

WEST CENTRAL AREA COMMITTEE

11 March 2021
6.30 - 9.15 pm

Present

Area Committee Members: Councillors Matthews (Chair), Porrer (Vice-Chair), Bick, Chadwick, Gehring, Martinelli, Payne, Harrison, Nethsingha and Richards

Officers:

Head of Environmental Services: Joel Carre

Committee Manager: Rob Ferguson

Meeting Producer: Gary Clift

Environmental Health Manager: Yvonne O'Donnell

Community Funding & Development Manager: Jackie Hanson

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

21/1/WAC Welcome, Introduction and Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Hipkin.

Councillor Martinelli provided apologies for lateness and joined the meeting during item 21/5/WAC.

21/2/WAC Declarations of Interest

Name	Item	Interest
Councillor Payne	21/8/WAC	Personal: Member of Steering Group for WC1 Castle Covid Support

21/3/WAC Minutes

Councillor Scutt questioned why her name did not appear on the list of attendees for the West Central area committee, as she represented the McManus Estate. The councillor also stated that other county councillors had divisions that crossed city council boundaries and attended more than one area committee. Councillor Scutt asked that it be put on record that it was unfair residents of the Mcmanus Estate may feel they were not represented at

this committee. It was mentioned that changes in ward boundaries may have contributed to the matter.

The Chair noted this had been discussed in previous meetings and it was good to remind anyone watching from the area Councillor Scutt referred to, that they were being represented.

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

21/4/WAC Matters and Actions Arising From the Minutes

Councillor Matthews fed back on progress following an update by the Area Development Manager, who had met with Great Anglia and visited Cycle Point to meet with stakeholders. A revised management plan was now expected back from Great Anglia in the future, which the Area Development Manager was hopeful would rectify the outstanding commitments and issues.

The councillor noted that the following actions had been implemented:

- i. Removal of abandoned tagged bicycles
- ii. Repair of cycle stands
- iii. No evidence of drug usage or rough sleeping in the facility
- iv. More regular patrols of the facility taking place

Councillor Matthews asked the Head of Environmental Services for a further update, which included the following points:

- i. A city-wide cycle crime prevention group had been set up, through the Community Safety partnership, with a sub-group specifically looking at Cycle Point. This multi-agency group included CamCycle, Greater Anglia, Brookgate and the University of Cambridge. An action plan was being developed that would augment the management plan and look at measures which went beyond those required to satisfy planning conditions.
- ii. This would include short, medium and long term actions to address issues associated with the cycle point facility, with discussions around the provision of a warden facility, improved signage and layout, making the cycle stands more accessible and robust, plus improved CCTV linked to the control room in Huntingdon.

Councillor Gehring asked if there was a budget issue that could be petitioned to advance the linking of CCTV to the shared services system, and what the timeline would be to carry out the upgrade to the CCTV to allow the connection to the shared service system.

The Head of Environmental Services did not anticipate a budgetary issue with the delivery of the CCTV measures, and quotes were being obtained to bring this forward as soon as possible. The partnership was also looking at other funding, including external grants, in addition to combined internal resources.

Councillor Chadwick reported that in relation to Castle Mound, the right of way should appear on the definitive Ordinance Survey Map following a four week public consultation period with the county council, although it had not yet been updated on the online version of the map.

Councillor Scutt confirmed that further to Councillor Chadwick's update, the application relating to the right of way was successful, however this impacted on the town green application. Councillor Scutt and Councillor Richards were seeking clarification from the county council and would feed back at the next area committee. Councillor Scutt also stated that the current pandemic had affected the timescale for the process.

Councillor Payne asked that the action item relating to Travellers on the McManus Estate be removed as they had moved on, and reported that the local highways improvement bid had been submitted and was well received. The councillor also thanked the chair of the Histon Road residents association for their input in this matter, and for confirming that the response to the bid should be received by the end of March.

The Chair reported that the final action item, on the possibility of using cameras to tackle obstructions to pavements and cycle lanes caused by vehicles delivering goods to homes, was the responsibility of Police Sgt Mišík who was not present at the committee. It was noted that Councillors Bick and Porrer were due to meet Sgt Mišík later in the month and requested an update at that time.

21/5/WAC Open Forum

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

1. A member of the public raised the following issues:

- i. Begging had increased on Histon Road and they had reported this to the police.
- ii. Homeless individuals had been housed in temporary accommodation in this area due to the Covid situation, but an update from the police would be appreciated. An additional issue was that these same people often took up space in the local bus stop.

Councillor Payne said that issues around the Histon Road shops area had been discussed with the police in previous years but were compounded by the area sitting on the boundary between two police teams which may lead to problems with allocating responsibility for actions. The councillor also stated that they had contacted the organisation running the homelessness housing, who were aware of the issue and were working on security and being able to keep track of the residents' locations whilst organising permanent accommodation. Suggested action to raise with Sgt Mišík.

A second member of the public noted that the bus stop will be moving close to the co-op shop on Histon Road and that this should be noted.

Action Point: Councillor Payne to follow up with the homeless accommodation organization and councillors meeting Sgt Mišík to raise this with him.

2. A member of the public said on behalf of the Histon Road Area Resident's Association (HRARA):

HRARA raised 3 Questions at the Histon Road LLF regarding the Histon Road Construction project

1. Reduce cars travelling on Histon Road in the aftermath of Covid
2. Safe spaces for schoolchildren to walk and cycle to school
3. Milton Road diversions

The GCP Joint Assembly already raised the question about benefits of lower traffic levels and suggested boldness and speed to get in place actions that could make a difference to car-based recovery. The Histon Road Project Manager Paul van de Bulk mentioned that they had documented 100's of speed limit offences during the monitoring of the temporary speed limit. He also mentioned that the officers already seriously consider reviewing a scheme for the Southern area of Histon Road between the Victoria Junction and Akeman Street. This would be presented to the Board and the County Council and result in a TRO which could be coordinated with the road works before the completion in October 2021.

Regarding the unsafe walking and cycling in the midst of construction work, the Project Manager agreed that this had been a difficult period especially when work moved from the inbound lane to the outbound lane, when the first set of works had not finished. He mentioned that at the moment there was no work going on at the Gilbert Road Junction, and even though this was the major school route, schoolchildren criss-cross all along the road. Extraordinary safety precautions should be reviewed for the schoolchildren.

Regarding the question regarding traffic diversions from Milton Road to Histon Road HRARA received a firm reply that there would be no formal diversion signs on Milton Road pointing towards Histon Road. The Project Manager envisaged that there would be virtually no diversions due to the two-way traffic on Milton Road.

HRARA asked that the West Central Area Committee supported the officers in their scheme and the TRO for the 20mph speed limit in the southern area of Histon Road from Victoria Junction to Akeman Street. Also asked for support regarding the request for improved safety for cyclists and pedestrians, in particular schoolchildren during the construction period.

Councillor Payne supported the suggestions made, and stated that all three issues raised were important. Councillor Payne also said that many residents had fed back that they appreciated the current temporary 20mph speed limit and that it was encouraging to hear at the LLF that there was the possibility of this being made permanent.

Councillor Scutt stated that residents appeared pleased with the current Histon Road project. Councillor Scutt and Councillor Richards also supported the issues that had been brought to the committee.

3. A member of the public raised the following issues:

- i. Pesticide-Free Cambridge, Friends of Sheeps Green and Lammas Land, Newham Croft Residents Association and On the Verge Cambridge wrote recently, at the beginning of this month, to Councillor Thornburrow and Councillor Herbert. They asked for an end to all City Council pesticide use in and around Sheeps Green and Lammas Land and the adjacent roads, Fen Causeway and Newnham Road. Although pesticides were no longer used in parks, they continued to be sprayed on the adjacent verges and on street infrastructure, lampposts, benches and so on. Non-chemical alternatives were available and they knew that the City Council was

investigating them. On 2nd March their proposal also received the support of the Barton Road and Barton Close Residents Association. Knew that councillors from different parties were in favour of phasing out pesticides. They had had very positive meetings with Councillors Harrison, Herbert, Matthews, Porrer, Thornburrow and there was extensive local public support.

- ii. Asked if Sheeps Green, Lammas Land and their adjacent road verges and footways could be a completely pesticide-free zone now and Believed that the County Council did not want the road verges managed by the City Council to be sprayed with pesticide. It was not, as had been described, a contractual obligation to the County that the City Council used pesticides to manage weeds on footways, pavements or road verges.
- iii. Asked if the City Council would make it a priority to end pesticide use on the footways and road verges that they manage for the County, and ideally give a date when that might happen?
- iv. The member of the public clarified that when using the term pesticides, this was referring to herbicides, insecticides and similar substances.

Councillor Matthews supported the matters addressed and suggested writing a letter of support to Cambridge City Council on behalf of the West Central Area Committee.

Councillor Scutt stated that the issue of pesticide use had been raised at the Environment and Sustainability Committee at the County Council, and that Councillor Thornburrow had provided assurances that the city council did not use pesticides. Councillor Scutt would raise this matter again with both the County Council and City Council and fully supported the issues raised.

Councillor Nethsingha asked if it was possible to expand the area discussed to include Queens Road and Queens Green where there was spraying in the previous year, as grass control could be carried out with a strimmer instead of pesticides.

Councillor Gehring asked why both councils stated they did not wish to use pesticides, but they were still being used on pavements, and requested a voluntary refusal to use any new neonicotinoids on council land or land that has been rented from the county council.

A further member of the public suggested raising this matter with the university and their estate, and Councillor Matthews stated that discussions with local groups had also mentioned approaching local schools about the issue.

Councillor Harrison said that in answer to a recent written question by Councillor Porrer, the City Council acknowledged that herbicides were being used on highway and housing land as there were 'limited alternative effective controls'. Councillor Harrison had obtained clarification from a senior environmental officer from the County Council that the City Council was not contracted, authorised or permitted to put weedkiller onto the County Councils highway, and that the County Council's policy was to move away from the use of pesticides except in the case of certain invasive species. The councillor also expressed frustration that the City Council was continuing to put pesticides down on land it did not own, against the intentions of the County Council, and asked that the City Council provide clear instructions to their officers to stop.

Councillor Porrer expressed concern that members of the public may assume that grass verges were pesticide free when they were not and suggested adding signage to explain why vegetation may be less tidy.

Action Point: County Councillors to seek further clarity from their organisation, and Councillor Matthews to discuss submitting letter to Cambridge City Council and other stakeholders in the city on behalf of West Central Area Committee supporting the points.

4. A member of the public raised the following issues:
 - i. Last year a young heifer on Grantchester Meadows died after swallowing a plastic bag. The council leader tweeted 'Too many thoughtless visitors'. Yet £710,000 growth funding has been approved for the Wider Cambridge Visitor Project to encourage even more people to come to an already very crowded city. The Silver Street public toilets were being refurbished with squat toilets for the wider tourist market with low priority given to water or sustainability.
 - ii. Asked how residents and local businesses who were concerned about development plans for the market and the city's green spaces could be involved in key decisions about city centre recovery and climate change and biodiversity if the city's public spaces and its commons were treated as assets to be prioritised for investment because they would generate income as event locations and future accelerator parks, visitor 'honeypot' destinations funded by the National Lottery, the National Trust and the Ministry for Homes, Communities and Local Government.
 - iii. In June the Council would sponsor plastic cows on Cambridge's backs and commons funded by businesses. If there had not been media

coverage of the budget plan to cut the emergency out of hours rescue service for the graziers, this would have been cut and the real cows would have gone.

- iv. The new joint Local Plan provided an exceptional opportunity to consider City Centre Recovery and the Cam as it flowed through South Cambridgeshire and the city.
- v. Asked if the council and councillors would commit to a City Centre Recovery Strategy that prioritises the natural environment and local food supply and was based on community involvement not developer profit or generating income for the council from accelerator parks and visitor destinations?
- vi. Asked how much, if any, of the £710,000 from the Wider Cambridge Visitor Project is going to be used to support the market traders?

Councillor Matthews agreed there was a need to have a city centre plan that balanced all of the matters mentioned.

Councillor Porrer was pleased that the pinder service has been restored through a late amendment.

Councillor Nethsingha agreed that there needed to be a proper recovery strategy for the city centre and how the city would look in the future, including the impact of tourism.

Councillor Nethsingha said that visitors were good for our city, and should not be discouraged, but that everyone needed to be careful about how open spaces were used, including local residents. It was also noted that there needed to be a good collaboration between the city council, businesses and residents.

Councillor Matthews said that any plans for the Silver Street toilets that came to the committee would be closely looked at in terms of water sustainability.

The member of the public asked for safe, sustainable tourism for the area that looked at the wider Cambridgeshire area rather than channelling visitors to the same spaces, and suggested counting the numbers of visitors to local parks and green spaces.

5. A member of the public raised the following issues:
 - i. They were a Cambridge resident for over 40 years, who lived in Coleridge. They supported what Cllr Bick was trying to achieve with

- his motion on the City Centre to last month's Council Meeting; they also agreed with Cllr Hipkin that too much was expected of the limited space in the heart of the city. Their concern was that the difficult choices and decisions had to be identified and made openly, rather than left to go by the board.
- ii. They raised their concerns in their response to the "Making Space for People" consultation in October 2019 and heard from Stephen Kelly that evening that the consultation response had not been received. They had circulated it to all the councillors in October 2019. Stephen Kelly had provided assurances that the council had decided not to pursue the vision and principles document in its current form, and that officers were instead noting that work on the document should be postponed until it could be rolled up into the preparation of a full SPD, so there would be a further opportunity to consider the comments in the light of that. Felt that the comments they submitted were incredibly relevant to discussions now.
 - iii. Their response highlighted many flaws in the Market Square Feasibility Study, which was published at the end of that consultation period, but on which the Council said it was not inviting comments. Refusal to consult, and taking the opportunity to remedy failings, at this key stage of the Market Square project compounded the Council's failure at the very beginning to include a public visioning workshop or even a collective visioning workshop among the invited stakeholders. Following the November 2020 stakeholder workshops, they submitted 30 questions and only 10 had been answered. Noted a draft vision and concept design was going to committee in March for approval for public consultation.
 - iv. Asked Councillors to read the forthcoming report to Environment Scrutiny together with a response that they had circulated, their unanswered questions, and their question to the last full Council which they felt was hardly answered.
 - v. Asked the councillors to consider whether vital feasibility questions have been answered. Asked whether the use of demountable stalls should have been established long before now.
 - vi. They were not opposed to change. Successful change in the public realm demanded genuine understanding of the issues and meaningful involvement of all interested parties. The issue with the 'Making Space for People' is that it didn't understand the context, the text jumped from "Air Quality" to "Public Art and Culture" without mentioning Heritage, it did not cross-reference the Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal or the Street Analyses which should be

the starting point for any public realm scheme including city centre recovery projects. In future, decisions and choices should be informed by the promised Historic Core Conservation Area Management Plan, which was trailed in the Historic Core Conservation Area Appraisal of 2016 but had not appeared, and by a capacity analysis. Both of these were urgently needed.

- vii. Questioned how a Council so keen to embrace the principles of Doughnut Economics, could be so blind to environmental capacity issues in the city. There was already adequate cycle parking capacity in the city centre, but the market square proposals involved removing more cycle racks. The Greenways would bring more cyclists into the city centre, where would these extra cycles going to go? How would conflicts be managed? How could this be achieved safely without harm to heritage? And where is the strategic cycle parking solution which is so urgently needed to cater for current demand, let alone growth pressures?

Councillor Matthews agreed that after reading the plans during the stakeholder consultation, many of the questions raised had not been answered and that on the day of the environment committee at the end of March, councillors will aim to ensure as many concerns as possibly are formally addressed.

Councillor Bick asked why the member of the public's contribution to the consultation was not registered or responded to by the council, and stated that officers had not been able to answer. Councillor Bick also agreed there was a lack of heritage context in the Making Spaces for People document, and asked the member of the public to resubmit contributions when the consultation was carried out a second time, in the process of building a formal supplementary planning document. The councillor expressed a desire for the council to look at what the city centre could become, rather than aiming to return to how it was previously.

Councillor Scutt asked for a copy of the original consultation submission and asked for the opportunity to work with the city councillors on the project to ensure the city serves as a positive destination for residents and tourists while preserving the historic centre.

6. A member of the public asked:

- i. If there were any plans to take the city centre recovery plan presentation to the other area committees.

The Head of Environmental Services stated that there had been no request to carry out the presentation to other committees but if there was value to this, then it could be an option. The current focus was on shorter term response planning, based on issues, risks and impacts while moving through the steps of the road map, with more opportunities for people to engage with in the future.

The Chair noted that it would be a decision made by the Chairs of the other area committees to make this decision, and contact can be made with them to suggest this.

Action Point: Councillor Matthews and Councillor Porrer to contact other area committee Chairs to suggest opportunity for City Centre Recovery presentation to be made at their area committees.

21/6/WAC City Centre Recovery

The Head of Environmental Services introduced the report and made the following comments in response to the Committee's questions:

- i. The council will factor into its plans the impact of additional tables and chairs in the marketplace on pedestrian flow and space for people to move freely.
- ii. The Government were likely to extend legislation allowing businesses to apply to the city council for licenses to have tables and chairs outside of their premises until September 2022. These applications would be assessed based on impact to movement of the public.
- iii. Work has been carried out with Public Health on allowing all eligible traders to return to the market, under a phased process, planned to begin the following week. A public announcement on this would be made in advance.
- iv. There had not been a significant number of complaints regarding A-boards or their effect on pedestrians. If councillors were aware of specific A-boards causing a problem, they should report these for investigation.
- v. The Destination Management organisation is an informal partnership, with no specific funding except for that gained from bid submissions, and the budgets available to each partner including the small City Council tourism budget. The legal status may change in the future.
- vi. The use of Grantchester Meadows as a park by the public was not factored into current plans, but discussions will take place on how the council could support the open space's management along with other outer city locations.

- vii. Greater Cambridgeshire are part of the City Centre Recovery group, with the City Council aligning with a number of their programmes including city access and improving links between the city and outlying locations.
- viii. Councillors and members of the public should flag concerns with litter and a need for additional bins to the operations team, so temporary bins can be installed to monitor their effect before permanent changes are made.

21/7/WAC WCAC - Environmental Report

The Committee received a report from the Environmental Health Manager. The report outlined an overview of the council's Streets and Open Spaces, Environmental Health and Shared Waste service activity in the Area Committee area over the past six months.

In response to Members' questions the Environmental Health Manager said the following:

- i. The number of reported dog issues has reduced, in part due to an improved reporting mechanism. Spreading dog warden duties across the team had increased the ability to manage capacity.
- ii. During the pandemic, the public have been less likely to allow their dogs to stray, keeping doors closed and dogs on leads when in public. This had meant a large reduction in the number of reported stray dogs during the last year.
- iii. There was an increase in the number of Section 47 notices served on businesses following re-opening in summer 2020 after a period of closure, where those businesses may not have been able to afford a suitable number of waste collections. The council has worked with businesses to manage their waste and minimised the number of prosecutions and fixed penalty notices.
- iv. There was an increase in fly-tipped cardboard, likely due to increased home deliveries. The Street Enforcement department had been working with the waste team, including on problems with shared bin stores in housing estates.
- v. A number of members within the team had worked hard on compiling the report for the committee, and the Environmental Health Manager asked to credit them following praise from councillors regarding the quality of the report.

21/8/WAC WCAC Area Committee Grants 2021-22

The Committee received a report from the Community Funding and Development Manager.

Councillor Payne stated a declaration of interest as a member of the steering group for WC1 Castle Covid Support, but noted support for all other grant applications included in the report.

Councillor Gehring was not present for the vote.

The Community Funding and Development Manager provided the following responses to member questions:

- i. Some bids for funding by community groups were not within the remit of grants available. The Community Funding and Development Manager had worked with some of these groups on options for additional funding, including donations or using current reserves
- ii. The grants were allocated to allow a good mix of activities across the city wards.
- iii. A group which had last year been allocated a higher one-off grant for additional equipment, was this year allocated a lower level of funding as it was felt the bid did not have a strong connection to the priorities. Discussions took place with the group to connect it with the Streets and Open Spaces team and potential alternative funding.

Following discussion, Members **resolved (unanimously):**

To agree the proposed awards detailed in Appendix 1 of the officer's report and as summarised in the table below.

Ref	Organisation	Purpose	Award
WC1	Castle Covid Support Association (via Benson Road Residents' Assoc)	Three public concerts	£950
WC2	Christ's Pieces Residents' Association	Talk for local residents	£200
WC3	Eddington Residents' Association	Regular activities for residents and 2 trips for families	£2,190
WC4	Friends of Histon Road Cemetery	Information and activities	£500
WC5	Friends of Midsummer Common	Community activities and maintenance of community orchard	£900
WC6	Histon Road Area Residents' Association	Exhibition	£80
WC7	Mayfield Seniors' Group	Transport for 3 trips and newsletters	£650
WC8	Oblique Arts	Six creative workshops with exhibition for older	£1,500

	people	
Total		£6,970

21/9/WAC West/Central Area Committee Dates 2021/22

Councillor Martinelli expressed a preference for 'in person' rather than virtual committee meetings, and asked the chair if this could be considered for area committees in advance of other council meetings.

The Democratic Services Manager stated that a decision had not yet been made by the Government on whether virtual council meetings would be permitted past the current date of 7th May 2021. A conversation would be required between officers and the council leadership, taking into account social distancing and the current vaccination programme for any changes.

Councillor Porrer said that when committees return to taking place in a physical location, they would welcome the option for people to join the meetings virtually. More people have stayed for the entire meeting and there has been an increase in participation during virtual committees, in addition to a need to ensure those self-isolating during the vaccination rollout are able to continue participating.

The following dates were agreed unanimously:

17th June 2021

9th September 2021

25th November 2021

10th March 2022

The meeting ended at 9.15 pm

CHAIR