

COUNCIL

19 October 2023

6.00 - 9.45 pm

Present: Councillors Ashton, Baigent, Bennett, Bick, Carling, Davey, Divkovic, Flaubert, Gawthrop Wood, Gilderdale, Glasberg, Griffin, Hauk, Holloway, Hossain, Howard, Lee, Levien, Martinelli, McPherson, Moore, Nestor, Nethsingha, Payne, Porrer, Robertson, Sheil, Smart, S. Smith, Swift, Thittala Varkey, Thornburrow, Tong, Wade and Young

Also present (virtually) Councillors: A. Smith, Todd-Jones.

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

23/47/CNL Mayor's Statement on the Situation in Israel and the Palestinian Occupied Territories

On behalf of the City Council and residents of Cambridge, expressed this city's collective condolences, support, and solidarity to everyone that has suffered and is suffering in Israel and the Palestinian Occupied Territories.

This is a horrible situation and we are appalled by all and any acts of violence. Any loss of civilian life is unbearable and unacceptable.

We recognise that different communities have suffered loss, and we call for a cessation of violence, for international diplomacy, and for peace.

All communities in the Middle East are entitled to have their human rights respected. We must also respect the needs of all communities to grieve the devastating loss of family members and friends on their own terms.

We know that some Cambridge residents have been directly affected by the tragic events of the last two weeks.

The City Council and us as Members have a duty to support and facilitate community cohesion and promote good relations between the different faiths and cultures that live and worship side by side peacefully in Cambridge.

We take this responsibility seriously and care about it deeply. We must all play our part to help heal the tragic wounds caused thousands of miles away in Israel, in Gaza and in the West Bank.

As Chair of this Council and Mayor of the City of Cambridge, called on all communities in Cambridge to continue to respect each other, each other's right to express themselves peacefully, within the law, and to be able go about their daily lives without the fear of threats, reprisal, or intimidation.

Wished to remind people that Cambridge is a City of Sanctuary. We are a proudly diverse city and we have a tradition of welcoming asylum seekers and refugees, and for upholding and respecting the human rights and dignity of all peoples.

On the 24th October many communities and nations will mark United Nations Day. It is a day of reflection, and a day of aspiration - for the world we want to become. Above all, United Nations Day is '*rooted in a spirit of determination to heal divisions, repair relations and build peace*'.

As a Council we recognise that it is the responsibility of all nations, and governmental bodies at all levels, including local government, business, and civil society to help build that world of peace, of sustainable development, and human rights for all.

We call on the United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres, to use his good offices to support a peaceful resolution of the conflict, to ensure that humanitarian and international aid can safely reach the people of Gaza, the return of hostages, and to continue to support a two-State solution.

And we call on all Heads of State and Government around the world to demonstrate leadership at this important time - to build bridges, to support peace in the Middle East and to avoid actions that could spill over into further bloodshed.

Mahatma Gandhi taught us that we, '*... must be the change [we] wish to see in the world*', and, also that, '*an eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind.*'

Asked for a minute's silence.

23/48/CNL Minutes

The minutes of the 20 July 2023 meeting were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

23/49/CNL Mayor's announcements

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bird, Dryden, Healy, Pounds and apologies for lateness from Councillor Sheil (who joined the meeting during oral questions item 23/52/CNL).

On-line were Councillors Anna Smith and Todd-Jones who could participate but not vote.

2. Remembrance Sunday

Members were reminded that the Remembrance Sunday civic service would take place on Sunday 12 November and anyone wishing to attend at Great St. Mary's Church was asked to let Gary Clift know by 27 October. The Deputy Mayor would be leading the civic procession to church.

The Mayor would lay a wreath on behalf of the City at the War Memorial and anyone wishing to join her there was very welcome to do so by arriving at the Memorial for 10.30 a.m.

3. Chevin Service

Advance notice was given that the preaching of the Chevin Sermon at the Good Shepherd in Arbury would take place on Sunday 14 January 2024. Invitations would be sent out nearer the time.

Since July the Mayor seemed to be back up to a full pre-pandemic diary. Over the expected quiet summer holiday period, the Mayor attended lots of community events.

The Mayor thanked the three staff supporting and running her diary and the civic event organization in amongst their other work.

The Mayor asked Council to note that there would be an additional item before the meeting concluded to thank a key member of staff: Gary Clift

Name	Item	Interest
Councillor Young	23/53/CNLa	Personal: Member of Cambridge Unitary Campaign

23/50/CNL Public questions time

The Democratic Service Manager read a written statement on behalf of a member of the public, as set out below.

1. Raised the following points:
 - i. Referred to public question to Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee at <https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=475&MId=4268> and the response from councillors, plus my public questions to East Area Committee and the debate councillors had (See the video here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7rguMwVj00&t=57m20s>).
 - ii. Re the motion at 6a by Councillor Tim Bick on Unitary Councils, asked Cambridge City Council to discuss with its partner councils what co-ordinated actions it could take to help educate residents about how our city and county function and malfunction.
 - iii. Feedback from the first workshop hosted at Rock Road Library corroborated the statement in the motion 6a that "This fragmentation frequently leaves our residents confused about the location of responsibilities and accountability."
 - iv. The speaker had further events lined up, but did not have the capacity to run such events for the entire city on a 'pay what you can afford' basis - whether barriers be the costs of event hire to the efforts needed to advertise the events when the fragmentation of, and costs of advertising on social media means that fewer people find out about such things compared with a decade ago.
 - v. Although happy to contribute towards such efforts, it's something that needed to be led by local government rather than well-meaning volunteers.

The Leader responded:

- i. Referred to Motion 6a, 6b and amendments to these.
- ii. Local government was for the benefit of the local population.
- iii. Hoped the motions, and amendments if approved, would lead to a discussion on how politicians could serve residents.

23/51/CNL To consider the recommendations of Committees for adoption

25/51/CNLa Civic Affairs Committee 18 October 2023

Resolved (by 24 votes to 10):

To approve:

- (i) To pause area committee meetings for two cycles (approximately six months) after the November/December 2023 cycle of meetings (para 3.3-3.5 of the officer report).

Resolved (by 34 votes to 0):

To approve:

- (ii) That Council Procedure Rules (Appendix A2 Rules of Debate on the Budget) is amended to change the length of speeches per group from up to 45 minutes to up to 15 minutes, and to note that the Council meeting on 15 February 2024 would deal with all agenda business and the scheduled 'follow on' Council meeting date of 29 February 2024 is therefore no longer required (para 4.3 of the officer report).
- (iii) Public Questions (except for Planning Committee) to be received in writing, in full, by noon two days before a meeting, not read out, with a Councillor reply of up to two minutes, a public supplementary of up to two minutes and a councillor reply to that of up to two minutes (para 4.5 of the officer report).

23/52/CNL To deal with oral questions

1. Councillor Robertson to the Executive Councillor for Housing and Homelessness.

Please can the Executive Cllr for Housing and Homelessness give us an update on progress with the private tenants' forum?

The Executive Councillor responded:

- i. Estimated that 31% of residents lived in the private rented sector.
- ii. The number of people living in homes of multiple occupation was increasing. The City Council was trying to identify and licence these.
- iii. There was a high demand for, but a limited supply of homes. This affected the cost.
- iv. Councillors and Officers were putting together a private rental residents' forum 21 October to provide information and facilitate questions. Other (partner) organisations would also be present.

2. Councillor Thittala Varkey to the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure.

How is Cambridge going to be affected by the new Building Safety Act?

The Executive Councillor responded:

- i. 1 October 2023 marked the start of the full higher risk building regime.
- ii. This would ensure that people responsible for high rise buildings were aware of the risks involved in this building type.
- iii. There were no buildings affected by the criteria in the city at present.

3. Councillor McPherson to the Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services.

Can the Executive Councillor give an update on the Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream project?

The Executive Councillor responded:

- i. The City Council was pleased to secure County Council funding for the project. An experienced officer had been appointed to steer it.
- ii. An evidenced based approach would be used to ensure the project was a success.
- iii. Large scale interventions were needed to address chalk stream issues.
- iv. The City Council was working with local residents to improve chalk streams near them.

4. Councillor Young to the Executive Councillor for Communities.

Last year the Council set up warm spaces for those who have difficulty in heating their flats or houses. What plans does the Council have this year?

The Leader responded:

- i. Warm spaces were a vital addition in 2022 to tackle loneliness, provide warmth and help people to stay connected to their communities. The hubs were available throughout the year.
- ii. The City Council was setting up a network with other organisations to help support them.

5. Councillor Hossain to the Leader.

At the last meeting the leader of the council said he could not comment in response to my question on road closures in Nightingale Avenue, Bateman

Street, Luard Road, Panton Street, Story's Way, Carlyle Road, Vinery Road and would need to investigate this further. What was the outcome of his investigation?

The Executive Councillor responded:

- i. Would send a written response after this Council meeting.
- ii. This was a County Council not a City Council matter.
- iii. The Leader had contacted the County Council and Greater Cambridge Partnership. The road closure proposals (except Vinery Road) went through the Highways Committee in 2021 and were unanimously approved by all political parties. They were a way to introduce active travel during the pandemic. Responses were positive so the measures were made permanent.
- iv. Vinery Road proposals would be considered by the County Council in December 2023.

6. Councillor Wade to the Executive Councillor for Community Wealth Building and Community Safety.

The new Real Living Wage is being announced in less than a week by the RLW foundation. What is the council doing to ensure the new rates and the Real Living Wage is promoted to businesses and residents in the city?

The Executive Councillor responded:

- i. The City Council was liaising with businesses to raise the profile of the Real Living Wage.
- ii. The Council was undertaking a range of promotional activities to raise awareness of the new rates, the importance of the Real Living Wage and business benefits to accrediting with the Living Wage Foundation. This included:
 - Displaying information on the council's poster boards across different locations in the city, on Zedify trikes, and on the Mandela House digital screen during Living Wage Week (6th to 12th November)
 - Producing two videos
 - One on the announcement of the new rates and the council's continued commitment to the Real Living Wage
 - One to mark Living Wage Week encouraging other organisations to pay it and accredit with the Foundation.
- iii. It was hoped people who were directly and indirectly employed by accredited companies would be put on the minimum wage.

7. Councillor Griffin to the Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services.

Could the Executive Councillor outline how and why the focus for the strategic EIP funding has changed this year?

The Executive Councillor responded:

- i. A budget allocation for EIP funding was made in 2021-22.
 - a. Project bids could be made for area committee funding.
 - b. Strategic EIP funding was available for cross-city projects such as improving the street scene and providing free drinking water.
- ii. In 2023 EIP funding was reviewed by Officers and the Executive Councillor. The two funding streams would continue, but align the strategic funding projects with enhancing the city's green amenity spaces plus the Council's increasing focus on biodiversity and climate crisis.

8. Councillor Hauk to the Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services.

Could the Executive Councillor for Open Spaces please explain why there has been no Trumpington ward walk-about as part of the herbicide-free trial?

The Executive Councillor responded:

- i. An offer to undertake a ward walkabout was extended to Councillors in August and the levels of sign up and then availability of individuals was deemed to limit the usefulness of the walkabouts.
- ii. If Councillor Hauk, would like to offer some dates, Officers were happy to attend.
- iii. Officers were happy to make site visits where issues are raised.
- iv. The invitation was sent on the 8th August, with a follow up request on the 16th August.
- v. The dates offered included the 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st August and 2nd September.
- vi. It was accepted that these dates offered may have been during summer holiday breaks, and therefore impacted on take up.
- vii. Getting convenient times for everyone to attend during the day made the scheduling of the walk about difficult, and risked not allowing those wish to participate to do so, without repeats and this was not deemed efficient use of Officer time.

A full list of oral questions including those not asked during the meeting can be found in the Information Pack, which was published on the meeting webpage

[Agenda for Council on Thursday, 19th October, 2023, 6.00 pm - Cambridge Council.](#)

23/53/CNL To consider the following notices of motion, notice of which has been given by:

25/53/CNLa Councillor Bick - A Unitary Council

Councillor Bick proposed and Councillor Martinelli seconded the following motion:

Council notes its past interest in reform of local government structure in our area, reflected in the motion overwhelmingly supported by members in November 2014* and the renewed public interest in it today.

Council notes that:

1. Although many important partnership relationships are in place between this and other councils, that the current fragmentation of responsibilities and decision-making presents an unhelpful hurdle to strategic focus on the big range of issues which bind the city of Cambridge and the south of the county, affecting lives and livelihoods of all our residents.
2. This fragmentation frequently leaves our residents confused about the location of responsibilities and accountability.
3. Past doubts about the critical mass required to justify unitary status are being dispelled by recent and projected population growth in our area.

Council re-affirms its belief that:

1. Power should reside as close to people as is consistent with effective decisions that impact them.
2. For purposeful, democratic government, we should aspire to a single tier council, framed around the logical community of interest within an economic subregion: a shared area of identity within which most people both live and work.
3. In our situation this would mean a unitary council for the southern part of Cambridgeshire.

In addition it affirms:

1. Its continue commitment to the many, complex partnership arrangements of which it is a part as the best available current means of pursuing joined-up decision-making so long as local government structure remains as it is.
2. Its awareness that even with a unitary council, working co-operatively and supportively with our neighbours would remain mutually essential.

3. That the increasing expectations of change and economic growth that face us in this area make it no longer optimal that we have less dedicated local self-government than city areas such as Peterborough, York, Bedford, Reading or Bath.
4. Its belief that a unitary council would better connect our residents to their representatives and service providers, and improve joined-up decision-making, and strengthen our voice in dialogue with central government.

Accordingly, Council renews its call on the Leader and Chief Executive to participate in discussions with other Cambridgeshire authorities and government to build a consensus for a new single tier authority for the south of the county with appropriate solutions for the remainder.

Councillor Davey proposed and Councillor Griffin seconded the following amendment to the New Unitary Council motion. (Deleted text ~~struckthrough~~, additional text underlined.)

~~Council notes its past interest in reform of local government structure in our area, reflected in the motion overwhelmingly supported by members in November 2014* and the renewed public interest in it today.~~

Council notes that:

1. There is renewed public interest in how Cambridge is governed.
2. Although many important partnership relationships are in place between this and other councils, that the current fragmentation of responsibilities and decision-making presents an unhelpful hurdle to strategic focus on the big range of issues which bind the city of Cambridge ~~and the south of the county~~, affecting lives and livelihoods of all our residents.
3. This fragmentation frequently leaves many of our residents confused about the location of responsibilities and accountability.
4. Past doubts about the critical mass required to justify unitary status are being questioned again, as they were in the 1890s, after both World Wars, in the 1950s and again in the 1960s. ~~dispelled by recent and projected population growth in our area.~~

Council ~~re-affirms its belief~~ that:

1. Power should reside as close to people as is ~~consistent with effective decisions that impact them~~ possible.
2. For purposeful, democratic government, we should therefore consider whether aspire to a single tier council, amongst other options, framed around the urban geography of the city, is the most appropriate model of Government for our city. ~~the logical community of interest within an~~

~~economic subregion: a shared area of identity within which most people both live and work.~~

- ~~3. We support the calls currently being made for deeper devolution of powers from central government and are committed to working with the Mayor to progress those discussions, for the benefit of both Cambridge and the wider region, to ensure we can best support our communities through the cost of living, climate and biodiversity emergencies. Specifically we believe devolution in relation to single funding settlements and fiscal powers, devolved skills and adult education budgets and clearer, transport responsibilities would give power back to local communities. In our situation this would mean a unitary council for the southern part of Cambridgeshire.~~

In addition Council it affirms:

1. Its continued commitment to the many, complex partnership arrangements of which it is a part as the best available current means of pursuing joined-up decision-making so long as local government structure remains as it is.
2. Its awareness that ~~even with a unitary council~~ whatever model of Governance might emerge, working co-operatively and supportively with our ~~neighbours would remain mutually~~ partners and communities is essential to deliver better outcomes for our residents.
3. That the increasing expectations of change and economic growth that face us in this area make it no longer optimal that we have less dedicated local self-government than city areas such as Peterborough, Luton, York, Bedford, Reading or Bath. In particular reference should be made to the structures in Manchester given that this city sits within a Combined Authority.
4. Its belief that an alternative model of local government ~~unitary council would~~ could better connect our residents to their representatives and local service providers, and ~~improve~~ facilitate joined-up decision-making, and strengthen our voice in dialogue with central government and improve the life chances, health and wellbeing, and opportunities for our residents.

Accordingly, Council ~~renews its call on~~ asks the Leader and Chief Executive to ~~participate in~~ initiate discussions with other Authorities in the region and then central Government to identify options for a less fragmented and more cohesive model of Government for Cambridge, that best serves the needs of its residents. These discussions should involve and engage with the people of the city in a meaningful way, thereby recognising the need for our governance structures to reflect the wishes of the people we serve Cambridgeshire

~~authorities and government to build a consensus for a new single tier authority for the south of the county with appropriate solutions for the remainder.~~

~~*Motion passed on November 6 2014 by 37 votes to 0 with 3 abstentions from the minutes~~

~~**Resolved** (by 37 votes to 0, with 3 abstentions) that:~~

~~Council notes:~~

- ~~i. The urgent need to increase the relevance of public decision making to people's daily lives and to rejuvenate our local democracy.~~
- ~~ii. The opportunity to tackle this in an appropriate way in England following the Scottish referendum and the commitments made there for increased devolution from Westminster.~~
- ~~iii. The recent report of the RSA City Growth Commission presenting just the latest evidence that city regions, if empowered to do so, can serve to boost national economic growth.~~
- ~~iv. The groundswell of support in the local business community for a single council providing coordinated, accountable leadership for the Greater Cambridge area.~~
- ~~v. The welcome debate opened up at the County Council for alternative approaches to local government in our area, to which the City Council will be asked to participate.~~

~~Council believes that:~~

- ~~i. The survival of the proud tradition of municipal innovation and enterprise, which historically transformed social conditions and enabled strides in prosperity is under threat from the control tendencies of all recent governments.~~
- ~~ii. There is much to do in our area, yet too often our locally elected representatives are circumscribed from taking actions that local people expect of them.~~
- ~~iii. Both the unwieldy structure of local government covering the city of Cambridge and the centralisation of the vast majority of revenues arising from the area are major sources of frustration with the democratic process.~~
- ~~iv. Power should reside as close to people as is consistent with making effective decisions that impact them.~~
- ~~v. Irrespective of demarcations between councils, voluntary collaborations between them are being shown to offer economies of scale and critical mass where needed for cost effective service delivery.~~
- ~~vi. For purposeful democratic, local government we should aspire to a single tier council framed around the logical community of interest~~

~~within an economic sub region: a shared area of identity within which most people both live and work;~~

~~Council calls on the Leader and Chief Executive to:~~

- ~~i. Participate in discussions with other Cambridgeshire authorities and Peterborough to seek a consensus for a single tier solution of several unitary authorities including one for greater Cambridge, and a local referendum if supported in principle, including full involvement of residents, local community organisations, the business community and Universities.~~
- ~~ii. Seek in the interim negotiations with central Government on the Greater Cambridge City Deal acceleration of the already proposed legislation to enable a Greater Cambridge combined authority.~~
- ~~iii. Develop and articulate the case for:
 - ~~a. The retention without strings of a majority of the public revenues arising in this area from business rates and other property based taxation, allowing for the remainder to be redeployed nationally for equalisation.~~
 - ~~b. Local accountability to local people for setting business rates and council tax levels.~~
 - ~~c. Clear devolution of powers from Whitehall, working in partnership with Cambridgeshire councils, Peterborough and similar city regions, to remove obstacles to sustainable growth for Greater Cambridge including
 - ~~i. Lifting the Housing Revenue Account cap and transferring related housing powers~~
 - ~~ii. Addressing additional strategic transport infrastructure that is essential but not covered by the City Deal or already agreed~~
 - ~~iii. Increasing capital and revenue funding for schools and skills development~~
 - ~~iv. Removing barriers to enable councils to tackle inequality, and~~
 - ~~v. Strengthening local planning powers for Greater Cambridge.~~~~~~
- ~~iv. A proportional voting system within a newly empowered local government.~~
- ~~v. A national constitutional convention to provide the stimulus for a new mindset in Westminster and Whitehall and a general framework for progress in all these respects.~~

The amendment was carried by 24 votes to 10.

Resolved (by 34 votes to 0) that:

Council notes that:

1. There is renewed public interest in how Cambridge is governed.
2. Although many important partnership relationships are in place between this and other councils, that the current fragmentation of responsibilities and decision-making presents an unhelpful hurdle to strategic focus on the big range of issues which bind the city of Cambridge, affecting lives and livelihoods of all our residents.
3. This fragmentation frequently leaves many of our residents confused about the location of responsibilities and accountability.
4. Past doubts about the critical mass required to justify unitary status are being questioned again, as they were in the 1890s, after both World Wars, in the 1950s and again in the 1960s.

Council affirms that:

1. Power should reside as close to people as is possible.
2. For purposeful, democratic government, we should therefore consider whether a single tier council, amongst other options, framed around the urban geography of the city, is the most appropriate model of Government for our city.
3. We support the calls currently being made for deeper devolution of powers from central government and are committed to working with the Mayor to progress those discussions, for the benefit of both Cambridge and the wider region, to ensure we can best support our communities through the cost of living, climate and biodiversity emergencies. Specifically we believe devolution in relation to single funding settlements and fiscal powers, devolved skills and adult education budgets and clearer, transport responsibilities would give power back to local communities.

In addition Council affirms:

1. Its continued commitment to the many, complex partnership arrangements of which it is a part as the best available current means of pursuing joined-up decision-making so long as local government structure remains as it is.
2. Its awareness that whatever model of Governance might emerge, working co-operatively and supportively with our partners and communities is essential to deliver better outcomes for our residents.
3. That the increasing expectations of change and economic growth that face us in this area make it no longer optimal that we have less dedicated local self-government than city areas such as Peterborough, Luton, York, Bedford, Reading or Bath. In particular reference should be

made to the structures in Manchester given that this city sits within a Combined Authority.

4. Its belief that an alternative model of local government could better connect our residents to their representatives and local service providers, and facilitate joined-up decision-making, and strengthen our voice in dialogue with central government and improve the life chances, health and wellbeing, and opportunities for our residents.

Accordingly, Council asks the Leader and Chief Executive to initiate discussions with other Authorities in the region and then central Government to identify options for a less fragmented and more cohesive model of Government for Cambridge, that best serves the needs of its residents. These discussions should involve and engage with the people of the city in a meaningful way, thereby recognising the need for our governance structures to reflect the wishes of the people we serve.

25/53/CNLb Councillor Young - Short Term Lets in Cambridge

Councillor Young proposed and Councillor Porrer seconded the following motion:

Council Notes:

Advertising a room on Air BnB and other similar platforms started off as a practical way to generate occasional income for a few, renting out a spare room or a whole dwelling for a few weeks of the year whilst on holiday, but the practice has grown hugely since the site was founded and is now enormously commercialised;

This has had the effect of taking out privately owned and rented property from the market for long term living, and putting it in the market for short term and holiday lets and other temporary use;

Currently, there are few or no proactive controls available to the Local Planning Authority or council to oversee such changes of use, particularly in smaller properties, and therefore no means by which neighbours can put forward their views on such changes, or where additional comings and goings from servicing of such properties can be properly assessed.

Uncontrolled changes of residential property to continuous short term lets have the effect of:

- Squeezing the housing market for people who want to live close to where they work;
- In particular, driving out young people at the lower end of the price range who want to live where they were brought up and raise children and thus reducing the long term sustainability of communities;
- In some cases enabling a source of neighbourhood nuisance by virtue of the use of inappropriate buildings or locations;
- Turning Cambridge into a town with unsuitable or substandard accommodation for visitors to Cambridge;

Therefore, this council:

1. Calls on central government urgently to put in place regulation to enable local councils to control the practice of short term lets, as consulted on in the recent “Introduction of a Use Class for Short Term Lets and associated permitted development rights” (12 April 2023) and requests the Chief Executive to write to the Housing Minister to express this council’s support for this.

2. Calls on the Executive Councillor for Planning & Infrastructure to work across the council to shape the emerging Local Plan to address these concerns, exploring the use of all the powers which are at our disposal now and in the future to improve the situation, such as:

- How best the Local Planning Authority could use current or future legislation to require a change of use permission to be obtained for any dwellings used as short terms lets on a permanent basis;
- Clarifying how many days a year a property could be let before reaching the definition of permanent (for example, 90 days per annum, as used in London);
- Applying minimum space and safety standards for short term lettings similar to those in use for existing HMOs (Houses of Multiple Occupation);
- Ensuring that impact on the long term sustainability of a neighbourhood is considered as part of any change of use application to a short term let;
- Ensuring that the comings and goings and associated deliveries and servicing of short term rented dwellings are considered as part of this change of use application to a short term let;
- Including a presumption that ancillary dwellings approved as such should not later be converted to short term lets;
- Considering whether it would be reasonable to include a condition for new build dwellings to require change of use permission for short term lets until national policy on this is clarified.

Councillor Thornburrow proposed and Councillor Nestor seconded the following amendment to the Short Term Letting in Cambridge motion. (Deleted text ~~struckthrough~~, additional text underlined.)

Council Notes:

This Council notes that letting Advertising a room on Air BnB and other similar platforms started off as a practical way to generate occasional income for a few, renting out a spare room or a whole dwelling for a few weeks of the year whilst on holiday, but the practice has grown hugely since the site was founded and is now widespread enormously commercialised;

This Council further notes that this has had the effect of taking out privately owned and rented property from the market for long term living, and putting it in the market for short term and holiday lets and other temporary use; short-term lets through Airbnb may adversely affect the housing market, reduce the sustainability of communities, be the source of neighbourhood nuisance, and lead to substandard accommodation being offered to visitors;

Council acknowledges that it could address issues around short term lets under planning law if change of use was required but national planning policy and legislation currently do not identify these lets as a separate use class and so establishing change of use is complex and subject to appeal. However, in January 2019 Cambridge was the first local authority, outside of London, to successfully defend an appeal against planning enforcement after it was issued in December 2017.

Council therefore resolves to:

Mandate its representatives working on the development of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan to take this issue into account and explore what additional controls may be feasible under existing powers and legislation.

Ask the Leader or Chief Executive to write to local Members of Parliament drawing their attention to this resolution and asking them to support measures to bring forward greater control on the market for short-term letting through the implementation of the measures proposed in the April 2023 consultation [Introduction of a use class for short term lets and associated permitted development rights - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Continue to update the planning committee on compliance work with regard to the enforcement of short term lets at regular intervals.

~~Currently, there are few or no proactive controls available to the Local Planning Authority or council to oversee such changes of use, particularly in smaller properties, and therefore no means by which neighbours can put forward their views on such changes, or where additional comings and goings from servicing of such properties can be properly assessed.~~

~~Uncontrolled changes of residential property to continuous short term lets have the effect of:~~

- ~~- Squeezing the housing market for people who want to live close to where they work;~~
- ~~- In particular, driving out young people at the lower end of the price range who want to live where they were brought up and raise children and thus reducing the long term sustainability of communities;~~
- ~~- in some cases enabling a source of neighbourhood nuisance by virtue of the use of inappropriate buildings or locations;~~
- ~~- Turning Cambridge into a town with unsuitable or substandard accommodation for visitors to Cambridge;~~

~~Therefore, this council:~~

~~1. Calls on central government urgently to put in place regulation to enable local councils to control the practice of short term lets, as consulted on in the recent "Introduction of a Use Class for Short Term Lets and associated permitted development rights" (12 April 2023) and requests the Chief Executive to write to the Housing Minister to express this council's support for this.~~

~~2. Calls on the Executive Councillor for Planning & Infrastructure to work across the council to shape the emerging Local Plan to address these concerns, exploring the use of all the powers which are at our disposal now and in the future to improve the situation, such as:~~

~~- How best the Local Planning Authority could use current or future legislation to require a change of use permission to be obtained for any dwellings used as short terms lets on a permanent basis;~~

- ~~-Clarifying how many days a year a property could be let before reaching the definition of permanent (for example, 90 days per annum, as used in London);~~
- ~~-Applying minimum space and safety standards for short term lettings similar to those in use for existing HMOs (Houses of Multiple Occupation);~~
- ~~-Ensuring that impact on the long term sustainability of a neighbourhood is considered as part of any change of use application to a short term let;~~
- ~~-Ensuring that the comings and goings and associated deliveries and servicing of short term rented dwellings are considered as part of this change of use application to a short term let;~~
- ~~-Including a presumption that ancillary dwellings approved as such should not later be converted to short term lets;~~
- ~~-Considering whether it would be reasonable to include a condition for new build dwellings to require change of use permission for short term lets until national policy on this is clarified.~~

The amendment was carried by 21 votes to 14.

Resolved (by 35 votes to 0) that:

Council Notes:

This Council notes that letting a room on Air BnB and other similar platforms started off as a practical way to generate occasional income for a few, renting out a spare room or a whole dwelling for a few weeks of the year whilst on holiday, but the practice has grown hugely since the site was founded and is now widespread;

This Council further notes that this has had the effect of taking out privately owned and rented property from the market for long term living, and putting it in the market for short term and holiday lets and other temporary use; short-term lets through Airbnb may adversely affect the housing market, reduce the sustainability of communities, be the source of neighbourhood nuisance, and lead to substandard accommodation being offered to visitors;

Council acknowledges that it could address issues around short term lets under planning law if change of use was required but national planning policy and legislation currently do not identify these lets as a separate use class and

so establishing change of use is complex and subject to appeal. However, in January 2019 Cambridge was the first local authority, outside of London, to successfully defend an appeal against planning enforcement after it was issued in December 2017.

Council therefore resolves to:

Mandate its representatives working on the development of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan to take this issue into account and explore what additional controls may be feasible under existing powers and legislation.

Ask the Leader or Chief Executive to write to local Members of Parliament drawing their attention to this resolution and asking them to support measures to bring forward greater control on the market for short-term letting through the implementation of the measures proposed in the April 2023 consultation [Introduction of a use class for short term lets and associated permitted development rights - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/introduction-of-a-use-class-for-short-term-lets-and-associated-permitted-development-rights)

Continue to update the planning committee on compliance work with regard to the enforcement of short term lets at regular intervals.

25/53/CNLc Councillor Flaubert - Inclusive play in Cambridge

Councillor Flaubert proposed and Councillor Payne seconded the following motion:

This council notes:

Accessible and inclusive play provision is a vital part of any city. Under the current equality legislation, the council has to endeavour to make play areas facilities accessible and inclusive. In this context, inclusive means maximising opportunities for a range of differing children's abilities, especially children with disabilities;

That our Streets and Open Spaces team already work hard to ensure that any play equipment suppliers provide a range of inclusive play when bids are submitted and that bids are rejected if this criterion is not met;

That in the recent Cambridge Together Project's Resident and Community Engagement project, residents fed back that they would like to see a range of

playground offers at free or low cost for families/children, young people and other adults;

That Streets and Open Spaces already provide listings of parks and their locations on the city council website but as yet, this does not state which inclusive play equipment is located at each park or playground. However, according to a recent national study playgrounds continue to be inaccessible for many disabled children because they are not designed for their needs and have limited choices;

That as yet, there is no city wide map of inclusive play equipment and a structured means of engagement with families when designing inclusive playgrounds;

That as yet, there is no city wide map of the play equipment suitable for different age groups;

That as yet there is no data on distances to travel for residents for inclusive and age appropriate play equipment.

Council calls for:

An addition to the existing city map of play areas (<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/>) to include a function to allow residents to search for types of inclusive play equipment and different age ranges of equipment across the city so they can identify easily where they may wish to play with their families. This should include a function to allow families to understand layout, play equipment overall space facilities and possible barriers to ensure safety, as well as photographs of the site;

A gap analysis to identify areas in the city lacking inclusive play equipment and types of age ranges of play equipment;

Engagement with families of disabled children when making adaptations to increase accessibility and to identify areas with a lack of choices;

A commitment to secure facilities for those children that need to remain seated in their wheelchairs to tackle a current lack of choices;

Provision of sensory opportunities in playgrounds;

Scrutiny of play equipment infrastructure so it meets a variety of play needs for all children;

The council's future play strategy to ensure that these gaps are considered when play equipment is being updated or where S106 or other contributions to development are being agreed, to ensure that reducing the travel times to inclusive and age appropriate play is a priority.

Councillor Carling proposed and Councillor Wade seconded the following amendment to the Inclusive Play in Cambridge motion. (Deleted text ~~struckthrough~~, additional text underlined.)

~~This council~~ The Council notes:

That accessible ~~Accessible~~ and inclusive play provision is a vital part of any city and that. ~~Under the current equality legislation,~~ the council has to therefore endeavours to make play areas and facilities accessible and inclusive in line with equality legislation. In this context, inclusive means maximising opportunities for a range of differing children's abilities, especially children with disabilities;

That our Streets and Open Spaces team already work hard to ensure that any play equipment suppliers provide a range of inclusive play when bids are submitted and that bids are rejected if this criterion is not met;

That in line with what residents rightly expect, all playground areas in Cambridge are free to use;

~~That in the recent Cambridge Together Project's Resident and Community Engagement project, residents fed back that they would like to see a range of playground offers at free or low cost for families/children, young people and other adults;~~

That Streets and Open Spaces already provide listings of parks and their locations on the city council website but ~~as yet, this does not state which inclusive play equipment is located at each park or playground. However, according to a recent national study playgrounds continue to be inaccessible for many disabled children because they are not designed for their needs and have limited choices~~ this does not currently include details of the equipment present at each site. However, it would be helpful for residents and families – especially those with accessibility requirements – to have access to such information in order to help them identify the best spaces for them to use;

~~That as yet, there is no city wide map of inclusive play equipment and a structured means of engagement with families when designing inclusive playgrounds when new play areas are proposed, the Council conducts a consultation – one facet of which is to seek views from residents regarding the accessibility of the proposed equipment;~~

~~That as yet, there is no city wide map of the play equipment suitable for different age groups;~~

~~That as yet there is no data on distances to travel for residents for inclusive and age appropriate play equipment.~~

That the Council holds catchment area data, which is a measure of the distance between residents and their closest play areas, and that this is informing our investment strategy for all types of play area: LAPs, LEAPs, NEAPs and Destination play areas;

That play equipment providers are becoming increasingly conscious of the urgent need for inclusivity and accessibility of play equipment, and that new equipment offers are increasingly incorporating this need, which the Council welcomes.

Council calls for agrees:

~~An addition to the existing city map of play areas (<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/>) to include a function to allow residents to search for types of inclusive play equipment and different age ranges of equipment across the city so they can identify easily where they may wish to play with their families. This should include a function to allow families to understand layout, play equipment overall space facilities and possible barriers to ensure safety, as well as photographs of the site;~~

That as part of ongoing work on developing a new investment strategy for play equipment, the Council will consider how best to provide information to residents on the play equipment available at different sites – with particular emphasis on enabling people with accessibility requirements to make informed choices about play areas – and will bring proposals for doing so to a scrutiny committee alongside the proposed new strategy;

~~A gap analysis to identify areas in the city lacking inclusive play equipment and types of age ranges of play equipment;~~

That a gap analysis is already underway as part of this work, which will inform the investment strategy and allow improved decision-making around inclusive play equipment;

Engagement That engagement with families of disabled children when making adaptations to play areas is important to increase accessibility and to identify areas with a lack of choices, and that this is already undertaken in the council's consultations;

~~A commitment to secure facilities for those children that need to remain seated in their wheelchairs to tackle a current lack of choices;~~

That equipment must be inclusive for all users, including wheelchair users - industry specialists do not recommend specific equipment for people in wheelchairs due to the tendency of such equipment to isolate users from others;

That the provision Provision of sensory opportunities in playgrounds is a key part of the existing tender process, and that the Council will remain committed to this;

~~Scrutiny of play equipment infrastructure so it meets a variety of play needs for all children;~~

That children have a variety of play needs, and that the Council meets these through the use of different suppliers and through creating play areas of different natures – no two play areas in Cambridge are alike;

~~The council's future play strategy to ensure that these gaps are considered when play equipment is being updated or where S106 or other contributions to development are being agreed, to ensure that reducing the travel times to inclusive and age appropriate play is a priority.~~

To reiterate its existing commitment to ensuring new housing developments provide play areas where required, and to continue emphasising the need for inclusivity when using S106 contributions from developments to improve play areas.

The amendment was carried by 21 votes to 14.

Resolved (by 35 votes to 0) that:

The Council notes:

That accessible and inclusive play provision is a vital part of any city and that the council therefore endeavours to make play areas and facilities accessible and inclusive in line with equality legislation. In this context, inclusive means maximising opportunities for a range of differing children's abilities, especially children with disabilities;

That our Streets and Open Spaces team already work hard to ensure that any play equipment suppliers provide a range of inclusive play when bids are submitted and that bids are rejected if this criterion is not met;

That in line with what residents rightly expect, all playground areas in Cambridge are free to use;

That Streets and Open Spaces already provide listings of parks and their locations on the city council website but this does not currently include details of the equipment present at each site. However, it would be helpful for residents and families – especially those with accessibility requirements – to have access to such information in order to help them identify the best spaces for them to use;

That when new play areas are proposed, the Council conducts a consultation – one facet of which is to seek views from residents regarding the accessibility of the proposed equipment;

That the Council holds catchment area data, which is a measure of the distance between residents and their closest play areas, and that this is informing our investment strategy for all types of play area: LAPs, LEAPs, NEAPs and Destination play areas;

That play equipment providers are becoming increasingly conscious of the urgent need for inclusivity and accessibility of play equipment, and that new equipment offers are increasingly incorporating this need, which the Council welcomes.

Council agrees:

That as part of ongoing work on developing a new investment strategy for play equipment, the Council will consider how best to provide information to residents on the play equipment available at different sites – with particular emphasis on enabling people with accessibility requirements to make informed choices about play areas – and will bring proposals for doing so to a scrutiny committee alongside the proposed new strategy;

That a gap analysis is already underway as part of this work, which will inform the investment strategy and allow improved decision-making around inclusive play equipment;

That engagement with families of disabled children when making adaptations to play areas is important to increase accessibility and to identify areas with a lack of choices, and that this is already undertaken in the council's consultations;

That equipment must be inclusive for all users, including wheelchair users - industry specialists do not recommend specific equipment for people in wheelchairs due to the tendency of such equipment to isolate users from others;

That the provision of sensory opportunities in playgrounds is a key part of the existing tender process, and that the Council will remain committed to this;

That children have a variety of play needs, and that the Council meets these through the use of different suppliers and through creating play areas of different natures – no two play areas in Cambridge are alike;

To reiterate its existing commitment to ensuring new housing developments provide play areas where required, and to continue emphasising the need for inclusivity when using S106 contributions from developments to improve play areas.

25/53/CNLd Councillor Tong - Towards greater transparency and closer co-operation in Local Government

Councillor Tong proposed and Councillor Howard seconded the following motion:

There have been public calls for replacement of our current governance structures by a small number of unitary authorities.

This motion does not call for the establishment of new unitary authorities.

However, it seeks to take some simple steps to allay some of the resident concerns behind those calls.

Residents find our convoluted local government system confusing. It makes it harder for them to find the help they need quickly and easily.

We propose that the council explores the possibility of establishing a common smart portal, "localCamgov.org.uk" to provide a single internet front door to the main local government structures.

This simple step would make it easier for residents to access the services they need and provide a better resident experience.

We also propose that the leader of the council invites the chairs and chief executives of key local government bodies including but not limited to the Greater Cambridge Partnership, the Combined Authority and the Cambridge Delivery Group to address full council and answer councillor questions at least once a year.

We believe that greater transparency will help to restore public confidence in local institutions and help to dispel concerns over the perceived democratic deficit.

The motion was lost by 5 votes to 20 with 10 abstentions.

25/53/CNLe Councillor A.Smith - Debate not hate

The motion was withdrawn by Councillor Smith under procedure rule 13 and would be returned at the next Council meeting.

23/54/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.

23/55/CNL Farewell to Member of Staff

The Mayor asked for it to be noted that Councillors thanked Gary Clift for his many years of service as a City Council Officer. He would retire at the end of 2023.

The meeting ended at 9.45 pm

CHAIR