

# Public Document Pack

Council

Cnl/1

Thursday, 23 February 2023

## COUNCIL

23 February 2023

6.00 - 11.30 pm

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

Also present (virtually) Councillors: Holloway, Moore and Scutt

### FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

#### 23/1/CNL Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the 20 October 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

#### 23/2/CNL Mayor's announcements

Name	Item	Interest
Councillor Bird	23/5/CNLa	Personal: Member of Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP) Board.
Councillor Davey	23/5/CNLa	Personal: Member of Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP) Board.
Councillor Bird	23/4/CNLa	Personal: Is a tenant of Cambridge Housing Society (CHS).
Councillor Thittala Varkey	23/4/CNLa	Personal: Is a council tenant.
Councillor Ashton	23/5/CNLa	Personal: with reference to CAP5048 - Is Chair of Cherry Hinton Residents Association and Director of Cherry Hinton Benefits Society.

## **Cambridge Chinese New Year Celebrations**

The Mayor had been invited to three celebrations in various parts of the community and enjoyed the festive atmosphere of Chinese New Year and in being exposed to diverse Chinese culture.

## **Mayor's Charity Quiz**

This was taking place on Thursday 9 March and money raised would be donated to the Mayor's Charities Cambridge Aid and the Romsey Mill Trust.

## **Councillors personal safety**

Members were reminded about two on-line events covering member personal safety next month.

## **Mayor's reception**

The Mayor and their consort would be hosting the annual Mayors Reception on Friday 28 April. Penny MacDonald would be sending out invitations shortly.

## **Reach Fair**

Reach Fair would be taking place on Monday 1 May, invitations would be sent out in late March.

## **Honorary Councillor Evelyn Knowles**

On behalf of Councillors, the Mayor passed on condolences to the family of Evelyn Knowles who was a councillor for West Chesterton Ward 1987-2003, and Mayor 2000-2001. In addition to being a councillor, Evelyn was a Member of Cambridge Community Health Council, Trustee of Cambridge Folk Museum, Chair of Cambridge Refugee Support Group and a Trustee of Cambridge Citizens' Advice Bureau.

## **Turkiye/Syria earthquake, Ukraine war one year on**

Members observed a minutes silence to reflect on the Türkiye/Syria earthquake and to note the Ukraine war one year on.

## **23/3/CNL Public questions time**

Members of the public asked a number of questions/statements, as set out below. Councillors answers are included where given.

#### Question 1

- i. Was pleased that there would be no further development in Greater Cambridge in the next Local Plan period unless / until suitable infrastructure was put in place to provide for a sustainable water supply.
- ii. Questioned whether there was a sufficient water supply for development in the current Local Plan period.
- iii. Noted that the Environment Agency had advised that any further water extraction would cause environmental damage. Noted that the Greater Cambridge Planning Service had advised that this issue had been taken into consideration when the current local plan was adopted.
- iv. Noted that 600 people had objected to the development of housing at Northstowe due to issues regarding ground water and South Cambs District Council's decision was challenged.
- v. Raised concerns regarding a contract for environmental consultancy services, which were paid for but not delivered. Advised that when they raised concerns their organisation came under Police scrutiny. Expressed concerns about the way in which the Police conducted their enquiries and how concerns about this were handled.

#### Question 2

- i. Challenged failings in the Council's vision, commitment and actions for the city.
- ii. Asked for consideration to be given to what made Cambridge a world-renowned place to live and visit, its historic environment of building, spaces, trees and landscape setting. These qualities were not mentioned in the Council's vision for Cambridge and no reference was made to maintaining them.
- iii. These qualities did not feature in the 'Cambridge Rich Picture' current consultation 'Putting Residents and Communities at the heart of the Conversation'.
- iv. Expressed concern that the 'Cambridge Rich Picture' did not address as part of its vision the challenge of how to work within environmental limits.
- v. Felt the Cambridge Rich Picture and the Local Plan should explicitly address the challenge of reconciling current and projected growth with environmental capacity.
- vi. Questioned what had happened to the City Portrait.
- vii. Asked when the Council would recognise that sustainability was about more than just carbon and biodiversity, environmental capacity was

fundamental and that what made Cambridge special was a key element of sustainability.

- viii. Asked when the Council would consult on the draft City Portrait on the doughnut model and if a consultation was not going to be undertaken, why.

The Executive Councillor for Finance, Resources and Transformation responded:

- i. 'Our Cambridge' was the transformation programme for the City Council which needed to consider resident's views. The 'Cambridge Rich Picture' was a tool that the council was using, which was being delivered by external consultants and would contribute towards a new vision for the city.
- ii. The 'City Portrait' was being developed in conjunction with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority. Cambridge Econometrics was the company awarded the contract to undertake the City Portrait work. Confirmed that consultation would take place.
- iii. Agreed that sustainability was about more than just carbon and biodiversity, environmental capacity was fundamental and that what made Cambridge special was a key element of sustainability.
- iv. Noted that the Executive Councillor and Officers would be happy to meet with the public speaker outside of the meeting to discuss further.

#### Supplementary question

- i. William Morris set the pattern for the building conservation movement.
- ii. Wanted the historic environment to get recognition. The Arc project and the Oxford-Cambridge Partnership environmental principles did not mention the historic built environment.
- iii. Was pleased that the net zero pilot project had been awarded to the council in the Ross Street area and that the council had been successful in its bid for the social housing decarbonisation fund. Questioned to what extent the council would take on board the historic character of the buildings and particularly traditional construction methods. The Council's 'Retrofitting Your Home' guide did not mention the parts set out in PAS 2035 which covered traditional construction or the need to employ professionals with knowledge of traditional construction.
- iv. Wanted the council to use those projects to comply with PAS 2035 requirements to get people that were appropriately qualified and also

because of the skills shortage to use these projects to get training happening in traditional buildings repair, refurbishment and retrofit.

### Question 3

- i. Expressed concern that 4 of the 12 budget proposals would result in significant service change and involved housing, anti-poverty action, refugees and asylum seekers and the homeless. These budget proposals would affect the most vulnerable people in society.
- ii. Referred to budget proposal S5103 to reduce the homelessness prevention grant and noted that there could be a disproportionate impact on those from ethnic minority groups.
- iii. The Council committed to providing site provision with South Cambridgeshire District Council and other organisations.
- iv. Asked why there was no funding for a transit site for the Gypsy Roma Traveller community set aside in this year's budget.

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

- i. Explained the difference between transit sites, negotiated stopping places and permanent sites. Felt that focus should be on permanent site provision alongside negotiated stopping provision. Transit sites were long-term temporary sites and required similar levels of investment and provision to permanent sites.
- ii. In partnership with South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council, the City Council was leading on the establishment of two officer working groups to identify appropriate negotiated stopping sites. A member group involving all three authorities was also being established. The groups would also be looking at potential permanent sites, which would be informed by the Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA) once published.
- iii. Acknowledged that the GTANA had been delayed but site provision options were being worked up in the Greater Cambridge area.
- iv. The Local Plan would look at appropriate Gypsy Roma Traveller policies and site provision.
- v. Felt it was difficult to develop a budget proposal until a site had been identified. Wanted to focus on site identification. Once site(s) were

identified, work could then be undertaken to develop a budget bid / proposal.

- vi. Discussions were taking place around identifying locations for potential transit sites and it may be that negotiated stopping places could be managed within existing resources.
- vii. Noted that the Executive Councillor would be happy to meet with the public speaker outside of the meeting to discuss further.
- viii. The Executive Councillor for Housing advised that the Homeless Prevention Grants had not been cut, £50,000 per annum had been ring fenced for the contract regarding winter provision for rough sleepers.

#### Supplementary question

- i. Had been raising the issue about transit site provision since 2020. Asked when a timeline for when a site, permanent or transit, would be provided.
- ii. Questioned if the Council could provide a traveller site as had experienced difficulties elsewhere when going through the planning process.
- iii. Also raised the issue of the change in the 2015 definition of traveller and the impact this would have on the number of people who needed to be provided for.

#### Question 4

- i. Just over two years ago over 7000 people called for the re-opening of the wonderful, busy, thriving eclectic 7 day a week market. A market which contained traders who had continued to work during the covid 19 pandemic.
- ii. Traders set up their own delivery service in addition to working on the market so that people who were not able to get to the market could still be supplied with fresh fruit and vegetable and fish.
- iii. The market was busy on Saturday and Sundays but during the week stalls were empty.
- iv. Expressed concern regarding budget proposal I15138 to remove the traders' rebate.
- v. Felt the Council should do more to pro-actively support and promote the market or else the traders would go elsewhere.
- vi. Felt the council should remove the current requirement on weekend traders to take a pitch during the week. Weekday stalls which were paid

for but not filled were a blight on the market. The reduced charges on Mondays and Tuesdays had not been effective in attracting new traders, because weekend traders had taken up the spaces.

vii. Asked the Council to:

- a. put money into cleaning and re-furbishing the market
- b. promote the market via an inviting and informative web site
- c. discuss with the traders what they need for our market to thrive again.

The Executive Councillor for Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity responded

- i. Did not feel that the market was failing and noted that as well as the project to renovate the market/market square to ensure the long-term future of the market, the council had been investing in the market recently e.g. each stall had a new canopy, there was a project to improve the electrics and the health and safety of the market during the day and when it was closed.
- ii. Noted there had always been difficulties to fill all the stalls throughout the week and noted that Mondays to Wednesdays were the quietest days.
- iii. One of their first decisions as an Executive Councillor was to lower fees at the beginning of the week to try and attract more traders.
- iv. The requirement for weekend traders to also have a stall during the week was to help increase occupancy on the quieter days.
- v. Acknowledged that since the pandemic, occupancy numbers had not picked up and Monday - Wednesday were still the quietest days. The Market Team had been exploring other options to increase occupancy.
- vi. Noted that there had been a move generally across the city centre to move away from retail to hot food businesses. There was a self-imposed limit for hot food stalls on the market and this was due to be reviewed.
- vii. The market was promoted on the radio, in posters and by local media. Officers would look into the suggestion of a web site.
- viii. The market was cleaned throughout the day, 7 days a week by the Streets and Open Spaces Team.
- ix. It was proposed as part of the market square project to re-lay the flooring which would make it more accessible and easier to clean.
- x. Acknowledged that relations between the council and traders had become strained followed the temporary closure of the market for public

health reasons just before the second lockdown. Felt that relations were now improving.

xi. Noted that work was being undertaken on an updated Litter Strategy.

#### Supplementary questions

- i. Noted reference by the Executive Councillor to the number of hot food stalls which had helped the market on Saturdays and Sundays but this also created problems as the fat from the hot food stalls spread.
- ii. Felt the eclectic nature of the market had been lost due to the number of hot food stalls.
- iii. Clarified that they did not mean that the market was failing now but with the Council's attrition and when traders went elsewhere that was when the market may fail.
- iv. Felt the litter issue was related to the number of hot food stalls.
- v. Referred to Ely's website for their market and thought something similar could be done for Cambridge.

### **23/4/CNL To consider the recommendations of the Executive for adoption**

#### **4a Executive Councillor for Housing: HRA Budget Setting Report (BSR) 2023/24**

An amended version of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Setting Report (BSR) was presented to Council on the 23 February 2023 following a number of key changes which arose since Housing Scrutiny Committee met on the 24 January 2023. The changes are set out in the Housing Revenue Account Budget Setting Report (BSR) 2023/24 to Council. [Agenda for Council on Thursday, 23rd February, 2023, 6.00 pm - Cambridge Council](#). The report amended some of the Executive Councillor for Housing decisions which had previously been taken on 24 January 2023 and the Executive Councillor for Housing recommendations to Council on 23 February 2023.

#### **Decision of the Executive Councillor for Housing**

- i. Approved the Revised Budget identified in Section 4 and Appendix D (1) of the HRA Budget Setting Report, which reflects a net reduction in the use of HRA reserves for 2022/23 of £4,327,200.



- ii. Approved any Non-Cash Limit items identified in Section 4 of the HRA Budget Setting Report or shown in Appendix D (2) of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- iii. Approved any Savings, Increased Income, Unavoidable Revenue Bids, Reduced Income Proposals and Bids, as shown in Appendix D (2) of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- iv. Approved the resulting Housing Revenue Account revenue budget as summarised in the Housing Revenue Account Summary Forecast 2022/23 to 2027/28 shown in Appendix J of the HRA Budget Setting Report.

**Council Resolved (by 30 votes to 0) to:**

- i. Approve the revised need to borrow over the 30-year life of the business plan, with the first instance of this anticipated to be in 2023/24, to sustain the proposed level of investment, which includes ear-marking funding for delivery of the 10 Year New Homes Programme.
- ii. Recognise that the constitution delegates Treasury Management to the Head of Finance (Part 3, para 5.11), with Part 4F, C16 stating; 'All executive decisions on borrowing, investment or financing shall be delegated to the Head of Finance, who is required to act in accordance with CIPFA's Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Local Authorities.
- iii. Recognise that the decision to borrow significantly to build new homes impacts the authority's ability to set-aside resource to redeem the HRA Self-Financing debt at the point at which the loan portfolio matures, with the need to re-finance debt in the latter stages of the business plan.
- iv. Approve capital bids, as detailed in Appendix D (3) and Appendix E of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- v. Approve the latest Decent Homes and Other HRA Stock Investment Programme, to include re-phasing of elements of the programme into later years, as detailed in Appendix E of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- vi. Approve the latest budget sums, profiling and associated financing for all new build schemes, as detailed in Appendices E and H, and summarised in Appendix K, of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
- vii. Approve the allocation of £10,964,000 of funds from the budget ear-marked for the delivery of new homes into a scheme specific budget for East Road, in line with the scheme specific report presented as part of the committee cycle.
- viii. Approve the allocation of £11,387,366 000 of funds from the budget ear-marked for the delivery of new homes into a specific budget to allow the acquisition or development of a minimum of 30 homes for Ukrainian and Afghan refugees in 2023/24, subject to final award of DLUHC grant of

- £4,968,683, with the original funding for new homes replaced in later years of the programme.
- ix. Approve the allocation of £2,000,000 of funds from the budget earmarked for the delivery of new homes into a specific budget for the acquisition of existing homes on potential future development sites.
  - x. Approve the revised Housing Capital Investment Plan as shown in Appendix K of the HRA Budget Setting Report.
  - xi. Approve inclusion of Disabled Facilities Grant expenditure and associated grant income from 2022/23 onwards, based upon 2022/23 net grant awarded, with approval of delegation to the Head of Finance, as Section 151 Officer, to approve an in year increase or decrease in the budget for disabled facilities grants in any year, in direct relation to any increase or decrease in the capital grant funding for this purpose, as received from the County Council through the Better Care Fund.
  - xii. Approve delegation to the Head of Finance, as Section 151 Officer, to determine the most appropriate use of any additional Disabled Facilities Grant funding, for the wider benefit of the Shared Home Improvement Agency.
  - xiii. Approve delegation to the relevant Director to review and amend the level of fees charged by the Shared Home Improvement Agency for disabled facilities grants and repair assistance grants, in line with any recommendations made by the Shared Home Improvement Agency Board.
  - xiv. Approve delegation to the relevant Director, in consultation with the Head of Finance, as Section 151 Officer, to draw down resource from the earmarked reserves for potential debt redemption or re-investment, for the purpose of open market land or property acquisition or new build housing development, should the need arise, in order to meet deadlines for the use of retained right to buy receipts or to facilitate future site redevelopment.
  - xv. Approve delegation to the Head of Finance, as Section 151 Officer, to make any necessary technical amendments to detailed budgets in respect of recharges between the General Fund and the HRA, with any change in impact for the HRA to be reported and incorporated as part of the HRA Medium Term Financial Strategy in September 2023.
  - xvi. Note the result of the Homes England Compliance Audit in respect of rough sleeper property acquisitions at confidential Appendix M, recognising there is no corrective action to be taken.

**4b Executive Councillor for Finance, Resources and Transformation: Capital Strategy 2023/24**

**Resolved (by 34 votes to 0):**

- i. Agree the capital strategy as set out in the officer's report and note the summary capital programme

**4c Executive Councillor for Finance, Resources and Transformation: Treasury Management Strategy Statement Report 2023/24 to 2025/26****Resolved (by 34 votes to 0) to:**

- i. Approve the report, including the estimated Prudential and Treasury Indicators for 2023/24 to 2026/27 (inclusive) as set out in Appendix C of the officer's report.

**23/5/CNL To consider Budget Recommendations of the Executive for adoption****5a Budget Setting Report (General Fund) 2023/24 to 2027/28**

The Executive presented its budget recommendations as set out in the Council Agenda and as published on the City Council's website.

The Liberal Democrat Group Members presented the Liberal Democrat Group's alternative budget as published on the City Council's website.

The Green and Independent Group Members presented the Green and Independent Group budget amendment and comments as published on the City Council's website.

On a show of hands the Liberal Democrat Group's alternative budget amendment was lost by:

8 votes in favour: Bick, Flaubert, Hauk, Lee, Levien, Nethsingha, Payne, Porrer

To 22 votes against: Ashton, Bennett, Bird, Carling, Collis, Davey, Divkovic, Gawthroe Wood, Gilderdale, Healy, Herbert, McPherson, Pounds, Robertson, Sheil, Smart, A.Smith, S.Smith, Sweeney, Swift, Thornburrow, Todd-Jones

3 Abstentions: Copley, Davies, Howard

In accordance with the Council's budget procedure, Councillor Bick moved separately the following proposals, which formed part of the Liberal Democrat Group alternative budget:

Reference - the deletion of S5118 – Closing some Public Conveniences (see agenda item 5b - Liberal Democrat Group Amendment to the General Fund Budget p3)

The amendment was lost by:

12 votes in favour: Bennett, Bick, Copley, Davies, Flaubert, Hauk, Howard, Lee, Levien, Nethsingha, Payne, Porrer

To 21 votes against: Ashton, Bird, Carling, Collis, Davey, Divkovic, Gawthrope Wood, Gilderdale, Healy, Herbert, McPherson, Pounds, Robertson, Sheil, Smart, A.Smith, S.Smith, Sweeney, Swift, Thornburrow, Todd-Jones

Reference – the deletion in 2023/24 of – S5102 Cancel Big Weekend City Event (see agenda item 5b - Liberal Democrat Group Amendment to the General Fund Budget p3)

The amendment was lost by

8 votes in favour: Bick, Flaubert, Hauk, Lee, Levien, Nethsingha, Payne, Porrer

To 22 votes against: Ashton, Bennett, Bird, Carling, Collis, Davey, Divkovic, Gawthrope Wood, Gilderdale, Healy, Herbert, McPherson, Pounds, Robertson, Sheil, Smart, A.Smith, S.Smith, Sweeney, Swift, Thornburrow, Todd-Jones

3 Abstentions: Copley, Davies, Howard

In accordance with the Council's budget procedure, Councillor Bennett moved separately the following proposals, which formed part of the Green and Independent Group's budget amendments.

Reference A To reallocate the proposed £35k saving from the unused tourism budget (S5104) and the proposed £25k increased income from the cessation of the market traders Direct Debit reduction (I15138) to enable the recruitment of further staff to the central market team (see agenda item 5c – Green and Independent Group Budget Submission for General Fund p2)

The amendment was lost by:

4 votes in favour: Bennett, Copley, Davies, Howard

To 21 votes against: Ashton, Bird, Carling, Collis, Davey, Divkovic, Gawthrope Wood, Gilderdale, Healy, Herbert, McPherson, Pounds, Robertson, Sheil, Smart, A.Smith, S.Smith, Sweeney, Swift, Thornburrow, Todd-Jones

8 Abstentions: Bick, Flaubert, Hauk, Lee, Levien, Nethsingha, Payne, Porrer

Reference B To note and to reflect upon of the recommendations in section 3 and convene a cross party group to meet at regular intervals with a view to placing final proposals before full council in early 2024 (see agenda item 5c – Green and Independent Group Budget Submission for General Fund p2)

The amendment was lost by:

4 votes in favour: Bennett, Copley, Davies, Howard

To 21 votes against: Ashton, Bird, Carling, Collis, Davey, Divkovic, Gawthrope Wood, Gilderdale, Healy, Herbert, McPherson, Pounds, Robertson, Sheil, Smart, A.Smith, S.Smith, Sweeney, Swift, Thornburrow, Todd-Jones

8 Abstentions: Bick, Flaubert, Hauk, Lee, Levien, Nethsingha, Payne, Porrer

Unless otherwise stated, all references in the recommendations to sections, pages and appendices relate to Version 4.0 (Council) of the Budget Setting Report (BSR). This can be found via: [Agenda for Council on Thursday, 23rd February, 2023, 6.00 pm - Cambridge Council](#)

It was RESOLVED to agree the Executive's budget proposals by:

24 votes in favour: Ashton, Bennett, Bird, Carling, Collis, Copley Davey, Davies Divkovic, Gawthrope Wood, Gilderdale, Healy, Herbert, McPherson, Pounds, Robertson, Sheil, Smart, A.Smith, S.Smith, Sweeney, Swift, Thornburrow, Todd-Jones

To 9 Abstentions: Bick, Flaubert, Hauk, Howard Lee, Levien, Nethsingha, Payne, Porrer

To approve the following:

- i. Revenue Pressures and Bids shown in Appendix C(b) and Savings shown in Appendix C(c).
- ii. Non-Cash Limit items as shown in Appendix C(d).
- iii. Bids to be funded from External Funding sources as shown in Appendix C(e).
- iv. Delegate to the Chief Financial Officer (Head of Finance) of the calculation and determination of the Council Tax taxbase (including submission of the National Non-Domestic Rates Forecast Form, NNDR1, for each financial year) which is set out in Appendix A(a).
- v. The level of Council Tax for 2023/24 as set out in Appendix A (b) and Section 2, page 2
- vi. Delegate to the Head of Finance authority to finalise changes relating to any further corporate and/or departmental restructuring and any reallocation of support service and central costs, in accordance with the CIPFA Service Reporting Code of Practice for Local Authorities (SeRCOP).
- vii. The proposals outlined in Appendix D(a) for inclusion in the Capital Plan.
- viii. Subject to vii above, the revised Capital Plan for the General Fund as set out in Appendix D(c) and the Funding as set out in Section 5, page 17.
- ix. The impact of revenue budget approvals and the resulting contribution to reserves [Section 6, page 21].
- x. The creation of an Energy Cost Earmarked Reserve as set out in Section 6, page 21.
- xi. The resulting level of reserves [Section 6, page 21].
- xii. The Chief Finance Officer's Section 25 Report included in Section 8 of the BSR [page 32].
- xiii. The schedule of proposed fees and charges for 2023/24 in Appendix F.

**Under Council Procedure Rule 28 on the Mayor's proposal and Council agreement the meeting was adjourned until 6pm on Thursday 2 March.**

The meeting ended at 11.30 pm

**CHAIR**