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Council

Cnl/1

Thursday, 29 February 2024

COUNCIL

29 February 2024

6.00 - 7.30 pm

Present: Councillors Ashton, Baigent, Bennett, Bick, Bird, Blackburn-Horgan, Carling, Davey, Divkovic, Flaubert, Gawthrope Wood, Gilderdale, Glasberg, Griffin, Hauk, Healy, Holloway, Hossain, Howard, Lee, McPherson, Moore, Nestor, Nethsingha, Payne, Porrer, Pounds, Robertson, Sheil, Smart, A. Smith, S. Smith, Swift, Thittala Varkey, Thornburrow, Todd-Jones, Tong, Wade and Young

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

24/19/CNL Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Ashton, Levien and Martinelli.

Councillors Flaubert, Glasberg, Nethsingha and Sheil joined the meeting online.

24/20/CNL Declarations of Interest

Name	Item	Interest
Councillor Baigent	All	Personal: Member of Cambridge Cycling Campaign.

24/21/CNL Minutes

Item covered in 15 February 2024 minutes.

24/22/CNL Mayor's announcements

"I would now like to make a statement on the Humanitarian appeal for the people of Gaza and has been agreed by all Group Leaders.

The situation in Gaza is deteriorating day by day. The death and destruction taking place is having a devastating impact on innocent civilians, particularly women and children. A ground offensive in Rafah, southern Gaza will only lead to further unnecessary loss of life.

I know many in Cambridge have been deeply and personally affected. The events since October have been truly awful and I extend my sympathies to all those who have been directly and indirectly affected and their families.

We can help people in Gaza by donating to one of the following organisations that provide medical aid and humanitarian relief:

- [United Nations Relief and Works Agency](#)
- [United Nations Population Fund](#)
- [Medecins Sans Frontiers](#)
- [The Red Cross](#)
- [Palestine Red Crescent](#)

As Mayor and on behalf of the city, I have made two statements about the situation in Gaza, ([17th Oct 2023](#) and [21st Feb 2024](#)), and continue our calls for an immediate ceasefire, the return of hostages, unfettered access for humanitarian aid, peace in the Middle East, international support for a two-State solution and the upholding of international law.

Cambridge is proud to be a [City of Sanctuary](#) that upholds and respects the human rights and dignity of all peoples.

The council seeks to promote civility between all members of our city community, including those who feel an association with parties to conflict elsewhere in the world.

There is no place for hate in Cambridge. If you are aware of hate crimes, you can report them to the police on 999 or 101, to [Stop Hate UK](#) or to the City Council's [Racial Harassment Service on 01223 457967](#)."

24/23/CNL Public questions time

Item covered in 15 February 2024 minutes.

24/24/CNL To consider the recommendations of the Executive for adoption

24/24/CNLa Executive Councillor for Housing: HRA Budget Setting Report (BSR) 2024/25

Item covered in 15 February 2024 minutes.

24/24/CNLb Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources: Capital Strategy 2024/25

Item covered in 15 February 2024 minutes.

24/24/CNLc Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources: Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2024/25 to 2026/27

Item covered in 15 February 2024 minutes.

24/24/CNLd Leader of the Council: Hartree - Proposed Early Stage Development and Possible Acceleration (Subject to Permissions)

Under paragraph 4.2.1 of the Council Procedure Rules, the Mayor used her discretion to alter the order of the agenda items. The Hartree item was moved to the end of the meeting. However, for ease of the reader, these minutes will follow the order of the published agenda.

Members resolved to exclude members of the public from the meeting on the grounds that, if they were present, there would be disclosure to them of information defined as exempt from publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Councillors Baigent and S. Smith left the Committee before this item was considered and did not return.

Councillors Porrer, Smart and Thornburrow withdrew from the meeting for this item and did not participate in the discussion or decision making.

The Committee received a report regarding funding for the Hartree development.

Resolved by 25 votes to 3 to accept the Officer recommendations.

24/25/CNL To consider Budget Recommendations of the Executive for adoption**24/25/CNLa** Budget Setting Report (General Fund) 2024/25 to 2028/29

Item covered in 15 February 2024 minutes.

24/26/CNL To consider the recommendations of Committees for adoption**24/26/CNLa** Civic Affairs Committee: Pay Policy Statement 2024/25

Item covered in 15 February 2024 minutes.

24/26/CNLb Licensing Committee: Cumulative Impact Statement

Item covered in 15 February 2024 minutes.

24/27/CNL To deal with oral questions

1) Councillor Payne to the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control, and Infrastructure

Do you think a Development Corporation for Cambridge is a good idea?

The Leader responded:

- i. 'No' in principle, but it depended on circumstances in reality. Would look at the details of the proposal about the problems the Development Corporation was trying to fix if an application was made (one had not been). Queried if the Development Corporation would be fit for purpose.
- ii. Expected the Democratic Leaders of the City Council and South Cambs District Council to be involved in the Development Corporation. Not members appointed by Central Government. Residents needed a voice.

2) Councillor McPherson to the Executive Councillor for Community Wealth Building and Community Safety

Can the Exec Cllr for Community Wealth Building and Community Safety update the Council on the work of the Cambridge BID?

The Executive Councillor responded:

- i. Cambridge BID (Business Improvement District) had undertaken several initiatives and activities this year to support local businesses and enhance the city for residents and visitors.
- ii. Areas of work included:
 - a. Purple Flag and Night-time economy – the BID were a key partner in Purple Flag Group, which brings together the Cambridge BID, city council, police, local business, Cambridge Businesses Against Crime, voluntary services and higher education organisations to help keep Cambridge safe, particularly in relation to the night-time economy. This included providing funding for Taxi Marshalls to help people to get home safely, street pastors to help people in distress and a communication network run by the police and CAMBAC for venues to alert each other about suspicious behaviour when people were moving between venues. As a result Cambridge had retained Purple Flag status since 2019.
 - b. Street Cleaning: The BID continued to fund additional street cleaning and a rapid response service to help keep the city centre streets clean, deal with graffiti and fly tipping.

- c. Events: The Cambridge BID had organized a range of events and arts and cultural activities to bring vibrancy to the city. These include the organising and funding the Cambridge Christmas Lights and switch on events, support for the 'Out of the Ordinary' street arts festival last summer and the upcoming Standing Tall Sculpture Trail which followed the successful Cows About Cambridge in 2021 and will offer families a free and fun way to explore the city and help raise money for the BREAK charity which supported young care leavers. It also had a grant funding pot which supported locally organised events throughout the year.

3) Councillor Pounds to the Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources

Can the Executive Councillor explain how the Government's confirmed Local Government Finance Settlement impacts our Council and residents?

The Executive Councillor responded:

- i. The City Council needed certainty to deliver services.
- ii. It had received the annual settlement late so had to plan how to delivery services and balance the budget without financial certainty.
- iii. Changes to Central Government funding made it hard to deliver services. It was hard to delivery services due to Central Government austerity.

4) Councillor Griffin (on behalf of Councillor Ashton) to the Leader

Can you update Council regarding progress on Cambridge 2040?

The Leader responded:

- i. Michael Gove made an announcement in the Sunday Times July 2023 about supercharging Cambridge to make it the science capital of Europe by building new homes.
- ii. Funding was announced for a multi-agency group to address water scarcity and boost local planning capacity (£9m announced for this so far which could assist schemes that had stalled from 2018 Local Plan). Support was also offered from Homes England for North East Cambridge development.
- iii. Michael Gove met Council Leaders in December 2023 then made an announcement in the paper without first liaising with South Cambs and City Council Leaders.
- iv. City Officers were working with civil servants.
- v. There was a good working relationship between South Cambs and City Council Leaders plus Peter Freeman (Chair of Homes England).

- vi. Was not aware what would be included in the Budget Speech. Undertook to update Council in future.

5) Councillor Divkovic to the Executive Councillor for Housing & Homelessness

In August 2023, the Council was reaccredited by the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance. What does the accreditation signify?

The Executive Councillor responded:

- i. The Council was first accredited by DAHA in 2019. The accreditation was recognised as a national benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse, given that they were in a unique position to identify it, prevent it and provide help for people suffering its effects.
- ii. To achieve its re-accreditation the Council had to meet new, more rigorous DAHA criteria to demonstrate the quality of service it provided to those seeking housing advice, and supporting tenants, residents and council staff who may be experiencing domestic abuse.
- iii. As part of the accreditation process DAHA assessors inspected the council's procedures and case files, and interviewed staff.
- iv. The assessors praised the Council's work, including:
 - a. The quality of risk assessments completed.
 - b. Demonstrating a proactive approach to identifying signs of domestic abuse in people approaching the council for housing support, plus other residents and council staff.
 - c. Providing a trauma informed, non-judgemental and believing response.
 - d. Partnering with other agencies to tailor the service provided according to survivors' individual needs.
- v. The reaccreditation demonstrated the Council's commitment to supporting residents who experience all forms of domestic abuse. The Council would continue to make improvements to services based on feedback from survivors.

6) Councillor Nestor to the Executive Councillor for Communities

In 2023, the Cambridge Folk Festival was awarded Greener Festival Outstanding Certification. As work is going into promoting and arranging the 2024 festival, could the Executive Councillor for communities let us know what work is the Council doing to build on this certification?

The Executive Councillor responded:

- i. “Outstanding” means the Council had (at the festival):
 - a. Reduced greenhouse gas emissions and its carbon footprint.
 - b. Minimised water use.
 - c. Excellent travel, transport and food waste policies.
- ii. To build on this in 2024 the Council aimed to:
 - a. Further reduce water consumption by using compost toilets.
 - b. Encourage re-use of equipment through a repair café to discourage broken/wonky items going to landfill.
 - c. Introduce a share initiative around camping equipment to reduce the amount of items brought onto site.
 - d. Encourage people to bring their own crockery and cutlery to reduce waste.
 - e. Encourage people to use less water.
 - f. ‘Sew Positive’ would be present to reduce waste and increase recycling.

7) Councillor Lee to the Leader

In light of a recent Housing Scrutiny Committee where the Executive Councillor not only failed to answer a member of the public’s supplementary question, but instead answered someone else’s question, how can the Leader of the Council ensure that when the public asks the Council questions, the public are listened to, respected and have their questions answered in a coherent way?

The Leader responded:

- i. All Executive Councillors were dedicated and committed to their portfolio.
- ii. The error was unintentional and the Executive Councillor apologised.
- iii. The Executive Councillor listened to, and advocated for, her residents.
- iv. If the questioner wished to resubmit the same question in writing, a response would be given again in writing or informally as the questioner wished.

8) Councillor Todd-Jones to the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure

How is the Design Code trial progressing in the North of the city, and how might it help improve the planning process in the long run?

The Executive Councillor responded:

- i. The Design Code trial was progressing well. There were three phases to the project.
- ii. A consultation had been undertaken.

- iii. There had been a design review of the Code jointly between Cambridge City Council, Greater Cambridge Design Review Panel and the Cambridgeshire Quality Panel.
- iv. It took six months to prepare the Code.
- v. The Planning Service would learn from this experience for other master planning activity.

9) Councillor Varkey to the Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services

Could the Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services explain whether (and if so, how) the County Council's recent decision to reinstate herbicide spraying will affect our ambition not to use herbicides in our regular operations?

The Executive Councillor responded:

- i. On 23 January the County Council Highways Committee reviewed their earlier decision and reinstated herbicide spraying.
- ii. The City Council was running a trial not to use weedkillers.
- iii. The City Council hoped to work with the County Council to encourage the elimination of herbicide use.
- iv. The County Council said they would not use chemicals/herbicides in areas which had alternative plans. The County Council recognised the City Council was one such area as it had a Herbicide Reduction Plan ie alternatives to herbicides.

A full list of oral questions including those not asked during the meeting can be found in the Information Pack, which is published on the meeting webpage [Agenda for Council on Thursday, 29th February, 2024, 6.00 pm - Cambridge Council](#).

24/28/CNL To consider the following notices of motion, notice of which has been given by:

24/29/CNL Councillor Holloway - Care Experience as Protected Characteristic

Item covered in 15 February 2024 minutes.

24/30/CNL Councillor Bennett - Equality Training 2024

Councillor Bennett proposed and Councillor Tong seconded the following motion:

Cambridge City Council provides training on certain protected characteristics. This helps councillors to provide the best support we can to residents and make the best policy choices.

However, we don't provide this training on all protected characteristics.

The purpose of this motion is to correct that omission and also extend cover to care leavers who do not yet enjoy statutory protection under the Equality Act 2010

This council reaffirms its commitment to supporting all its residents to the best of its ability.

In particular, it notes the importance of ensuring appropriate training for councillors so that they can provide the best support to all residents.

It notes that to date training has been provided on aspects of some but not all protected characteristics or on care leaver status.

In particular, no training has been provided for councillors to help them support those residents who have the protected characteristics of age and disability. Yet both of these characteristics have a significant impact on how residents use the services we provide as a council.

This council commits to introducing appropriate disability training for councillors in 2024.

Appropriate disability training should as a minimum cover:

- The social model of disability.
- Hidden disabilities.
- The stigma attached to disability.
- The disability services provided by the council and its partner agencies.
- An understanding of how attitudes to disability can prevent residents seeking appropriate help.

The council also commits to reviewing the training on protected characteristics that it provides with group leaders to provide the most appropriate programme for councillors so that as comprehensive training as possible can be provided within the time and budgetary constraints applicable.

Resolved (unanimously of all physically present in the Chamber [34 Councillors]) to support the motion.

24/31/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.

24/32/CNL To Note Urgency Action Taken by Officer

24/32/CNLa Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority- Appointment of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee reserve (substitute) member

Members were asked to note the decision.

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm

CHAIR