Authority's e-scooter pilot scheme to Voi and the Combined Authority.

The Committee noted the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor noted the recommendations.

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

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

## **21/8/SR Cambridge City Housing Company Update**

### **Matter for Decision**

The report presented an update on the Council's intermediate housing company, Cambridge City Housing Company Limited (CCHC).

### **Decision of the Executive Councillor for Strategy and External Partnerships**

- i. Noted the comments of the Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Committee on the draft Business Plan; and
- ii. Informed the Board of Directors of Cambridge City Housing Company of the comments of the Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Committee/Council for consideration in finalising the Business Plan
- iii. Requested a further review of the Housing Company's acquisition policy and future plans prior to the Council's loan refinancing due in April 2022.

### **Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

### **Scrutiny Considerations**

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

Not applicable

### **Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Head of Finance.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Noted that when the Housing Company was originally set up, properties were put into the company which the council intended to let at sub-market rent. Asked what level this was in relation to market rent.
- ii. Noted that properties released from the Housing Revenue Account which were used to house homeless people was an expansion of Town Hall lettings which was previously run through the private sector. The existing programme intended to provide sub-market rents.

The Scrutiny Committee resolved by 5 votes to 0 to exclude members of the public from the meeting on the grounds that, if they were present, there would be disclosure to them of information defined as exempt from publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. Responses to the members' questions are not included within the minutes as these were provided during exempt session.

The Committee unanimously endorsed 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.

### **21/9/SR Cambridge North East**

#### **Matter for Decision**

The report provided an update on the North East Cambridge (NEC) programme and outlined progress against the three key projects associated with its strategic regeneration.

#### **Decision of the Executive Councillor for Strategy and External Partnerships**

- i. Noted the update on progress across the programme
- ii. Noted the progress against the projects which are managed in line with their statutory and legal governance and management arrangements.

- iii. Noted that a further update will be submitted to Strategy and Resources committee in 2022 (any reserved matters decision requirements will be reported to the relevant Committee and Anglian Water's Board as required)

### **Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

### **Scrutiny Considerations**

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

Not applicable

### **Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Strategic Director.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Noted a dip in housing provision since the Darwin Green development as there were no other major schemes which had been brought forward.
- ii. The NEC development was an important site which was adjacent to the city and was in a sustainable location but there was still a lot of work which needed to be done to address sustainability aspects of the development.
- iii. Asked for clarification regarding the density of the development.

In response the Strategic Director said the following:

- i. The proposals regarding the density of the development were still at an early stage; a balance was required between the needs of a new district and any planning framework determined. On the core part of the site there would be a normal range of housing with 2-3 storeys, 4-6 storeys and 8 storeys. The project was still in the early stages.

The Committee endorsed 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.

### **21/10/SR Combined Authority Update**

**Matter for Decision**

The Officer's report provided an update on the activities of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority since the 5 October 2020 Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

**Decision of the Executive Councillor for Strategy and External Partnerships**

- i. Noted the update provided on issues considered at the meetings of the Combined Authority Board held on the 25 November (reconvened on 27 November 2020) and on 27 January 2021.

**Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

**Scrutiny Considerations****Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable

**Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee received a report from the Head of Corporate Strategy.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Noted from the November Combined Authority Board meeting that a special purpose vehicle had been created for the Cam Metro project. Questioned the amount of money being spent on this project. Commented that the financial commitments being entered into were significant.
- ii. Noted that 3 affordable housing schemes had not received funding and thought that they would have received funding.

In response the Executive Councillor for Strategy and External Partnerships said the following:

- i. He had voted against the setting up of a special purpose vehicle for the Cam Metro project.
- ii. Noted that there were a number of affordable housing schemes which were being stalled. Ministers were waiting for the Combined Authority Mayor to respond to a letter.
- iii. Welcomed the work undertaken on the University of Peterborough.

The Committee noted the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor noted the recommendations.

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

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

**21/11/SR Delivery of General Fund Property Development Programme**

**Matter for Decision**

The Officer's report set out a proposal regarding the Delivery of General Fund Property Development Programme

**Decision of Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources**

- i. Approved Officer's recommendation

**Reason for the Decision**

As set out in the Officer's report.

**Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

Not applicable.

**Scrutiny Considerations**

The Committee resolved by 4 votes to 0 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.

**21/12/SR Capital Strategy**

**Matter for Decision**

This report presents the capital strategy of the council together with a summary capital programme for the General Fund (GF) and Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The previous capital strategy was approved by the council on 25 February 2020. The strategy is focused on providing a framework for delivery of capital expenditure plans over a 10-30 year period.

**Decision of the Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources**

- i. To recommend Council approved the Capital Strategy as set out in the officer report.
- ii. Noted the summary capital programme

### **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 Finance.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Noted the report proposed the end of revenue funding of capital programme, which was a substantial change. Questioned the financial impact of borrowing over time and if there would be a burden on the revenue budget.
- ii. Noted commitment to building 1000 new council homes to Passivhaus standards but only where this was feasible.
- iii. Referred to 'Doughnut economics' which looked at what helped address economic issues and what was sustainable.
- iv. Referred to the Asset Management Plan and noted that maintenance did not appear to be done on a regular basis and commented this could lead to increased costs and carbon foot print by the time the works were completed.
- v. The New Homes Bonus used to be seen as funding for capital development but not anymore.
- vi. Thanked the Finance Team as they had maintained the Council in a good financial position so felt a new approach could be tried.
- vii. Asked what could be done to encourage development of officers especially Planning Officers.

In response the Head of Finance said the following:

- i. Agreed that there was a fundamental change to the way the council would fund its capital programme however it created a revenue saving to the council, £2.3 million would be returned to the revenue budget for service delivery. There would be a number of capital receipts totalling £25 million in the next 5 - 10 years. Work had been undertaken with services to identify capital works although this would need to be revisited

- and extended. Where borrowing would increase the revenue pressure, this would be reviewed at the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- ii. Could not say how many councils used revenue resources to fund their capital programmes but considering the number of councils who borrow, and that borrowing can only be used to fund capital expenditure, there could not be many councils who had the capacity to do so.
  - iii. Now was a good time to make changes to the way in which the capital programme was funded as there were significant challenges ahead. This linked to the transformation programme and was an opportunity to consider whether the council needed all the assets it had.

In response the Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources said the following:

- i. Their ambition was to build the new council homes to Passivhaus standards however this was where possible. Hoped would be operating on zero carbon as soon as possible but this had to be balanced against being able to build 1000 new council homes.
- ii. The Council were investigating the costs to retrofit council housing stock so that they were carbon neutral.
- iii. The recruitment and retention of staff was vital. The Planning Department was currently fully staffed. There had been some work carried out regarding 'golden hellos'.

The Committee resolved by 4 votes to 0 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.

## **21/13/SR Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2021/22 to 2023/24**

### **Matter for Decision**

The Council is required to receive and approve, as a minimum, three main treasury management reports each year.

The first and most important is the Treasury Management Strategy (this report), which covers:

- capital plans (including prudential indicators);

- a Minimum Revenue Provision policy which explains how unfinanced capital expenditure will be charged to revenue over time;
- the Treasury Management Strategy (how investments and borrowings are to be organised) including treasury indicators; and
- a Treasury Management Investment Strategy (the parameters on how investments are to be managed).

A mid-year treasury management report is produced to update Members on the progress of the capital position, amending prudential indicators as necessary, and advising if any policies require revision.

The Outturn or Annual Report compares actual performance to the estimates in the Strategy.

The statutory framework for the prudential system under which local government operates is set out in the Local Government Act 2003 and Capital Financing and Accounting Statutory Instruments. The framework incorporates four statutory codes. These are:

- the Prudential Code (2017 edition) prepared by CIPFA;
- the Treasury Management Code (2017 edition) prepared by CIPFA;
- the Statutory Guidance on Local Authority Investments prepared by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (effective 1 April 2018); and
- the Statutory Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision prepared by MHCLG (effective 1 April 2019).

## **Decision of the Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources**

### **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 Finance

The Committee made the following comment in response to the report:

- i. Did not have any concerns with the borrowing limits and thought that the council should be able to manage the level of debt.

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.

### **21/14/SR UK Municipal Bonds Agency Framework Agreement**

This item was withdrawn.

### **21/15/SR General Fund Budget Setting Report 2021/22 to 2025/26**

#### **Matter for Decision**

The Budget-Setting Report (BSR) includes the updated Corporate Plan and detailed revenue bids and savings and capital proposals and sets out the key parameters for the detailed recommendations and budget finalisation being considered at this meeting. This report reflects recommendations that will be made to The Executive on 8 February 2021 and then to Council, for consideration at its meeting on 25 February 2021.

#### **Decision of the Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources**

To recommend the Executive to:

- i. Approve Revenue Pressures and Bids shown in Appendix C(b) and Savings shown in Appendix C(c).
- ii. Approve Non-Cash Limit items as shown in Appendix C(d).
- iii. Agree that there are no bids to be funded from External or Earmarked Funds (which would be included as Appendix C(e)).
- iv. Agree any recommendations for submission to the Executive in respect of the proposals outlined in Appendix D(a) for inclusion in the Capital Plan.

To recommend Council to:

- i. Approve delegation to the Chief Financial Officer (Head of Finance) of the calculation and determination of the Council Tax taxbase (including submission of the National Non-Domestic Rates Forecast Form, NNDR1, for each financial year) which is set out in Appendix A(a).

- ii. Approve the level of Council Tax for 2021/22 as set out in Appendix A (b) (*to follow for Council*) and Section 4 [page 20 of the BSR refers].

Note that the Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Panel will meet by 3 February 2021 to consider the precept proposed by the Police and Crime Commissioner, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Fire Authority will meet on 11 February 2021 and Cambridgeshire County Council will meet on 9 or 12 February 2021 to consider the amounts in precepts to be issued to the City Council for the year 2021/22.

- iii. Approve delegation to the Head of Finance authority to finalise changes relating to any corporate and/or departmental restructuring and any reallocation of support service and central costs, in accordance with the CIPFA Service Reporting Code of Practice for Local Authorities (SeRCOP).
- iv. Approve the revised Capital Plan for the General Fund as set out in Appendix D(c) and the Funding as set out in Section 6, page 29 of the BSR.
- v. Note the impact of revenue and capital budget approvals and approve the resulting level of reserves to be used to support the budget proposals as set out in the table [Section 8, page 49 refers].
- vi. Approve the updated Corporate Plan 2019 - 2022, attached at Appendix B.

### **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 Finance.

Members of the Executive and Spokes Councillors who did not ordinarily attend the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee joined the Committee for discussion on the budget.

In response to members' questions the Head of Finance confirmed:

- i. That the quarter 3 financial management report supported the assumption in the Budget Setting Report that the Council would have a balanced budget at the end of the financial year.
- ii. When the interim assessment was carried out in July a revised budget was put forward which proposed using £2million of reserves.

- iii. Had been through a couple more lockdowns since this period which posed additional pressures but there had also been additional funding from Central Government.
- iv. Were following requirements to spread the Collection Fund deficit over 3 years and currently anticipating that only £1million of reserves would have to be used. However they were yet to submit income compensation claims to government and go through the reconciliation process.

### **S4682 Closure of Housing Cashiers [linked to S4698 – HRA]**

In response to members questions Councillor Davey confirmed:

- i. The Covid pandemic had provided the opportunity to look at the implications of potentially shutting the Housing Cashiers. Wanted to offer an improved and enhanced service. The consultation was currently ongoing so they did not know whether there would be any redundancies. Was in constant discussion with Unions. There had been a 1% increase in arrears but did not think this was due to shutting down offices but due to the impacts of the Covid pandemic. The issue of poverty needed to be looked at.

### **S4679 Housing Enabling Officer**

In response to members questions Councillor Davey confirmed:

- i. The post had been vacant for a few years this was why this post was being offered up as a saving.

### **S4798 Selective Landlord Licensing [linked to RI4797]**

In response to members questions the Strategic Director (SH) and Councillor Johnson confirmed:

- i. Officers undertook a thorough investigation into this matter.
- ii. Noted discussions which had taken place at Housing Scrutiny Committee, some elements were clear, and some were not so clear. The feasibility study was useful as it provided a lot of information about the private sector and as a consequence, enforcement options could be considered.

### **URP 4739 Review and consideration of possible alternative delivery models for the Arts Distribution Service (including a stop).**

In response to members questions the Strategic Director (SH) confirmed:

- i. The revenue pressure arose because there had been a reduction in income as a result of the pandemic.
- ii. A decision had not been made regarding the service and it was currently being reviewed.

- iii. Consideration was being given as to whether the service could be digitised.
- iv. Noted the description of this budget could have been clearer.

### **CAP 4787 Market Square project**

In response to members questions Councillor Moore confirmed:

- i. The project had been slightly delayed given the deferment of the item from Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee in January. It was anticipated that the item would be brought back to the March Committee. This did not prevent the bid being included in the budget. This would not affect any future consultation. The market needed investment and updating.

### **CAP 4741 Investment programme for public toilet re-purposed property assets [linked to I4754] and S4743 Public toilet review and policy implementation.**

In response to members questions Councillor Moore confirmed:

- i. There were 21 public toilets in varying states of condition. The review of the public toilets may result in closing the least used toilets and investing in the toilets used the most. Changing Places toilets were also being considered.

### **CAP4740 Creation of a new boat pumping station near or on Stourbridge Common.**

In response to members questions Councillor Thornburrow confirmed:

- i. Regular meetings had been held with Cam Boaters and a close eye would be kept on how much maintenance was undertaken. Would continue to have regular meetings with the community.

### **I4754 New business opportunities on Parks and Open Spaces (not event related) [ linked to CAP 4741].**

In response to members questions Councillor Thornburrow confirmed:

- i. Officers were working closely with Ward Councillors as this would affect certain wards more than others.
- ii. Questioned if the open spaces could be used for education or arts and culture events.
- iii. Once applications had been received regarding proposed new activities and these had been assessed, Ward Councillors would be consulted prior to the proposal moving ahead.
- iv. Wanted any business opportunities to reduce the use of diesel. If the activity involved food, would want this to be sustainable.

- v. Questioned if buildings could be repurposed for example as a hedgehog hospital.

**B4715 Community Seed Funding Scheme – grass root grants and B4813 Community Grants – additional Covid related support.**

In response to members questions Councillor Smith confirmed:

- i. There was a £30,000 uplift in funding under B4813 because of the greater use of community grants coming through because of Covid. This funding would be allocated through Area Committee funding. Noted that not every community group was large enough to be able to access the Area Committee grant process.

**CAP4706 Cambridge Corn Exchange – Infrastructure improvements and upgrades.**

In response to members questions the Strategic Director (SH) and Councillor Smith confirmed:

- i. The Council was currently gathering information on the carbon footprint of the Corn Exchange. The boiler work needed to be carried out urgently as it was extremely inefficient.
- ii. Before the pandemic the Corn Exchange had been achieving high numbers of audiences.
- iii. This was an opportune time to change the boiler as the Corn Exchange was closed because of the pandemic. The works would be as carbon neutral as possible
- iv. Maintenance of the boiler had been undertaken.
- v. A report would be brought to the next Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee to provide further detail.

The Committee resolved by 4 votes to 0 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.

**21/16/SR Amendment to Budget Setting Report (General Fund) 2021/22 to 2025/26**

The purpose of the discussion was to ask questions of the Liberal Democrat Members on their group's budget amendment.

The Labour Members of the Committee and Executive Councillors asked the following question. The answer provided by Liberal Democrat Members immediately follow.

i. **B0002 – Postponement of Customer Services Review Saving.**

Queried caution about the review when members had voted for Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget which included HRA share of revenue savings.

The budget bid B0002, Arbury Road was a separate budget item.

**21/17/SR To Note Record of Urgent Decision Taken by the Executive Councillor for Strategy and External Partnerships**

**17a** Appointment of Council Representative on the Greater Cambridge Partnership Executive Board

The decision was noted.

The meeting ended at 10.04 pm

**CHAIR**