

**COUNCIL**

20 October 2022

6.00 - 11.17 pm

**Present:** Councillors Ashton, D. Baigent, Bennett, Bick, Bird, Carling, Collis, Copley, Davey, S. Davies, Divkovic, Flaubert, Gawthrope Wood, Gilderdale, Hauk, Healy, Holloway, Howard, Lee, Levien, McPherson, Moore, Nethsingha, Page-Croft, Payne, Porrer, Pounds, Robertson, Sheil, Smart, A. Smith, S. Smith, Sweeney, Swift, Thittala Varkey, Thornburrow and Todd-Jones

Also present (virtually) Councillor: S.Baigent

**FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**

**22/33/CNL Minutes**

The minutes of the 21 July 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor subject to the following amendments:

- i. Noting apologies from Councillor Sheil
- ii. Noting that one of the declarations listed for Councillor Dryden for item 22/29/CNLb should have been listed as a declaration for Councillor Ashton.

**22/34/CNL Mayor's announcements**

**Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Dryden, Herbert, McQueen.

It was noted that Councillor Sarah Baigent joined the meeting virtually via Microsoft Teams.

**Mayors Announcements**

Members were reminded that the Remembrance Sunday civic service was taking place on Sunday 13 November at Great St. Mary's Church at 10.55 a.m.

The Mayor would be laying a wreath on behalf of the City at the War Memorial.

The Chevin Sermon would take place on Sunday 29 January 2023.

The Annual Meeting of Council passed a Resolution of Thanks to Councillor McPherson and Mrs McPherson for their period of office as Mayor and Mayoress. The framed Resolution was presented to Councillor McPherson.

### Declarations of Interest

Member	Item	Interest
D.Baigent	All	Personal: Member of Cambridge Cycling Campaign
Gilderdale	22/44/CNLd	Personal: Member of Acorn Union
Bennett	22/38/CNL	Personal: Member of LITRG, CIOT and CPAG being organisations campaigning about Universal Credit.
Bick	22/44/CNLd	Personal: Owned a rental property in Cambridge.
Levien	22/44/CNLd	Personal: Owned a two properties in Cambridge.

### 22/35/CNL Public questions time

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

#### Question 1.

As the nights draw in, more and more students are becoming aware of the low levels of lighting on some of the most well used paths around Cambridge. Many of these paths cross beautiful areas, rich in wildlife, and I know there are concerns about the impact increased permanent lighting might have on wildlife, in particular bats. However, for the winter months, when the lighting is most important for the human residents in Cambridge, many bat species are hibernating. Would the Executive member for Open Spaces be willing to meet with me to discuss a program to use “Christmas” lighting (perhaps in the trees) as a temporary and attractive way to improve the lighting on some of our paths make them feel safer for walkers and cyclists without having an undue impact on bats or other insects in the summer?

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

- i. Thanked the member of the public for raising the question and agreed the question was important from the point of view of protecting not only members of the public but also protected species.
- ii. Confirmed that they would be happy to meet with the public speaker and suggested that Councillor Gilderdale also joined them.
- iii. Noted that Cambridge had recently been awarded Purple Flag status for the third consecutive year. Purple Flag was an internationally accredited standard which was awarded to towns and cities which delivered a safe, entertaining and diverse evening and night-time experience which included a consideration for lighting.
- iv. Was keen to understand the areas which caused concern. And suggested that colleagues from the Neighbourhood Policing Team, City Council Ecology Officers and Project Officers from the Streets and Open Spaces Team should also be invited to the meeting.
- v. Noted that Cambridgeshire County Council was the lead Authority for street lighting and that permission would need to be sought from them for any additions to street lighting columns. Also noted that applications for changes this winter may be too late.

Question 2.

On September 5th 2022, a group of Travellers were evicted from Arbury Town Rec. It is common for family groups to travel through Cambridge for funerals, weddings, births, hospital visits, and to find work. However, due to the local authorities' failure to provide adequate legal stopping provisions, they are often forced to park their vehicles without authorisation.

In a Facebook post, Cambridge police said of the eviction:

*"We were made aware of trespassing on land at Campkin Road – known as Arbury Town Rec – over the weekend and a range of significant impacts on local people including anti-social behaviour. We have been working with the landowners, Cambridge City Council, to respond to those behaviours.*

*As set out in national guidance on legislation under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act 2022, we assess and then respond appropriately to cases based on the individual circumstances.*

*This includes balancing considerations as to whether the behaviours meet the threshold of ‘causing, or likely to cause, significant damage, disruption or distress’, alongside the potential impact taking enforcement action may have on families involved or other vulnerable people.*

*This afternoon we agreed with Cambridge City Council that the trespassing has been causing disorder and disruption to the local community and the most appropriate course of action was to direct the group to leave using the new Section 60C(1) powers.”*

As Cambridge City Council acknowledged in its July 2021 Motion on the Policing Bill, Section 60C(1) “specifically [targets] Gypsy and Traveller communities, who are some of the most discriminated against and marginalised minority ethnic communities in UK society.” The Council described Section 60C(1) as “discriminatory and disproportionate” and resolved to “stand in solidarity with Traveller and Gypsy communities in Cambridge.”

We now know what the Council thinks solidarity looks like.

Were alternative provisions, such as a negotiated stopping agreement, attempted prior to the Council’s decision to enforce a measure that it claims to condemn; can the Council provide evidence that the alleged “disorder and disruption” met the legal threshold for an eviction under the PCSC Act; and, if so, did this eviction result in criminal proceedings, under the PCSC Act or otherwise?

Sources:

- <https://www.facebook.com/CambridgeCity.police/posts/pfbid0X1cyiY7hHzDRpojT22PadtCqnWfHrThTp3UDYHEeVfRst6JbXYfHfVB1oewWHHDF!>
- <https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=27720>

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

- i. The Police statement on Facebook was correct in its reports that there was significant impact on local people as a result of the gathering referred to, which included a high level of anti-social behaviour. Council Officers visited on the Sunday and the Monday and witnessed the anti-social behaviour. The Executive Councillor also witnessed the behaviour

- themselves and was contacted by a number of residents who were distressed by the high level of disturbance.
- ii. The decision to evict was not one which was taken lightly and there was a lot of dialogue including a thorough appraisal with site meetings in the lead up to the decision. The Council owns Arbury Town Park and has managed several unauthorised encampments on this site in 2022, the visit prior to the one referred to in the public question was a negotiated stopping arrangement.
  - iii. The cross-authority officer working group had been looking at options for negotiated stopping places. With regards to the 26 August visit, Council Officers had talked with the group and established that the group wanted a short stay and the group left by 31 August. The visit on the 4 September was a significant gathering involving 10 vehicles, 6 caravans and 47 people. Council Officers were unable to conduct a welfare assessment on 4 September as a high number of individuals were intoxicated.
  - iv. On the 5 September the Police conducted over 30 door to door visits in the neighbourhood to understand the impact of the unauthorised encampment on the local community. Resident's feedback and Council officers' experiences was that the group's late-night drinking and associated noise had caused significant disruption and distress to residents in neighbouring properties. Despite requests from the Police to be mindful of their proximity to neighbouring homes, the group did not abate their drinking, with approximately 15 people sat drinking at 10am on Monday 5 September. This meant the threshold for significant damage or disruption was met on the following grounds:
    - a. local communities being prevented from accessing or using facilities;
    - b. damage to the environment;
    - c. distress caused by offensive conduct such as verbal abusive and threatening behaviour
  - v. After a lot of discussions, the Council accepted the Police's decision for the need to use their powers to disperse this Group because of the disorder and disruption caused.

Supplementary public question:

- i. Noted that the situation was not an easy one and that there was a duty of care to residents but also felt that there was a duty of care to the people who were stopping in Cambridge and that whilst resident's lives were disrupted the group who stopped also had disruption to their lives when they were evicted. Questioned how the Council was fulfilling their duty of care, when people were evicted without a welfare check being undertaken.

### Question 3.

"Recently it has been noticed that there is a significant increase in the number of international students arriving at Cambridge. Anglia Ruskin has published on their website that 2000 international students have been registered in 2022-23.

It is very alarming to see international students are being forced to stay at B&B and/or Travel Lodges, where they have to pay a huge amount of sum as University has not secured accommodation before arrival. It has been reported that students who arrive in Cambridge in the middle of the night, ended up sleeping in the university lounge and some days they have to sleep in the corridors of Travel Lodge. In many cases, they have to pay for Bed & Breakfast for weeks until they could find some accommodation, effectively being homeless for a certain period of time.

Can the council confirm that the students are being provided with secured accommodation and are not forced to become homeless?"

The Executive Councillor for Housing responded:

- i. The University in Cambridge made it clear in communication with overseas students in advance of travel that they should not arrive without securing suitable residential accommodation. Information was published on their website within the allocations policies. The University continued to work to source additional student accommodation either developed themselves or with private sector partners.
- ii. The Council did not have a duty in relation to providing accommodation to those students who arrived in the city having not secured accommodation in advance. The Council did not have any powers to limit the number of international students or the capacity of educational establishments.
- iii. The Council had powers to ensure that accommodation within the city was safe, this included accommodation for international students.

Supplementary public question:

- i. Asked the Executive Councillor to check the figures referred to regarding the number of incidences of international students arriving in the city without accommodation being secured.

Question 4.

While awaiting the now two-year delayed GTANA, upon which the Council seems to put so much store, the need for Transit Sites in Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire is clearly evident, based on the Council's continuing use of evictions for 'unauthorised encampments'. (1) (2)

At the May Full Council Meeting, the Executive Councillor stated they could not commit to a moratorium on evictions, but did not intend to bring criminal proceedings under the Police, Crime Sentencing and Courts Act (2022) on Council-owned land. The City Council appears to be in breach of this with regard to an unauthorised encampment at Arbury Town Rec in September.

This raises the question what further need a GTANA can demonstrate than the clear evidence which is staring the Council full in the face.

To put this into context, the RRR Consultancy Ltd GTANA was commissioned to inform the housing and planning requirements in emerging Local Plans for the 20 year period 2020–2040, but the current Local Plan (by ORS and not passed until 2018) is still the basis of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS). This should have already demonstrated need, yet failed to propose any Transit Sites for Cambridge City and South Cambs' Joint Planning Authority.

In fact Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (3) stated 12 years ago that public bodies should have regard to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; foster good relations; to remove and minimise disadvantages suffered by those due to their protected characteristics; and to encourage them to participate in public life. 'LAs used to have a legal duty to provide sites for Gypsies and Travellers. In 1994 this obligation was removed following the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act and as a result, and along with a change in the use of land and more land being identified for housing, site provision to accommodate the roadside GRT communities is limited.' (4)

The other issue the Council seems to have left in abeyance is the impact of the 2015 new definition of Travellers in planning guidance. For the past 50 years, aspects of law and policy in England have sought to address a shortage of Gypsy and Traveller sites to compensate for the closure of traditional stopping

places on common land since 1960. The new definition recognises only those travelling for work permanently and excludes those who have settled due to age, illness, education or other reasons. In an EHRC study across 20 LPAs, the pre-2015 total requirement was for 1,584 further pitches. After the revised definition was introduced, the assessed need fell to just 345. ‘Another way of looking at this is that **instead of 100% of accommodation need coming within the PPTS definition, we have found that since August 2015 this figure is nearer 15% of assessed households.**’ (5)

By their very nature, those Travellers involved in unauthorised encampments are the most obviously PPTS-compliant candidates, yet they are difficult to track and suspicious of officials coming onto their encampments and asking questions. This appears to have been the case in Arbury Town Rec.

While failing to provide any new pitches or transit sites, the South Cambridgeshire website helpfully provides an ‘Unauthorised Encampments Toolkit’ for parishes to assist in enforcement actions either in 3 easy steps using Common Law or through Possession proceedings under Section 55. (6)

What all this means is that the changes to PPTS, the repeal of the duty to specifically assess Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs, and its replacement with a more general duty to assess the need for caravan sites in the assessment of a general housing need, have led to a significant reduction in pitch numbers in GTAAs.

RRR Consultancy Ltd have submitted their data to the individual Councils in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Kings Lynn and West Norfolk. Fenland may reject it and commission their own study and West Suffolk have approved an interim statement of accommodation needs, due to the demands of the emerging Local Plan. The City Council have now received the data from RRR Consultancy Ltd and are reviewing it.

The question is: **When will the new GTANA be made public?**

### **Notes:**

- 1 During the pandemic up until July 2021, there were 11 evictions.
- 2 Since the July 2021 City Council Motion to “stand in solidarity with Traveller and Gypsy communities in Cambridge”, 7 further evictions from Arbury Town Park land have taken place between July 2021 and March 2022. In response to a question by Cllr Bennett in March 2022 at the Full Council Meeting.

3 The Equality Act (2010)  
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>



4 From South Cambridgeshire website.

5 EHRC: G&T sites: the revised planning definitions impact on assessing accommodation needs Research Report 128 September 2019

6 <https://www.scambss.gov.uk/housing/housing-advice/gypsy-and-traveller-information/gypsy-and-traveller-encampment-advice/>

The Executive Councillor for Equalities, Anti-Poverty and Wellbeing responded:

- i. Wanted to note that it had been stated that criminal proceedings had been brought under the PCSC Act 2022 but this was incorrect, they were civic proceedings.
- ii. The consultants carrying out the work had provided a draft Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment report, which also included an assessment of the needs of caravan dwellers who did not meet the planning policy traveller sites definition.
- iii. Initially there were delays in the 'fieldwork' for this survey as a consequence of the pandemic and the need to minimise the risk to both Gypsy Roma Traveller communities and researchers. However, there were concerns about the robustness of the findings and it was not felt the data was robust enough so the contract was ended. New consultants had been engaged to take the work forward.
- iv. This has not prevented Cambridge City Council from working with partners, including South Cambridgeshire District Council, to explore options for permanent and negotiated stopping place/transit site provision based on existing evidence. An Officer Working Group had been meeting and would continue to take this work forward regardless of when a new assessment was completed.
- v. Once a robust assessment was in place it would be published as part of the evidence base to support the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan.
- vi. Noted that a Gypsy Roma Traveller Community worker would be recruited.
- vii. The Council had previously committed to holding a day of activities for Gypsy Roma Traveller communities and this would be held in December at the Guildhall.

Supplementary public question:

- i. Noted that criminal proceedings had not been instigated but felt this was because families left, but felt it was always a pressure on these families.
- ii. The need for transit sites was clear and felt the Council did not need a Gypsy Roma Traveller Needs Assessment (GTANA) to advise them of that.
- iii. Noted the Council said that they were going to identify sites.

## **22/36/CNL To consider the recommendations of the Executive for adoption**

### **4a Housing Revenue Account Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 (Executive Councillor for Housing)**

#### **Resolved (by 23 votes to 0) to:**

- i. Approve proposals for changes in existing housing capital budgets, as introduced in the officer's report at sections 6 and 7 and detailed in Appendix E of the document, with the resulting position summarised in Appendix H, for decision at Council on 20 October 2022.
- ii. Approve proposals for new housing capital budgets, as introduced in the officer's report at sections 6 and 7 and detailed in Appendix E of the document, with the resulting position summarised in Appendix H, for decision at Council on 20 October 2022.
- iii. Approve the revised funding mix for the delivery of the Housing Capital Programme, recognising the latest assumptions for the use of Grant, Right to Buy Receipts, HRA Resources, Major Repairs Allowance and HRA borrowing.

### **4b Appointment to Conservators of the River Cam (Executive Councillor Open Spaces, Food Justice and Community Development)**

#### **Resolved (unanimously) to:**

- i. Appoint Councillor Levien to the Conservators of the River Cam (term ending December 2024 for all city council appointees).

## **22/37/CNL Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority -city council appointments (Leader of the Council)**

#### **Resolved (unanimously) to:**

- i. Appoint Councillor Anna Smith as the substitute member on the Combined Authority Board and Councillor Simon Smith as a substantive member and Councillor Gawthrope Wood as the substitute member on the Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**22/38/CNL Council Tax Reduction Local Scheme April 2023-March 2026 (Executive Councillor for Finance, Resources and Transformation)**

**Resolved (unanimously):**

- i. Continue with the current Council Tax Reduction scheme (to include annual uprating in line with housing benefit rates) for working age claimants who are not in receipt of Universal Credit.
- ii. Reset the non-dependant deduction rates for both working-age schemes for 1 year from 1 April 2023 and to uprate by September CPI figures thereafter.
- iii. Continue with an earnings based banded local Council Tax Reduction scheme for Universal Credit claimants and to have fixed non-dependant deductions for these claims.
- iv. Reset the earned income bands and contribution amounts set out in 4.03 Table 1 for 1 year from 1 April 2023 and to uprate by September CPI figures thereafter.
- v. Align non-dependant deductions so the rules for application are the same for all schemes (prescribed Pensioner scheme and the two Local Schemes, one for Universal Credit households and one for non-Universal Credit households)
- vi. Not introduce a minimum contribution towards Council Tax for households on Local Council Tax Reduction.

**22/39/CNL Treasury Management half yearly report 2022/23 (Executive Councillor for Finance, Resources and Transformation)**

**Resolved (by 27 votes to 0):**

- i. Agree the Council's estimated Prudential and Treasury Indicators for 2022/23 to 2025/26 (Appendix A of the officer's report).
- ii. Approve the revised counterparty list (Appendix B of the officer's report).
- iii. Approve the addition of a loan to the Cambridge Investment Partnership in the counterparty list, to bring these into line with the approved expenditure per the approved capital plan (Appendix B of the officer's report).

## 22/40/CNL General Fund Medium Term Strategy 2022 (Executive Councillor for Finance, Resources and Transformation)

**Resolved (unanimously for recommendations i and iii-vii and by 27 votes to 0 for recommendation ii) to:**

- i. Agree the budget process and timetable as outlined in Section 8 [page 25] of the MTFs document.
- ii. Agree the incorporation of changed assumptions as presented in Section 3 [pages 10 and 11], which provide an indication of the net savings requirement, by year for the next five years [page 13], and revised projections for General Fund (GF) revenue and funding as shown in Appendix A [page 26] and reserves, Section 6 [page 18].
- iii. Agree the 2022/23 revenue budget proposal as set out in Section 4 [page 12], for a £1,122k increase in pay budgets to reflect the current pay offer
- iv. Note the changes to the capital plan and funding as set out in Section 5 [pages 15 to 17] and Appendix B [pages 27 to 30] of the MTFs document.
- v. Agree capital spending proposals as set out below.

Ref.	Description - £'000s	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
	<b>Proposals</b>							
SC826	WREN solar project	-	1,170	130	-	-	-	1,300
SC654	Redevelopment of Silver Street Toilets	141	-	-	-	-	-	141
	<b>Total proposals</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>1,170</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,441</b>

- vi. Agree changes to GF reserve levels, the prudent minimum balance being set at £6.854m and the target level at £8.225m as detailed in Section 6 [page 18].
- vii. Agree that the remaining balance of £213k on the Cambridge Live Development Fund is transferred to the GF reserve and the fund is closed [page 20].

**22/41/CNL To consider the recommendations of Committees for adoption****5a Civic Affairs Committee: Amendment to Contract Procedure Rules****Resolved (unanimously) to:**

- i. Amend the Contract Procedure Rules to enable Grant Agreements to be approved by deed; or signed under hand where appropriate by delegated authority to the Director. The new wording would be as follows: “ALL Grant Agreements paid to third parties must be executed as a deed; or signed under hand where appropriate by delegated authority to the Director”.

**5b Civic Affairs Committee: Review of the Budget Setting Process and Wider Financial Governance Issues****Resolved (unanimously for recommendations i – iv and by 25 votes to 9 for recommendation v) to:**

- i. Agree the changes to Council Procedure Rules and Budget Framework rules as set out in the Appendix A of the Officer’s report and that the arrangements are reviewed in good time to inform an agreed approach for the following budget cycle.
- ii. Note the additions and changes to meetings December 2022-February 2023 as a consequence of these changes.
- iii. Agree that Council meets on 23 February 2023 to consider the Budget Setting Report and associated financial recommendations only (ie a budget meeting), with the remainder of the Council Agenda adjourned until the following Thursday 2 March 2023 (ie the same arrangement as 2022).
- iv. Note that this arrangement may not be the best way on-going and Members will be consulted on different options for when Council meetings are scheduled at this time of the municipal year following a review of the above changes to the budget process.
- v. Agree the changes to Virements and carry forwards as described in 3.4 and Appendix B of the Officer’s report.

**5c Civic Affairs Committee: Proposal to Increase the current Cambridge Weighting for Employees and Agency Workers****Resolved (unanimously) to:**

- i. Approve the proposal to increase the Cambridge Weighting to be paid to employees and agency workers to a minimum of £11.00 per hour, with effect from April 2023.
- ii. Delegate authority to the Head of Human Resources to update the weightings on each relevant pay point, subject to the limit of £11.00 per hour, depending upon the current hourly rate and the Real Living Wage supplement payable at that time.

## **22/42/CNL Civic Affairs Committee: Review of the Pensions Discretions Statement**

### **Resolved (unanimously):**

- i. Approve the proposed policy statement on employer discretions shown as per Appendix A of the Officer's report.
- ii. Delegate approval to join a shared cost AVC scheme to the Head of Human Resources, following consultation with the Head of Finance, Executive Councillor for Finance, Resources and Transformation and Opposition Spokes for Strategy and Resources, if considered appropriate, following further exploration of a suitable procurement process.
- iii. Note that Council Officers will continue to review the Discretions Statement every 3 years and/or in line with changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) as advised by the Local Government Pensions Committee (LGPC) and the Administering Authority (Cambridgeshire County Council), and any recommended changes will go before Civic Affairs for approval.

## **22/43/CNL To deal with oral questions**

Question 1 – Councillor Holloway to the Executive Councillor for Housing.

With rising concerns around the future of the government's scheme for Ukrainian refugees, can the Executive Councillor set out how the council proposes to continue our support?

Executive Councillor response:

The creation and purpose of the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Team was to support guests with housing options advice, help Ukrainian Refugees to settle, build their homes in the UK and enable them to support themselves and secure future accommodation options. The Team would comprise a Team Leader, 3 Homelessness Prevention Officers and 4 Community Settlement roles.

Question 2 – Councillor Bick to the Leader.

One of the surviving initiatives of the government's abandoned economic strategy is the creation of Investment Zones, where financial incentives and light touch planning controls are offered to developers. Has this council supported a formal Expression of Interest to the government for any area within Cambridge to become an Investment Zone and if so, where?

Executive Councillor response:

The Combined Authority was responsible for the submission of expression of interest bids for Investment Zones. The Combined Authority had advised the Council that these bids were currently confidential, it was therefore difficult to answer the question fully. Cautious support had been given to some expressions of interest which may benefit the city. It had been made clear that willingness to allow bids to proceed to further discussion would be subject to i) no relaxation of planning rules ii) no relaxation of environmental rules iii) no changes to workers' rights and a clear demonstration of social value and benefit to the community of any bid which went forward. Support for the bids would be withdrawn if reassurances were not forthcoming.

Question 3 – Cllr Hauk to the Executive Councillor for Open Spaces, Food Justice and Community Development.

What are the City Council and the Executive Councillors planning to do to help the Clay Farm Centre library and community centre to be safe and welcoming spaces in the coming winter months, following a series of very serious failures of basic infrastructure?

Executive Councillor response:

There was an on-going issue with the heating and hot water system at Clay Farm. The City Council had responsibility for the building as a whole and for that particular system. Contractors had been working hard on this issue for some time but hadn't been able to fully resolve it. The result was that the

heating and hot water system was working but prone to cutting out. There were visits twice a day seven days a week to re-set the system. The Executive Councillor acknowledged this was not ideal and was working to bring all parties together to get issues resolved.

Question 4 – Councillor Carling to the Leader.

What is the Leader's perspective on the GCP City Access consultation which has just opened?

Leader response:

The most important message was to encourage as many people as possible to take part in the consultation. Noted that no decision had been made beyond agreement to go out to consultation. The key to the proposal was putting buses first. Noted that for some people there was no other option than to run a car as public transport was not good enough. The proposals also covered several exemptions and exceptions.

Question 5 – Councillor McPherson to the Executive Councillor for Recovery Employment and Community Safety.

In pre-covid 2019, the Children's Commissioner reported that Cambridge was the fourth worst performing area in the country for young people on Free School Meals. How is the Council supporting young people from disadvantaged backgrounds through education and into the job market.

Executive Councillor response:

It was reported by the Department for Education that the GCSE grades gap for disadvantaged pupils was the widest it had been for a decade. Students eligible for free school meals had GCSE results on average half a grade lower than children from better off backgrounds. This was the widest gap since 2011-12. The gap for children with special educational needs was wider than that. Those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds may not have had opportunities in extracurricular activities to develop transferrable skills. Many people equate the city with fantastic research and learning however while many residents benefitted from this, the Council was also working hard to ensure all have access to opportunities especially at times like now where many are facing difficulties. One of the recently launched programmes across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is the 'Region of Learning'. This was a project where young people were connected with opportunities to develop their



skills in the city through their library cards. The platform targeted specific groups including young people and those from less advantaged backgrounds and included businesses who tailored entry level opportunities to those who were looking for ways to enter the job market in the city. Skills gained were attached as badges to peoples' library cards and could be transferred on to CVs to help with their careers.

Question 6 – Cllr Howard – to the Executive Councillor for Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity.

Council will be aware of the proposal to do a feasibility study to establish a district heat network under the Market Square based on ground heat. This is an extremely challenging site because of existing underground buildings and archaeological heritage. Would it not be prudent to ask the funders to switch the funding to a less challenging clean site such as Abbey Pools car park?

Executive Councillor response:

Council will be aware of the proposal to do a feasibility study to look at the technical and financial barriers to establish a district heat network in the city centre. This built on an earlier study which identified the city centre as one of the areas potentially suited to a district heat network due to the concentration of heat demand. This was a shared project with Cambridge University and grant funding had been secured to explore this potential to decarbonise the city. The feasibility study was initially proposing to look at the City Council and University open spaces, but it was proposed to include the market square as well. Expected the feasibility study to consider potential areas of expansion into other areas of the city including residential areas.

Question 7 – Councillor Page-Croft to the Executive Councillor for Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity.

Could the Executive Councillor explain how or if the council are actively engaging with local businesses and offices to reduce their carbon footprint, particularly out of hours, in this troublesome time.

Executive Councillor response:

The Council regularly engages residents, businesses, and organisations on the climate crisis and how everyone can reduce their carbon emissions. Local businesses made a significant contribution to emissions in the city and the latest available estimates were that industrial and commercial sectors

accounted for 21% of Cambridge's carbon emissions. As a comparator the City Council contributed 1%. A lot of work had been undertaken this included providing £156,000 in green business grants to 18 Cambridge businesses this year for practical measures such as solar panels, heat pumps, electric bikes and other energy efficiency measures. Subject to Government funding, which was expected in December 2022, the City Council had included a £220,000 net zero advice and grant programme for 2023/24 as part of its sharing prosperity fund. This would help small to medium size businesses reduce their carbon footprint and lower energy costs. The Council had been funding Cambridge Carbon footprint to develop and promote the Cambridge Climate Charter.

A full list of oral questions including those not asked during the meeting can be found in the Information Pack, which is published on the meeting webpage [Agenda for Council on Thursday, 20th October, 2022, 6.00 pm - Cambridge Council](#).

**22/44/CNL To consider the following notices of motion, notice of which has been given by:**

**7a Councillor Bick and Councillor A.Smith - The Future of Local Bus Services**

Councillor Bick proposed and Councillor A.Smith seconded the following motion:

This Council:

**Deplores** Stagecoach's plan to withdraw 18 bus services across the county, noting the potential loss of independence and financial cost incurred by those who have relied on them, such as those students left without means of getting to sixth form college and CRC;

**Believes** that this further underlines the failure of the deregulated and purely commercial bus service in our area;

**Supports** measures by the CPCA Mayor Nik Johnson to protect these services beyond the end of October, should Stagecoach not be persuaded to rethink;

**Calls on** the Mayor to accelerate consideration of franchising bus services in our area, in particular noting the way this would complement the draft proposals 'Making Connections' from the Greater Cambridge Partnership, which could enable a longer term transformation of services;

**Encourages** Cambridge people to participate in the public consultation on the GCP's 'Making Connections' proposals, giving feedback on them to shape progress on the agenda of cutting congestion, improving mobility for all, enhancing our public realm and reducing carbon emissions from transport.

**Resolved (unanimously)** to support the motion.

**7b** Councillor Nethsingha - The cost of living crisis and the impact of Brexit

Councillor Nethsingha proposed and Councillor Bick seconded the following motion:

Council notes

- The devastating impact the recent fiscal event from Chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng has had on costs facing the majority of UK households through prompting a falling pound and increased interest rates;
- That this sits on top of not only the energy shortage caused by Putin's invasion of Ukraine over which we have limited influence, but also the inflationary effect and the constraints on trade and migration arising from Brexit, which is leaving us all relatively poorer overtime;

This Council calls on MPs of all parties, especially Daniel Zeichner as MP for Cambridge and Keir Starmer as Leader of the Opposition to:

- be clear of that Brexit remains a key and persistent cause of the cost of living crisis which is completely unique to the UK and
- recognise that a closer relationship with the EU, and in particular the restoration of free movement of goods and people is critical to tackling the cost of living crisis and securing sustainable growth, the absence of which disadvantages us all.

Councillor Divkovic proposed and Councillor Swift seconded the following amendment to motion (deleted text ~~struck through~~ and additional text underlined)

Council notes

The significant efforts of this Labour council, to address the cost-of-living crisis and support residents during these increasingly difficult times within a wider context which includes:

- The devastating impact of recent decisions ~~the recent fiscal event from~~ by the Conservative Government and the former Chancellor, Kwasi Kwarteng has had on costs facing the majority of UK households through prompting a falling pound and ~~and~~ increased interest rates;

- ~~That Tthis sits on top of compounds not only the energy shortage caused by Putin's invasion of Ukraine over which we have limited influence, but also the inflationary effect and the constraints on trade and migration arising from Brexit, which is leaving us all relatively poorer overtime;~~
- The risks of a second period of sustained austerity, even worse than previous austerity measures imposed by Coalition and Conservative governments since 2010 which caused so much hardship to so many- particularly those most vulnerable in society.

~~This Council recognises the efforts of Daniel Zeichner MP and Leader of the Labour party, Keir Starmer in relation to European unity, and notes their consistent support of the European project. We calls on MPs of all parties, especially Daniel Zeichner as MP for Cambridge and Keir Starmer as Leader of the Opposition to:~~

- ~~be clear of that Brexit remains a key and persistent cause underpinning of the cost-of-living crisis which is completely unique to the UK and~~
- ~~recognise that a closer relationship with the EU, and in particular the restoration of free movement of goods and people under the leadership of a national Labour Government is critical to tackling the cost of living crisis which will impact negatively on so many of our residents. and securing sustainable growth, the absence of which disadvantages us all.~~

On a show of hands the amendment was carried by 23 votes to 12.

### **Resolved (by 24 votes to 0) that:**

#### Council notes

The significant efforts of this Labour council, to address the cost-of-living crisis and support residents during these increasingly difficult times within a wider context which includes:

- The devastating impact of recent decisions by the Conservative Government and the former Chancellor, Kwasi Kwarteng has had on costs facing the majority of UK households through prompting a falling pound and increased interest rates;
- This compounds not only the energy shortage caused by Putin's invasion of Ukraine over which we have limited influence, but also inflation and constraints on trade and migration arising from Brexit

- The risks of a second period of sustained austerity, even worse than previous austerity measures imposed by Coalition and Conservative governments since 2010 which caused so much hardship to so many- particularly those most vulnerable in society.

This Council recognises the efforts of Daniel Zeichner MP and Leader of the Labour party, Keir Starmer in relation to European unity, and notes their consistent support of the European project. We call on MPs of all parties to:

- be clear that Brexit remains a key and persistent cause underpinning the cost-of-living crisis unique to the UK and
- recognise that a closer relationship with the EU, under the leadership of a national Labour Government is critical to tackling the cost of living crisis which will impact negatively on so many of our residents.

### **7c Councillor Collis and Councillor Carling - Tackling the Energy and Cost of Living Crisis Fairly**

Councillor Collis proposed and Councillor Carling seconded the following motion:

Inadequate action by national government on the energy crisis, and its failure to levy a sizeable energy company windfall tax, places the burden of spiralling energy costs on residents and businesses. The impacts of these failures and inadequacies will be far-reaching, meaning an extremely difficult winter for many and leaving a sizeable debt to pay off in the future. It will exacerbate the damage to jobs and real incomes caused by Government failure to reduce excessive inflation.

As research by the University of York Social Policy Unit projects, 91% of pensioner couples and 90% of couples with 3 children will find themselves soon spending 10% of their income on energy bills, and researchers' projections indicate that three quarters of UK households are likely to fall into food poverty by January 2023.

Cambridge City Council has set out a clear plan at the local level to address fuel poverty across the autumn and winter, including;

- Securing funding from the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) for a Heating and Health Project, working with South and East Cambridgeshire District Councils to co-produce local solutions supporting residents who will be at risk of health harms due to the cold and cost of living crisis this winter.

- establishing a network of cost-of-living advice hubs, where residents will be able to get advice on how to reduce their fuel bills.
- working with partners across the city to provide warm spaces, for residents who are struggling to heat their homes.
- issuing cost of living micro grants that groups of residents can apply to for support.
- Delivering £6.5m of Sustainable Warmth funding across Cambridgeshire to increase the energy efficiency of homes for the most vulnerable.
- continuing to insulate our council homes, with a further 100 identified for works.
- Making a £10,000 contribution to the Food Poverty Alliance's (FPA) Cambridge Cost of Food and Living Crisis crowd-funding campaign

However, council notes that the burden of intervention is falling disproportionately onto local authorities, which are already hit by those same rising energy costs and inflationary pressures. Following on from our March 2022 motion on fuel poverty and July motion on the cost of living, the Council calls for a far stronger plan of action from national government and demands that ministers;

1. Undertake a mid-year review and uprate benefits for 2022/23 to account for additional in-year non-energy inflation affecting household costs since the annual review, and not renege on their commitment to pensioners and those on benefits in order to help pay for tax cuts to high earners.
2. Withdraw the selective tax cuts proposed from November apart from the 1p income tax cut, and ensure the tax changes are fair to all.
3. Apply a further windfall tax on energy producing companies, in addition to the modest tax levied in the summer, in line with the tax asked for by council in its March motion.
4. Require Ofgem to review and reduce the electricity price formula to give all energy users a fairer deal, by ending their approach of basing it on the most expensive route to generate electricity, which is currently gas.

A copy of the motion will be sent to the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer, and forwarded to our local MPs, asking that they support its proposals and comment in response.

**Resolved (by 35 votes to 0)** to support the motion.

**7d** Councillor Holloway and Councillor Pounds - Private Rental Sector in Cambridge

Councillor Holloway proposed and Councillor Pounds seconded the following motion:

## The Council Notes

1. That according to research by Savills in 2021, 42% of households in Cambridge live in private rented accommodation.
2. That the strong rental market in Cambridge has led to high rental prices in the city, as displayed by Savills research from Aug 2020-21 where average rental prices increased by 4.1% in a year.
3. The City Council's 2019 review of homelessness and rough sleeping found that one of the most common causes of people becoming homeless in Cambridge were because of the loss of a private rented home.
4. The 2021 Census showed that Cambridge's population has been growing at almost three times the national average during the past decade (17.6% since 2011).
5. According to Government research, '*many low income households may have little choice over which property to rent because of the budget they have available*'. While 1/3 of privately rented homes in the UK don't meet the government's Decent Homes Standard.
6. Requests to Citizens Advice Bureau regarding help for private tenants are most typically about 'repairs and maintenance', 'rents and other charges' and 'tenancy deposit protection'.

## The Council Believes

1. Having a safe, secure and affordable home is vital.
2. That with such a growing population, house prices rising even faster, and without adequate funding for the council and housing associations to build affordable housing, the private rental sector in Cambridge is going to continue growing.
3. Tenants who may have little choice over rental properties may feel reluctant to complain about housing problems because they fear being evicted or are restricted by their budgets.
4. That as a city we should aspire for all residents to be living in safe, legal and adequate homes.
5. That working closely with private renters in Cambridge will allow us to better identify issues which can be addressed collaboratively.

## The Council Resolves

1. To convene a Private Renters' Forum to consult with private tenants in the city, including stakeholder groups such as ACORN, Students' Unions and Citizens Advice Bureau.

2. To notify Councillors at an All Member Briefing on plans for the Forum, and ensure information about the forum is shared widely.
3. Through the Forum, work with private renters to discuss how the Council can best support and advocate for private renters in the city.
4. To re-consider the need for a Selective Landlord Licensing Scheme in the light of the 2021 census data when it becomes available.
5. To continue to put high priority on work to ensure that all HMOs in the city are inspected, improved if needed, and licensed.
6. To ensure the relevant information on the Council's website (currently listed here: [www.cambridge.gov.uk/private-rented-accommodation](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/private-rented-accommodation)) is reviewed and promoted.
7. To look into providing resources in other languages which are spoken in the city.
8. To continue working via the Council's Landlord Steering Group to reach out to landlords in the city and ensure there is always private tenant representation on the Landlord Steering Group, either through ACORN or other local organisations.

Councillor Porrer proposed and Councillor Lee seconded the following amendment to motion (deleted text ~~struck through~~ and additional text underlined):

### **The Council Notes**

1. That according to research by Savills in 2021, 42% of households in Cambridge live in private rented accommodation.
2. That the strong rental market in Cambridge has led to high rental prices in the city, as displayed by Savills research from Aug 2020-21 where average rental prices increased by 4.1% in a year.
3. The City Council's 2019 review of homelessness and rough sleeping found that one of the most common causes of people becoming homeless in Cambridge were because of the loss of a private rented home.
4. The 2021 Census showed that Cambridge's population has been growing at almost three times the national average during the past decade (17.6% since 2011).
5. According to Government research, '*many low income households may have little choice over which property to rent because of the budget they have available*'. While 1/3 of privately rented homes in the UK don't meet the government's Decent Homes Standard.



6. Requests to Citizens Advice Bureau regarding help for private tenants are most typically about 'repairs and maintenance', 'rents and other charges' and 'tenancy deposit protection'.

### **The Council Believes**

1. Having a safe, secure and affordable home is vital.
2. That with such a growing population, house prices rising even faster, and without adequate funding for the council and housing associations to build affordable housing, the private rental sector in Cambridge is going to continue growing.
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5. That working closely with private renters in Cambridge will allow us to better identify issues which can be addressed collaboratively.

### **The Council Resolves**

1. To convene a Private Renters' Forum to consult with private tenants in the city, including stakeholder groups such as ACORN, Students' Unions and Citizens Advice Bureau.
2. To notify Councillors at an All Member Briefing on plans for the Forum, and ensure information about the forum is shared widely.
3. Through the Forum, work with private renters to discuss how the Council can best support and advocate for private renters in the city.
4. ~~To re-consider the need for a Selective Landlord Licensing Scheme in the light of the 2021 census data when it becomes available. To review progress on the targeted measures adopted by the council in 2021 to uphold acceptable standards in the Private Rental Sector following the clear conclusion of the report prepared for the council at that time that circumstances in Cambridge would not support a Selective Landlord Licensing Scheme under current legislation;~~
5. To continue to put high priority on work to ensure that all HMOs in the city are inspected, improved if needed, and licensed.
6. To ensure the relevant information on the Council's website (currently listed here: [www.cambridge.gov.uk/private-rented-accommodation](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/private-rented-accommodation)) is reviewed and promoted.
7. To look into providing resources in other languages which are spoken in the city.
8. To continue working via the Council's Landlord Steering Group to reach out to landlords in the city and ensure there is always private tenant

- representation on the Landlord Steering Group, either through ACORN or other local organisations;
9. To support moves to address the supply of decent and affordable private rental homes by making the most of the opportunity under our Housing Strategy and new Local Plan for the provision of new, modern, purpose-built rental accommodation with fair service charges, and to maximise use of enforcement powers to control losses through the conversion of existing homes to short term lets (Airbnb-like), whilst actively seeking improved powers to do so more effectively in future.

On a show of hands the amendment was lost by 13 votes to 23.

**Resolved (unanimously) that:**

### **The Council Notes**

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2. That the strong rental market in Cambridge has led to high rental prices in the city, as displayed by Savills research from Aug 2020-21 where average rental prices increased by 4.1% in a year.
3. The City Council's 2019 review of homelessness and rough sleeping found that one of the most common causes of people becoming homeless in Cambridge were because of the loss of a private rented home.
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build affordable housing, the private rental sector in Cambridge is going to continue growing.

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2. To notify Councillors at an All Member Briefing on plans for the Forum, and ensure information about the forum is shared widely.
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7. To look into providing resources in other languages which are spoken in the city.
8. To continue working via the Council's Landlord Steering Group to reach out to landlords in the city and ensure there is always private tenant representation on the Landlord Steering Group, either through ACORN or other local organisations.

### **22/45/CNL Written questions**

Members were asked to note the written questions and answers that had been placed in the information pack circulated around the Chamber.

### **22/46/CNL Officer Urgent Decision**

### **22/47/CNL Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority - Appointment of the Council's Substitute Member**

The urgent decision was noted.

The meeting ended at 11.17 pm

**CHAIR**