

WEST / CENTRAL AREA COMMITTEE

25 August 2011
7.00 - 10.15 pm

Council Members Present:

City Councillor for

Castle (John Hipkin, Simon Kightley and Phillip Tucker)
Market (Tim Bick and Andrea Reiner)
Newnham (Julie Smith and Rod Cantrill)

Co-opted non-voting members:

County Councillors: Belinda Brooks-Gordon (Castle)
Sarah Whitebread (Market)

Officers Present:

Principal Planning Officer: Toby Williams
Environmental Improvements Manager: Andrew Preston
Committee Manager: Toni Birkin

Also Present:

Richard Preston: Cambridgeshire County Council, Head of Road Safety and Parking.

The Neighbourhood Policing Sergeants Mike Barnshaw (Central Neighbourhood) and Jayne Drury (West Neighbourhood); John Fuller, Police Community Engagement Manager; Ruth Joyce, member of Cambridgeshire Police Authority

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

11/46/WAC Apologies

Apologies were received from City Councillors Reid and Rosenstiel and County Councillor Nethsingha.

11/47/WAC Declarations of Interest (Planning)

No interests were declared on planning issues.

11/48/WAC Planning Applications

11/0726/FUL - Victoria House, 1 Victoria Street

The committee received an application for a change of use from a 6 bedroom residence to a 4 bed sustainable boutique bed and breakfast including private residential accommodation for proprietor.

The applicant, Ms Cameron, addressed the committee and stated that she was happy to conform to the new conditions.

RESOLVED (unanimously) to approve the application, in accordance with the conditions as proposed and amended through the amendment sheet for the following reasons:

1. This development has been approved, conditionally, because subject to those requirements it is considered to conform to the Development Plan as a whole, particularly the following policies:

East of England plan 2008: T9, T14, ENV6, ENV7 and WM6 Cambridge Local Plan (2006): 3/4,3/7,4/11,4/13,5/4,6/3,8/2,8/6,8/10

2. The decision has been made having had regard to all other material planning considerations, none of which was considered to have been of such significance as to justify doing other than grant planning permission.

These reasons for approval can be a summary of the reasons for grant of planning permission only. For further details on the decision please see the officer report online at www.cambridge.gov.uk/planningpublicaccess or visit our Customer Service Centre, Mandela House, 4 Regent Street, Cambridge, CB2 1BY between 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday.

11/0653/FUL- 68 Maids Causeway

The committee received an application for the construction of a one storey side and front extension.

Dr Hunter addressed the committee and made the following points in objection to the application:

- She had no objection to the plans to change the fabric of the house.
- Objection related to boundary wall which abuts a busy public road.
- The new wall will be anti-social, oppressive and intimidating.
- She raised concerns about road safety and visibility.
- A low wall with railing would be more in keeping with the character of the area.

The applicant, Dr Davis, addressed the committee and raised the following points:

- The house was not built at the same time as the earlier properties in the area.
- Design is of its time and is currently not aesthetically pleasing.
- There has never been a right of way over the land.
- Visibility on the corner will be improved by the new wall.
- Suggested materials are in keeping with other properties in the area.
- Velux windows and weatherboarding is also common in the area.

RESOLVED (unanimously) to approve the application, in accordance with conditions, subject to revising Condition 2 in line with the recommendations of the Conservation Officer, to be approved by the Chair, for the following reasons:

1. This development has been approved, conditionally, because subject to those requirements it is considered to conform to the Development Plan as a whole, particularly the following policies:

East of England plan 2008: ENV6 and ENV7 Cambridge Local Plan (2006): 3/4,3/7,3/14 and 4/11

2. The decision has been made having had regard to all other material planning considerations, none of which was considered to have been of such significance as to justify doing other than grant planning permission.

These reasons for approval can be a summary of the reasons for grant of planning permission only. For further details on the decision please see the officer report online at www.cambridge.gov.uk/planningpublicaccess or visit our Customer Service Centre, Mandela House, 4 Regent Street, Cambridge, CB2 1BY between 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday.

11/49/WAC Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 21st June 2011 were agreed as a correct record subject to minor corrections.

11/50/WAC Matters and Actions arising from the Minutes

11/37/WAC – Richardson Candles

The Head of Planning has contacted Mr Lawton and discussions are on-going.

11/37/WAC – Tree on Jesus Green

The Green Spaces Manager would discuss options for replanting in the autumn with Jesus Green Association.

11/37/WAC – Publishing information on Licensing Matters

Councillor Smith stated that she supported the suggestion that as much information as possible should be made public. A report on this matter would be considered at the Full Licensing Committee in October to allow the matter to be fully debated.

11/39/WAC – Observation Figures

Full details of the speeding surveys had been circulated.

11/39/WAC – Concerns to taken to Area Joint Committee

The comment of this committee had been passed on and were shared by members of the AJC.

11/40/WAC – Bollards Outside the Co-op

Councillor Smith reported some progress with this matter. However, the issue of ongoing maintenance of the bollards remains unresolved. Councillor Smith would continue to pursue this matter.

Action: Councillor Smith

11/51/WAC Declarations of Interest (Main Agenda items)

Councillor Hipkin declared a personal interest in item 11/54/WAC (Environmental Improvements) as a resident of Oxford Road.

Councillor Kightley declared a personal interest in item 11/54/WAC as a resident of Sherlock Road.

County Councillor Brooks-Gordon declared a personal interest in item 11/52/WAC as a member of the ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers) National Working Party on Prostitution.

11/52/WAC Open Forum**1) Dick Baxter (Chair FoMSC)**

Over the last 8 months the new manager of the Fort St George pub has turned part of Midsummer Common into a public car park. Many people have complained but the Council has failed to correct the situation. This is the third time that this failure has been brought to the attention of this Area Committee.

Such is the Council's tardiness in resolving this matter, it has been

referred to the Local Government Ombudsman. The Ombudsman has given the Council until the 17 October to resolve this complaint before mounting a full investigation. How will the Executive Councillor deal with this?

Members agreed that the problems of parking on the Common were of long standing and a range of approaches had been tried. Any solution would have to meet the needs of a range of users of the space.

Councillor Cantrill stated that a stepped approach was being taken to the current dispute with Green King regarding the right to park on common land. The Ombudsman has ruled that the complaint is premature and allowed more time for a solution to be reached. Wheel clamping and asking the Police to take action had been investigated.

Interested parties had been consulted and an electric gate is currently being investigated. This would need to fit with the current visual aspect of the railing.

2) Jeremy Waller – Punting Touts

Punting touts continue to be problematic in Garret Hostel Lane. The County Council have no claim on the land and therefore riparian rights cannot be used to control the situation.

A survey was needed to assess the level of nuisance being caused and this is in hand. Investigation into ownership of the land is ongoing as this had been the main factor in addressing similar problems in the quayside area.

3) Mr Lawton – Planning consent for work on 8 Maids Causeway

Radical work appears to be taking place in this property and the planning department appear to have permitted this with very limited local consultation or suitable controls.

Councillor Bick was aware of the situation and had spoken to the planning department on the matter. Councillor Bick agreed to address this matter with Mr Lawton outside the meeting.

Action: Councillor Bick

4) Carol Leonard (Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator) – Prostitution

The issues of prostitution in Belmore close and Histon Road causes concern for local residents. This situation has been ongoing for a number of years.

Members agreed that the problem had increased in recent months. Considered action was needed and the street workers are a vulnerable group and heavy-handed action has been demonstrated to make the situation worse and to increase violent behaviour. The North Area Committee had also been discussing this issue. The police and other agencies are aware of the issue and are working together to find a solution. The City Rangers had been helpful in cleaning discarded condoms and drug taking paraphernalia from the streets. The committee understood Ms Leonard's frustration at the time taken to find a solution.

5) Richard Taylor – Jesus Green Lottery Bid

What progress has been made with the bid for lottery funding for improvements to Jesus Green and will the wider community have an opportunity to take part in the discussions? To date only the Jesus Green Association have been involved and they may not represent all user groups, for example, cyclists.

Councillor Cantrill responded. This issue has a long history. The current submission was essentially to assess the viability of making a full application; if acceptable in principle, a wider consultation process would take place. In addition to the Lottery, other improvements are planned. The Jesus Green Association had supported initiatives for facilities for many user groups. It is likely that further improvements would include some work to the footpaths. However, users of Jesus Green have varying views on priorities for the paths.

6) Richard Taylor – Round Church Street Wall

The wall has been repaired. Who did this?

This was not known.

11/53/WAC Policing and Safer Neighbourhoods

The Neighbourhood Policing Sergeants Mike Barnshaw (Central Neighbourhood, covering Market Ward) and Jayne Drury (West Neighbourhood, covering Newnham and Castle) presented a report on crime and policing for the three wards and made recommendations for the forthcoming period. Priorities agreed in April were discussed.

Speeding in Maid's Causeway

Police Community Engagement Manager John Fuller, reported that Speedwatch training had been completed and the volunteers had begun to

work in the area. To date no follow-up letters had been sent due to delays in the submission of paperwork. Data had been received that evening which would be considered. However, he stated that data submission needs to be timely, as a prompt follow up to check increases the likelihood that letters are acted upon.

Speedwatch volunteers reported that motorists they spoke to were not aware of the 20mph limit. It was agreed that improved signage, education and awareness was needed before this initiative achieved its desired results. A decision was expected imminently from the County Council on increased signage. Members asked for more detailed information on speeding trends and a cost-benefit analysis of the 20mph limit. The Community Engagement Manager directed members to the Cambridgeshire Police website where detailed information on speeding surveys was available:

https://www.cambs-police.co.uk/roadsafety/speed_surveys/survey_results.asp

Concerns were raised that the priority had changed from citywide to Maid's Causeway.

RESOLVED: Members agreed to retain support for the implementation of the 20mph limit as a citywide priority.

Alcohol-related crime in Sussex Street and environs

Members felt that this priority had produced the desired results. Some concerns about displacing the problem to other areas, such as Parkers Piece, were raised. The situation would be monitored and the police would continue to patrol the area. Councillor Hipkin was concerned that highlighting a priority had no impact on police actions. It was explained that the priorities allowed the police to draw on additional resources to deal with issues that intelligence from the public had raised as area of concern.

RESOLVED: To discharge this priority.

Cycle Theft in Castle and Newnham Wards

Members felt this matter should be retained as a priority.

RESOLVED: Continue the priority of reducing the number of cycles stolen in the west of the city and to bring offenders to justice.

Dwelling Burglary in Castle and Newnham Wards

RESOLVED: Discharge this priority.

Speeding in Castle and Newnham

RESOLVED: Discharge this priority.

Members discussed added additional priorities. Adding action to address prostitution as discussed in the open forum was agreed. This is already a priority for the North Area Committee.

RESOLVED: New priority of action to address prostitution and associated ASB in the Belmore Close area.

Councillor Bick recommended adding alcohol related ASB in the Grafton Centre area as a priority. This was thought to be linked to street life in the area.

RESOLVED: New priority of addressing alcohol related ASB in the Grafton Centre area.

Summary of Agreed priorities

1. Support for the implementation of the 20mph limit as a citywide priority.
2. Cycle theft in Castle and Newnham wards
 - Reduce the number of cycles stolen in the west of the city.
 - Bring offenders to justice.
3. Action to address prostitution and associated ASB in the Belmore Close area.
4. Alcohol related ASB in the Grafton Centre area.

Mr Taylor – Ruth Joyce member of Cambridgeshire Police Authority is present. Why is she not invited to the table to take part in the discussion? Recent decisions have allowed the police to use restorative justice for a much broader range of offences and this allows them too much scope to use this form of justice.

Councillor Bick responded. The city takes a positive view of restorative justice but the point is noted. The County Council can question and challenge police decisions.

Ruth Joyce stated that the Chief Executive and the Chair of the Police Authority meet regularly with the County Council.

Written Question from Vicky Hornby - Representing Cambridge Business Against Crime

Shop theft accounts for 20% of reported crime in Cambridge and 10% in Market Ward.

Much of the theft is used to fund a drink and/or drug addiction and is linked to variety of other crimes, such as drug abuse, drug dealing and anti-social behaviour, which are all mentioned regularly at these meetings.

On behalf of the local retailers, please may Cambac request Shop Theft is made an NPT priority for West/Central Area Oct-Dec?

Councillor Bick requested that the police look at this in detail with a view to adding it as a priority at the next priority setting meeting.

11/54/WAC Environmental Improvement Projects in the Highway

The committee received a report from the Project Delivery and Environment Manager regarding a recent County Council decision to request commuted sums to fund their increased maintenance liabilities created by third party funded projects within the highway and the approval of a joint highways budget with the City Council.

Councillor Cantrill reassured the committee that this was a positive situation and an opportunity that should not be missed. It presented a success in accessing funding from the County Council. It would require a reallocation of funding from some schemes to match fund. However, it should be possible to fund agreed schemes in other ways.

Councillor Hipkin proposed a new scheme for consideration. Oxford Road would require traffic mitigation measures when new developments in the area were completed. The developers would be expected to pay for these measures. However, a small sum (£1,000) now would allow a desk-top study to be undertaken on what would be required and what was achievable. This would be used to inform later debates with the developer.

Councillor Whitebread also proposed an additional item. Residents in the Kite area suffer from a lack of residents' parking bays. The area has streets with single yellow lines, which could be used for resident parking when the line is not in force, such as overnight. The cost of implementation would be relatively small.

It was noted that the Project Delivery and Environment Manager was working with the County on a number of Traffic Regulation Orders as there are economies to be made when advertising these en masse, meaning that a larger number of projects could be delivered.

Members agreed to progress all items in appendix B of the report plus the two additional schemes discussed above. However, it was noted that it may not be possible to deliver them all in this financial year.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

1. To approve funding of the commuted sums identified for increased maintenance liabilities associated with the Grantchester Road and Prospect Row Traffic Calming Schemes, totalling £7,610 from the EIP budget;
2. To allocate the required funding from the West / Central EIP budget by reducing the current funding allocated to the midsummer Common & Jesus Green Path refurbishment by £7610 to £15,676, which is currently on hold whilst sources of further funding are established;
3. To allocate £2,750 of the County Council contribution towards the Canterbury Street Traffic Calming scheme whilst maintaining a total project budget of £15,000 and to allocate the subsequent saving in EIP budget allocation to provide match funding for the remaining £2,750 County contribution;
4. To select minor highway schemes, taking into account those identified in Appendix B as amended above, for further development and consultation, with a view to providing match funding of the remainder of the County Council's £5500 contribution from the EIP budget.

The meeting ended at 10.15 pm

CHAIR