

ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 19 January 2023
5.30 - 7.40 pm

Present: Councillors Pounds (Chair), Carling (Vice-Chair), Copley, Hauk, Holloway, Payne and Swift

Executive Councillors: Collis (Executive Councillor for Open Spaces, Food Justice and Community Development), Healy (Executive Councillor for Equalities, Anti-Poverty and Wellbeing) and Moore (Executive Councillor for Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity)

Officers:

Assistant Chief Executive: Andrew Limb

Director of Neighbourhoods and Communities: Jane Wilson

Head of Community Services: Debbie Kaye

Community Engagement and Enforcement Manager: Wendy Johnston

Community Funding and Voluntary Sector Manager: Julie Cornwell

Environmental Health Manager: Yvonne O'Donnell

Strategic Project Manager: Allison Conder

Climate Change Officer: Catherine Stewart

Committee Manager: James Goddard

Meeting Producer: Boris Herzog

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

23/1/EnC Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Divkovic and Sweeney.

23/2/EnC Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

23/3/EnC Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

23/4/EnC Public Questions

Councillor Swift asked a question between items 4 and 7 on behalf of a resident.

He asked for a written response after the meeting:

- i. How to report cockerel noise?
- ii. What can residents do, what can the City Council do?

Re-Ordering Agenda

Under paragraph 4.2.1 of the Council Procedure Rules, the Chair used her discretion to alter the order of the agenda items. However, for ease of the reader, these minutes will follow the order of the published agenda.

23/5/EnC Community Grants 2023-24

Matter for Decision

The Committee received the annual report for the Community Grants fund for voluntary, community, and not for profit organisations. It provided an overview of the process, eligibility criteria, budget and applications received with recommendations for 2023-24 awards.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Equalities, Anti-Poverty and Wellbeing

Approved the Community Grants to voluntary and community organisations for 2023-24, as set out in Appendix 1 and 2 of the Officer's report, subject to the budget approval in February 2023 and any further satisfactory information required of applicant organisations.

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 Community Funding and Voluntary Sector Manager.

The Community Funding and Voluntary Sector Manager said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Evaluation of recent grant rounds had been omitted due to Covid lockdown pressures. Details about the 2021-22 Annual Report were included in the Officer's report. Councillors were invited to give feedback on information they would find helpful to include in future Annual Reports.

- ii. Applications were judged on their own merits. Funding was not issued to applicants who did not meet criteria or provided insufficient information.
- iii. Small grant funding was piloted as an initiative to support small groups who were new to the funding bidding process.
- iv. The City Council were keen to explore how they could support charities and small groups in the long term but were limited by (available) City Council finances. Community Services were looking at options such as multiple bidding windows for funding instead of an annual one.
- v. A number of stakeholder groups were involved in the small grant application question design to ensure they were fit for purpose and understandable for Applicants. The funding scheme was widely promoted to encourage take up. Officers were investigating alternative/additional ways in future. Officers used their knowledge to signpost Applicants to alternative funding sources if they did not meet City Council criteria.

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.

23/6/EnC Complaint Upheld by the LGO Service Relating to a Complaint About Noise

Matter for Decision

The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) found there was fault by the Council “but not causing injustice”, in relation to how the Council investigated a noise complaint from a large item of commercial equipment within the city.

The LGO found the Council at fault for how it initially investigated the noise complaint, which it determined to not be a statutory nuisance. However, this did not cause the complainant a personal injustice, as the Council subsequently acted without fault in its further noise investigation work relating to the commercial equipment; and which came to the same conclusion, ie it was not a statutory noise nuisance.

There was no legal definition of a statutory noise nuisance, but further general information on this subject matter may be found in the footnote below.

The LGO also formally accepted that all the identified service improvement actions, offered by the Council to the complainant, had been fully actioned by the Council.

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

Noted the findings of the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman in respect of this case and the actions taken by the Council in response to these findings.

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 Environmental Health Manager.

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

- i. This was the first complaint against the Noise Complaint Service referred to the LGO, or upheld by LGO.
- ii. The Noise Complaint Service received several complaints which officers triaged to ascertain if they were statutory noise issues that the Council could take action against. The Council were unable to take action against other noise types.
- iii. The complaints received by Environmental Service were generally because people were unhappy about something affecting them, not because they were unhappy with the Noise Complaint Service.
- iv. Officers usually visited on their own noise sources that were the subject of a complaint. A colleague was taken if the situation became more serious and a second opinion was required. A second officer was not requested by the (lone) officer investigating the noise in this complaint.
- v. It was down to an Officer's professional opinion if noise was designated as a statutory nuisance or not.

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.

23/7/EnC Review of Public Spaces Protection Order for Dog Control

Matter for Decision

The Public Spaces Protection Order (Dog Control) 2017 (“Order”) is due to expire on the 19 October 2023, having been successfully reviewed and extended for three years in 2020. At any point before expiry of the Order, the Council can vary or extend it by up to three years if they consider it is necessary to prevent the original behaviour (for which it was introduced) from occurring or recurring.

The Officer’s report revisited the terms of the current Order (Appendix A), and asked the Executive Councillor to approve, in principle, the proposal to extend and vary the Order in respect of dog control (including dog fouling, dog exclusion, seasonal dog on leads requirements, means to pick up faeces, dogs on leads and restriction on number of dogs requirements) within Cambridge, in the form set out at Appendix B and the locations set out in Appendix C; and to authorise officers to publicise the proposed orders and to consult, as required by the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (“The Act”).

Decision of Executive Councillor for Open Spaces, Food Justice and Community Development

- i. Approved the proposal to extend and vary the Order for dog control within Cambridge in the form set out at Appendix B and the locations set out in Appendix C; and
- ii. Authorised officers to publicise the proposed Order, as set out in Appendix B and C of the Officer’s report, and to carry out consultation as required by the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

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 Community Engagement and Enforcement Manager.

The Community Engagement and Enforcement Manager said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. A Public Spaces Protection Order would only be implemented after consultation to ascertain what the public wanted. Details on the consultation process were set out on P66-67 of the Officer's report.
- ii. A Public Spaces Protection Order would be in place for up to 3 years. It could be reviewed or renewed any time. Officers tended to review how a Public Spaces Protection Order was working in order to recommend amendments for the next one.
- iii. Public Spaces Protection Orders were considered for all City Council owned open spaces. If one was considered necessary Officers would observe an area, then write reports using public comments as evidence to ensure recommendations reflected how people wanted the area to be used.
- iv. People could report issues to the Police or City Council via its webform. Noted Councillor suggestion to list website details as posters in areas covered by Public Spaces Protection Orders so people could see the areas affected.
- v. The Community Engagement and Enforcement Manager did not recommend implementing a Public Spaces Protection Order or 'dogs on lead restriction' for unfenced open areas as there was no clear barrier to enforce/separate where a dog should not go.
- vi. There had been no complaints about dogs in Lammas Land since 2017 so the Public Spaces Protection Order had been removed from play areas in this location.

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.

23/8/EnC Extension to Storeys Field Community Centre

Matter for Decision

The Storey's Field Centre (SFC) on the Eddington Development in the Northwest of the City, opened to the public in February 2018 and has been managed and operated by the City Council under a contract for services with the Storey's Field Centre Trust (SFCT) since June 2016.

At some point the intended model for operating the new centre was changed from direct management by the Trust, to a contract for services. It was agreed that the Council would, in the first instance, enter a five-year services contract to operate the centre, partly to contribute community centre management expertise, but also to support establishment of the new centre to be able to meet the needs of a new community in a key city growth area. It was always the Council's intention for this to be a medium-term arrangement, to support the newly formed Trust until a centre manager and team had been recruited, trained and a centre programme had been established.

At the request of SFCT the council's contract for services has been extended twice, to give the Trust time to review the future direction of the centre, and to complete a procurement process to appoint a new operator. The current contract for services is due to end 31st March 2023.

SFCT undertook an open procurement process in July 2022 to seek a new operator, however, this was unsuccessful.

The recommendation made in the Officer's report was for the council to make a further extension to its contract for services with SFCT for 12 months until 31st March 2024, for the following reasons:

- a. For SFCT to assess the first procurement process and have sufficient time to complete a second tender process if required.
- b. For SFCT to review and agree the future direction for the centre.
- c. To give the SFCT staff team greater certainty regarding their ongoing employment.

At the end of the contract term on 31st March 2024, the Council Community Services team would focus on working collaboratively with SFCT and The University to ensure a joined-up programme across community facilities in the local area and that requirements in the Section 106 agreement were met.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Open Spaces, Food Justice and Community Development

- i. Agreed to extend the councils contract for management services if required by Storey's Field Centre Trust (SFCT), until 31 March 2024.
- ii. Noted that the council's management and operation of Storey's Field Centre will end 31 March 2024 and that eight Council employed posts may then transfer under a TUPE arrangement, to a new operator.

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 Strategic Project Manager.

The Strategic Project Manager said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. The City Council were working closely with Cambridge University to reach a sustainable future for the Storey's Field Centre.
- ii. The City Council were working with Storey's Field Centre Trust due to s106 obligations. No details had been given about a new contract operator.

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.

23/9/EnC Plant-Based Catering Options for Civic Events

Matter for Decision

The plant-based food motion passed at full Council in May 2022, required officers to:

- i. Explore a wide variety of catering options for civic events (including consideration of social enterprises) and bring a costed report of fully plant-based catering options for civic events to a future Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee.
- ii. Investigate the practicalities of using civic events to promote and showcase plant-based food options, alongside displayed information about the climate benefits and relative cost of different protein/food sources.

Following the motion, the Officer's report provided a detailed, costed assessment of fully plant-based catering options and part plant-based options which could be served at future civic events.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Open Spaces, Food Justice and Community Development

Agreed:

- i. All future civic events will promote plant-based food by always providing some plant-based food options and plant-based milks as standard (where reasonably possible).
- ii. 'Catering at Annual Full Council meeting in 2023 will consist of 75% plant-based options. This will increase to 100% plant-based in 2024, providing that the majority of plant-based choices are consumed at events and that suppliers can fulfil this requirement and at the same cost as non-plant based foods.'
- iii. Catering at all other civic events in 2023 (apart from the Annual Full Council meeting) will consist of 25% plant-based options with the remaining 75% made up of vegetarian and meat and dairy options. This will increase to 50% plant-based options in 2024, 75% in 2025, and 100% in 2026, providing that the majority of plant-based choices are consumed at events and that suppliers can fulfil this requirement and at the same cost as non-plant based foods.
- iv. The Council will no longer procure and serve beef and lamb at civic events due to their reported impact on greenhouse gas emissions and will reduce the amount of pork procured for civic events.
- v. The Council will endeavour to procure services from social enterprises for civic events, providing that they are available and can offer the services required.
- vi. The Council will use the Plant-Based Foods Association definition of plant-based food: foods made from plants that contain no animal derived ingredients.

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 Climate Change Officer.

The Climate Change Officer said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. The Council would keep advertising/promoting the reasons why it would provide plant based food at events ie trying to lower the Council's carbon footprint.
- ii. Officers would monitor the amount of food eaten at events to ascertain the take up of plant based food (compared to other types) and seek comments from delegates.
- iii. Plant based food would be introduced in a phased approach so people could become used to it. The Council did not want to contribute to food waste by providing food event delegates did not wish to eat.
- iv. Food providers were legally obliged to clearly label food, be mindful of food allergies and avoid contamination of food. Therefore it was not practicable to mix plant based food in with other types so people would eat it without noticing it was plant based food instead of meat/dairy etc.

Councillors requested a change to the recommendation in the Officer's report (amendment shown as bold text):

Proposer: Councillor Holloway
Secunder: Councillor Pounds

'Catering at Annual Full Council meeting in 2023 will consist of **75%** ~~50%~~ plant-based options. This will increase to **100%** ~~75%~~ plant-based in 2024, and ~~100% plant-based in 2025~~, providing that the majority of plant-based choices are consumed at events and that suppliers can fulfil this requirement and at the same cost as non-plant based foods.'

The Committee unanimously approved this amended recommendation.

Councillors requested a change to the recommendation in the Officer's report (amendment shown as bold text):

Proposer: Councillor Copley
Secunder: Councillor Hauk

'Catering at Annual Full Council meeting in 2023 will consist of **100%** ~~75%~~ ~~50%~~ plant-based options. This will increase to ~~100%~~ ~~75%~~ plant-based in 2024, and ~~100% plant-based in 2025~~, providing that the majority of plant-based choices are consumed at events and that suppliers can fulfil this requirement and at the same cost as non-plant based foods.'

The amendment was lost by 4 votes to 3.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendation as originally amended.

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.

23/10/EnC To Note Record of Urgent Decision Taken by the Executive Councillor for Open Spaces, Food Justice and Community Development

23/10a/EnC RoD - Environmental Improvement Programme Project Submission Summary Report (2023) for Discussion

The decision was noted.

The meeting ended at 7.40 pm

CHAIR

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