

ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 6 October 2022
5.30 - 7.30 pm

Present: Councillors Pounds (Chair), S. Baigent, Hauk, Holloway, Payne, Sweeney and Swift

Executive Councillors: Collis (Executive Councillor for Open Spaces, Food Justice and Community Development) and Moore (Executive Councillor for Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity)

Also present (physically) Councillor: Thornburrow

Officers:

Director of Neighbourhoods and Communities: Jane Wilson

Head of Property Services: Dave Prinsep

Head of Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service: Bode Esan

Development Manager, Streets & Open Spaces: Alistair Wilson

Strategy and Partnerships Manager: David Kidston

Team Manager - Residential, Environmental Services: Claire Adelizzi

Waste Policy, Climate and Environment Team Manager: Alex Snelling-Day

Climate Change Officer: Janet Fogg

Committee Manager: James Goddard

Meeting Producer: Chris Connor

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

22/39/EnC Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Carling (Baigent as Alternate), Copley and Divkovic.

22/40/EnC Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

22/41/EnC Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 May and 30 June 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

22/42/EnC Public Questions

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

1. Pesticide Free Cambridge - herbicide free trial: Could the Executive Cllr update us on the herbicide free trial wards and confirm, as per the council motion passed in 2021, that this autumn was the very last time that Cambridge City Council uses herbicide routinely on the verges, gutters and pavements that it manages for the County Council?

The Executive Councillor for Open Spaces, Food Justice and Community Development responded:

- i. The trial was progressing well.
- ii. Few complaints had been received from the two trial wards. Going pesticide free could be a change, but a positive one.
- iii. The trial presented the City Council with operational challenges as per the Happy Bee scheme. The amount of pesticide spray sessions had reduced from three to two each year.
- iv. An on-line tool had been introduced for people to raise concerns.
- v. The trial would be reviewed at the year end and knowledge used in 2023 to move forward.

Supplementary question: Could the Executive Councillor update us on the methods that the Operations Team have found successful in managing the two herbicide-free wards Arbury and Newnham?

The Executive Councillor responded:

- i. Time was needed to review the effect of not using herbicide in the trial wards.
- ii. The City Council was learning from other local authorities and exploring other methods plus alternative products that could be used.

2. Federation of Cambridge Residents Association (FeCRA):

- i. Spoke on behalf of both FeCRA and Friends of the River Cam regarding question at the meeting of this committee held on 30th June this year.
- ii. My question, as recorded in the minutes, relates to the earlier decision of this committee on March 25th to allocate up to a further £150,000 to the 'To the River' project in addition to the £120,000 already spent.

- iii. There was overwhelming public opposition to the proposed sculpture on the riverbank at Sheeps Green, and my question was whether in the interests of transparency and democracy the results of that consultation and the views expressed would be made public, the deliberations of the Art Panel reviewing the project be open to residents, and their recommendation be brought back to this committee so that there was scrutiny of a decision that involves spending so much public money.
- iv. Councillor Anna Smith had assured us that 'The Council would absolutely honour the results of the consultation' and at the meeting in June the Executive Councillor for Open Spaces, Food Justice and Community Development replied that the results of the consultation would be made public and a report on the project would come back to the scrutiny committee.
- v. The consultation ended in March, which was 6 months ago, so my question to the committee now was:
- vi. Had the results of this consultation been honoured, when would they be made public, when would a report on the project come back to the Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee's committee, and would a decision on it be made by this committee?

The Executive Councillor for Open Spaces, Food Justice and Community Development responded:

- i. She and Councillor Smith were clear they would honour the consultation.
- ii. Re-iterated answer given in June committee.
- iii. The consultation results had been collated and evaluated, details would be shared November 2022. Consultation respondents would be notified. The process would be clear and transparent.

Supplementary question:

- i. At the June 2022 committee it was said that public art could be controversial and divide opinion.
- ii. This sculpture was unpopular.
- iii. Would the committee ensure there was consultation on all public works of art?

The Streets and Open Spaces Development Manager responded:

- i. Outlined the public art process. Operational decisions were not usually referred to Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee.
- ii. Consultation responses were being worked through at present.

3. Raised the following points:

- i. Please can we have an answer to the supplementary question that was asked at the last meeting concerning the Cambridge China Centre and Confucius Institutes as the Cambridge China Centre was led by the London Confucius Centre?
- ii. In June Central Government tried to stop China working on university campuses.
- iii. What involvement does the Cambridge China Centre have in plans for Cambridge market square and the city centre and green spaces?

The Executive Councillor for Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity responded:

- i. The Market Square Liaison Group was made up from organisations located in or around the market square. They may be part of Cambridge China Centre and Confucius Institutes too.
- ii. Cambridge China Centre and Confucius Institutes were not directly involved in the market square project. They may have responded to the market square consultation.
- iii. The City Council welcomed responses to the market square consultation from organisations across the city.

4. Raised the following points:

- i. My question relates to item 7, paras 6.4-6.14 on pages 51-54 of the reports pack.
- ii. Expressed concern there was no mention in the Officer's report, of the need for a different approach to buildings of traditional construction which form at least 20% of the stock*. There had been major problems because too many builders don't understand old buildings. This issue was recognised in the Government's Retrofit guidance, PAS 2035, PAS 2038 for non-domestic buildings, and British Standard BS 7913 *guide to the conservation of historic buildings*, all of which reference heritage and traditional buildings. Repairs were essential before retrofit (as BS 7913

says, walls can be over a third less efficient if damp). But PAS 2035 and BS 7913 cost a prohibitive £190 and £225 respectively.

- iii. My Institute the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) has produced a free [Guidance note](#) on Retrofitting Traditional Buildings which covers key points. The Sustainable Traditional Buildings Alliance (STBA) <https://stbauk.org>, of which I am Heritage Chair, has produced the [Whole House approach](#) and [Retrofit Guidance Wheel](#) which are cited in the Local Plan Great Places topic paper, [free guidance for householders](#), a [paper on EPCs](#), and [From Retrofit to Regeneration, a blueprint for post-Covid recovery](#). This notes the importance of culture as the 4th Pillar of Sustainability; which was highly relevant to Cambridge, a city such of international historic importance that it was proposed for World Heritage status in 1989.
- iv. Hoped the Council's retrofit study (para 6.5), "engaging and accessible guidance document for residents" (para 6.8) and "infographic and guide about sustainability in the home" (para 6.13) would mention the need for a different approach to buildings of traditional construction, and the free guidance produced by STBA, IHBC and other bodies.

*up to 35%, according to a major study, the [Solid Wall Literature Review](#), published by DECC in 2015 and available on the gov.uk website.

The Executive Councillor for Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity responded:

- i. The report on today's committee agenda was high level and did not go into projects in detail.
- ii. Guidance on how to retrofit homes came about in response to demand from residents.
- iii. Had received a draft of the guidance from consultants, it would be published on the city council website in future.
- iv. There was no consultation on the information as only guidance was being produced.
- v. The guidance would signpost residents to other sources of help and information.

Supplementary question:

- i. Getting skilled workers to set up new buildings was hard, retrofitting building was harder.

- ii. Offered to help contribute to producing guidance.
- iii. Requested the City Council asked Central Government to also produce free retrofitting guidance.

The Executive Councillor responded:

- i. Agreed it was difficult to find skilled trades people and appropriate materials.
- ii. One solution was the City Council producing a framework of housing contractors that it used so people would know the contractors had been assessed by the City Council.
- iii. Undertook to ask Central Government to produce free retrofitting guidance.
- iv. City Council guidance would be available online.

22/43/EnC Petition - Maple Tree St Matthews Street

Councillor Thornburrow, on behalf of the Lead Petitioner, made a presentation to Committee setting out background information. Requested a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) in favour of, and for the permanent protection of the beautiful, healthy, mature maple tree on St 'Mathew's Street, Cambridge - for all circumstances.

The Streets and Open Spaces Development Manager said the following in response to the petition:

- i. A TPO was put in place to protect trees of woodlands to stop work without permission from the City Council.
- ii. The City Council received an emergency request to serve a TPO on the Maple located adjacent to St Matthew's Street garages. The reason given was that a local resident had been informed by a driver delivering barriers that the tree was going to be felled.
- iii. City Council Officers investigated and found no tree works were proposed. The tree was on council owned land and managed by the tree team.
- iv. The City Council constitution delegated duties and authorities set out in Part VIII, Chapter 1 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (The Act) to Tree Team Officers to put TPOs in place.
- v. The amenity value of the maple was not contested but expedience in this case was. The tree was on city land, was managed by the tree team and

there are no plans to remove it. The removal of city managed trees was also carried out in accordance with policies set out the Citywide Tree Strategy the most pertinent of which are GM2 and GM3.

- a. GM2: The Council would not remove trees without good reason. When felling work was carried out, the reasons for the work would be documented and recorded.
 - b. GM3: All planned tree works would be published on the Council website and through site notices for the community to access at least 20 working days before implementation. The Council saw this as an important tool for communicating to the local community about tree work planned for their area and the reasons why the works are necessary.
- vi. A TPO was not recommended for the maple at this time. In addition, serving TPOs on council trees increased workload as it would require the submission of an application before works could be carried out and might create an expectation for other council trees to be “protected” in the same way.
- vii. The Council valued residents’ interest to protecting and enhancing tree cover in Petersfield and therefore to facilitate greater understanding committed to providing residents with available relevant information to help improve our knowledge and understanding of trees and nature in this area by:
- a. A ‘walk around’, involving both Tree Officers and local residents, to examine the existing trees and consider opportunities for new trees both within Public Open Spaces and on local streets.
 - b. A hybrid (zoom/in-person) meeting to share information from the Council’s Tree Canopy Project (on the role of trees in reducing: the urban heat sink; problems from heavy downpour run-off; and overheating – as well as bringing together communities), also to address how the available evidence offers lessons that can be applied in Petersfield.
 - c. A continued ongoing collaboration with residents in Petersfield, aiming for better management and protection of our precious trees.
 - d. The substantial petition be kept on file by Tree Officers so that if circumstances changed in any adverse way a TPO would be reconsidered.

The Executive Councillor for Open Spaces, Food Justice and Community Development said:

- i. Officers had previously liaised with councillors and residents that no tree works were planned and a TPO was not required.
- ii. The petition had given an opportunity to look again at the City Council's Tree Strategy to ensure it was fit for purpose.
- iii. Tree Officers looked forward to engaging with residents about trees and how to protect them.
- iv. There was tree canopy cover in Petersfield Ward. It was not the lowest (amount) in the city, but levels were low. Ways to address this were being reviewed.
- v. It was a positive thing that residents petitioned to protect a tree when they thought it was in danger.

The Chair asked residents for suggestions that could be put in place if a TPO was not required so she could ensure they were followed up.

22/44/EnC Waterbeach Renewable Energy Network (WREN) Solar Project

Matter for Decision

The Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service (GCSWS) for Cambridge City Council (CCC) and South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) has firm policy commitments to decarbonise the fleet of refuse collection vehicles by 2030 and CCC has set a target to reduce its direct carbon emissions from corporate buildings, fleet vehicles and business travel to net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

A key part of the decarbonisation programme was to replace the fleet of existing diesel refuse collection vehicles (RCVs) as the current stock accounts for 1,800 tonnes of CO₂ per year.

The local electricity network at Waterbeach Depot had insufficient capacity to meet the charging requirements of an electric fleet as the maximum grid capacity would be reached now the two electric RCVs (eRCV) were operational.

In order to continue the fleet decarbonisation programme to meet the Council's 2030 net zero target, there was an urgent need for an on-site renewable

energy solution to enable charging of eRCVs. The Waterbeach Renewable Energy Network (WREN) Solar Project was how this need would be met.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Climate Change, Environment and City Centre

- i. Approved the council's participation in the WREN Solar Project to develop an integrated renewable energy and storage solution including a ground-mounted solar photovoltaic array and battery storage on land adjacent to the Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service Depot at Waterbeach depot.
- ii. Supported the inclusion of a capital proposal within the council's General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy for a contribution of £1.3m towards the capital delivery cost, funded by a £0.1m contribution from the council's Climate Change Fund and £1.2m from General Fund reserves.
- iii. Noted that the contribution of £0.1m from the Council's Climate Change Fund was match-funding to the contribution being made from the existing GCSWS budget towards the project.
- iv. Delegated authority to the Strategic Director in consultation with the Head of Legal Practice and Head of Property Services to approve necessary contracts and leases to enable the implementation of the WREN project.

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 Property Services.

The Head of Property Services said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Officers were working with a local contractor to supply electric vehicles. They were confident there would be no supply issues.
- ii. Combustion engine vehicles were timetabled to be replaced at the end of their working life.
- iii. Land required for vehicle replacement would be rented from a site next to the shared waste depot. Planning permission was in place for this.

- iv. Thirty five vehicles out of fifty from the waste fleet could become eRCVs or ultra low emission vehicles through this project. The intention was to use a mix of vehicles to replace diesel ones in future such as hybrid and electric. Thirty to thirty five vehicles would be replaced through this project, possibly more later.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

She said the Council had started a trial of hydrotreated vegetable oil fuels to lower vehicle emissions.

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

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

22/45/EnC Climate Change Strategy and Carbon Management Plan Annual Report 2021/22

Matter for Decision

The Officer's report provided an update on progress on the 2021/22 actions of the Council's Climate Change Strategy 2021-26.

The report also provided an update on the council's Greenhouse Gas Emissions for 2021/22.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Climate Change, Environment and City Centre

- i. Noted the progress achieved in 2021/22 in implementing the actions in the Climate Change Strategy and Carbon Management Plan.
- ii. Approved the updated Climate Change Strategy action plan presented in Appendix A of the Officer's report.
- iii. Approved the updated Environmental Policy Statement presented in Appendix C of the Officer's report.

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 Strategy and Partnerships Manager.

In response to the report Councillors asked if projects were under threat from tighter budgets in future?

The Executive Councillor said:

- i. These were difficult times. The City Council needed to manage its finances carefully. Some of the measures to reduce carbon emissions could lead to long term cost savings after the initial financial outlay. Reducing carbon emissions was a council policy commitment.
- ii. The City Council hoped to reach its target of net zero emissions by 2030. It was unclear if the City of Cambridge could become net zero by 2030 too.

The Strategy and Partnerships Manager said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. A budget of up to £20,000 was available for resident training on sustainability etc. The provider offered sessions for up to one hundred residents, plus wider engagement through other method such as a communications campaign.
- ii. The City Council had taken action over several years to reduce carbon emissions. There had also been investment at a national level to decarbonise the energy grid and move from fossil fuels to green energy. The City Council's emissions should therefore continue to decline based on these actions.
- iii. The City Council was still using gas as a fuel source to heat some buildings, so was looking at alternative heat sources to decarbonise the authority in future.
- iv. An Asset Management Plan had been created. Site surveys had been undertaken and the Plan would be updated by March 2023. The intention was to look at ways to reduce City Council buildings' carbon footprint through measures such as air source heat pumps. The Strategy and Partnerships Manager undertook to send Councillors details after committee.

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.

22/46/EnC Response to Question on Recycling Rates/Residual Waste**Matter for Decision**

The Council meeting on 21 July 2022 noted details about waste and recycling.

Council requested a report to the next Environment & Community Scrutiny committee to consider how this trend in residual waste reduction can be maintained and increased over the coming years.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Climate Change, Environment and City Centre

Noted the analysis of the recycling and waste data recorded during the pandemic period and the actions being taken to conduct targeted behavioral change campaigns and increase opportunities for reuse, repair and recycling.

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 Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service.

The Head of Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. The Waste Policy Team was designing behavioural change campaigns that could link with retrofitting training (referenced in earlier minute item).
- ii. The campaigns would focus on the waste hierarchy (reduce, reuse, recycle) then offer initiatives to address these such as repair cafes or 'library of things' to share ownership and increase usage. Feedback would allow officers to improve the program.

The Executive Councillor said that Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service were looking at what people threw away to target campaigns at areas that threw away food waste etc more than others.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendation.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

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

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

22/47/EnC Report on Progress of Environmental Services New Approach on Investigating Noise Complaints

Matter for Decision

The Council has a legal duty to investigate statutory nuisance within its area under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. However, the law does not specify how to exercise this duty, it was therefore the responsibility of each Local Authority to establish its own procedures for investigating complaints of noise that may amount to statutory nuisance.

At this committee on 27th January 2022, the Executive Councillor noted the results of the pro-active and planned Out of Hours Noise Service trial that was conducted between 1st October – 31st December 2021 and approved the adoption of this proactive and planned service approach on a permanent basis supported by use of evidence gathering technologies and equipment.

It was also agreed by the Executive Councillor that a further report on progress of Environmental Services new approach to investigating noise complaints would be brought to committee detailing further evaluation of the impact of the Council's move from a reactive Out of Hours Noise Service to one which uses a combination of technology and planned use of officer time.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Climate Change, Environment and City Centre

Noted the update report on the Council's new approach on investigating noise complaints.

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 Team Manager - Residential, Environmental Services.

The Team Manager - Residential, Environmental Services said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. No formal or informal complaints had been received about the new approach to investigating noise complaints.
- ii. Officers provided support to complainants when they logged issues. Section 3.10 of the Officer's report listed outcomes of noise complaints received.
- iii. A customer satisfaction survey was launched on-line from 1 October 2022.
- iv. The old system was a reactive approach to out of hours noise complaints. Now the City Council could be proactive on a case-by-case basis. Technology allowed the City Council to quickly intervene for repeated issues. Officers could plan what visits were required, and when, so they could witness issues as they occurred.
- v. The number of officer visits had decreased as they could be targeted to where/when needed.
- vi. The City Council could not investigate one-off issues, only repeated ones. Visiting on a reactive basis (old system) was not a good use of City Council resources as some issues were outside the Council's remit. Resources could be better directed and callers directed to appropriate sources of help under the new system (if the City Council was unable to help).

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendation.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

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

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm

CHAIR