

Written questions - Council 23 April 2009

1. From Councillor Walker to the Executive Councillor for Climate Change and Growth

Further to your response to my question at Council on 26th February, would you provide a full list of where trees were/are planned to be felled, in the Public Realm and on Council property, in 2008 and 2009, giving in each instance the location, numbers and types of trees?

Answer from Councillor Reid, the Executive Councillor for Climate Change and Growth

Councillor Walker's question is welcomed and a full response will be provided by Friday 1 May. Unfortunately, a comprehensive answer cannot be provided for Full Council within three days of the question being tabled. There are insufficient resources to research the information and the officer responsible for the management of trees on the Highway and communal land for Housing is on leave.

The public realm is defined as land owned by Cambridge City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council, which is managed by the City Council. This includes Highway land, but excludes the Guided Bus, Educational and Social Services land.

The City Council manages and maintains 15,000 trees growing on the communal areas of the Council's Housing land and in the Highway on a three-year cyclical programme.

Active Communities has approximately 30,000 trees on its parks, open spaces, recreation areas, nature reserves and other parcels of land.

All tree work undertaken is carried out in accordance with the Arboricultural Strategy 1996-2007, follows British and European guidance on best practice and all tree surgery undertaken complies to the British Standard 3998:1989 Tree Work.

Replacement trees are planted, wherever possible, on Highway and communal Housing land. Active Communities are keen to undertake tree planting on their land and all options are being investigated to resource this programme.

The attached information details the work undertaken on Active Communities land in 2008 and 2009 (attached at back as separate document)

2. From Councillor Walker to the Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health

Given that the County Community Safety Board is shortly to receive a scoping report, including a gap analysis, on ensuring effective service delivery for victims of sexual violence in the County and Cambridge.

a) Can you indicate how the City Council will take this forward to ensure that City residents affected have access to properly funded and trained counselling and advocacy services?

And

b) Will you bring a report on this to the Community Services Committee, and when?

Answer from Councillor Stuart, the Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health

The County Council have commissioned the development of a scoping report and gap analysis on issues around sexual violence. The aim of the scoping report currently being written is to provide, for the county as a whole, a document:

- To assess current levels of services in Cambridgeshire to support victims of serious sexual violence;
- To identify gaps in service provision;
- To produce a report with conclusions and recommendations for future service provision

Due to the size and complexity of this piece of research it will not be completed by the April County Community Safety Board, and so an update only will be tabled at the April board and a full report taken to the following meeting in July (the report will be completed by June). Cambridge Rape Crisis have been commissioned to produce the scoping report.

Cambridge City Council will await the findings of the report before we are able to make a judgement around next steps. However, once produced the City Council will be working with our Community Safety Partners in the city and the county to see how all agencies, including NHS Cambridgeshire and Cambs Police, can work together to effectively bridge any gaps identified by the report and take the report forward.

The intention will be to bring the findings and recommendations of the report to the Community Safety Partnership (likely to be the July Board) for all partners to consider, this report will be circulated to members for information. The report will also be taken to the County Community Safety Strategy Group in the same month. It is important that the findings of the report are considered by all agencies and not just the City Council. It will only be taken to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee if there is a decision within the report required by the Executive Councillor.

3. From Councillor Herbert to the Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation

From July 2006 to October 2008, what oral or written briefings did she receive, and when, updating her on:

- proposals to reduce queuing for tickets and increase sales by phone or internet,
- how new arrangements for internet tickets would work including online arrangements and the 2007 letting of the contract to Secureticket, or
- methods to tackle ebay abuse of resident tickets including options for residents discounts ?,

and what decisions did she make, or guidance did she give, on any of the above?

Answer from Councillor Smith, the Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation

Before answering this question in detail, there is one general point that must be emphasised. It is not the role of the Executive Councillor to micro-manage detailed operational issues. An Executive Councillor's primary role is to determine matters of policy, where appropriate in consultation with colleagues, leaving operational matters to be handled by officers. While I of course receive briefings from senior officers [the Director of Community Services and the relevant Heads of Service], including on matters associated with the Folk Festival, it would be wholly inappropriate for me to have become involved in levels of detail exceeding these general boundaries.

I first became involved in matters associated with Folk Festival ticket sales in May 2006 when I took over the Arts and Recreation portfolio. That year there were considerable queues when the Folk Festival tickets went on sale and a number of comments. I fielded questions at the Full Council meetings and undertook to look at arrangements for ticket sales [n.b. answers to questions at Full Council are not minuted, nor are supplementary questions minuted, hence there is no formal record of what I said]. A non-key decision was thus brought to the November 2006 Community Services Committee – this emanated from my request to officers to look into the issue of ticket sales, since the existing arrangements were clearly not working. These matters are essentially operational and I, as a member, would not expect to be involved, nor would other members be expected to be involved in essentially operational issues, which are a matter for officers. However, given the sensitivities associated with the queue in 2006 it was clear that a member decision was required on this occasion.

Officers discussed draft proposals for changes to ticket sales with me in October 2006. It was decided that on-line ticket sales should be introduced in 2007 to meet demand for more modern methods of sales and to try to reduce the problem of queuing. A report was produced for the November 2006 Community Services Committee and circulated to other members with an interest in the Folk Festival.

There were three innovations for ticket sales in 2007: online sales; opening up ticket sales a day earlier for Residents than for non-Residents; the number of phone lines was doubled compared with 2006. These changes had been discussed with members, including myself as Executive Councillor, and were expected to bring about improvements. I was informed that the company that Arts and Ents had initially chosen as the on-line ticket provider had received negative feedback from Legal, Finance and Internal Audit. The contract was therefore let to Arts and Ents' second choice company, Secure Ticket. I was informed of this but took no part in the decision to let the contract to Secure Ticket as this was an operational decision for officers.

In practice, there were again problems with queuing in 2007, with Cambridge Residents feeling particularly aggrieved that they couldn't get discounted tickets if they weren't early enough in the queue. I therefore requested two things: first, a meeting between officers, members and local residents who had raised particular concerns about the ticket sales. The meeting with residents was held on 14 June 2007 and the views of residents helped inform my thinking about the requirements for ticket sales.

Second, I asked for a member working party to be set up to review the allocation of tickets. Cllrs Dryden, Ellis-Miller, Kightley and McPherson agreed to serve on that group. The intention was that the working group would consider issues such as the balance of on-line/phone/personal booking and the issue of residents' discounts. It was not my intention to be on the working party, which was also intended to inform the decision I would ultimately have to make on ticket sales – however, since progress was slow, time was short and the officers and members seemed to have different recollections of the decisions made in the first meeting, I attended the second meeting on 23 January 2008, along with Cllrs Dryden, McPherson and Ellis-Miller and several officers from Arts and Ents – there was a draft view from the Box Office, which recommended ending the queue entirely. In addition, I discussed these matters with the Head of Arts and Entertainments on 4th and 18th January 2008. In the event it was decided to retain a limited number of tickets to be available to residents who wished to queue with the rest of the tickets sold in a ratio of 60:40 online/by phone. This had been discussed with the Opposition including the then Independent councillor. The only difference of opinion was that Labour proposed for more tickets to be sold to personal bookers. Overall the system worked well in terms of queues and issues on the day.

The issue of ticket touting/sale of residents' discounted tickets arose in 2006. I discussed possible solutions with officers but we did not find a suitable solution for 2007. However, in 2008, I supported officers' proposals both to allow tickets to be returned as way of reducing scope for people to claim they legitimately could not utilise tickets they had bought and to introduce ID check on arrival at Cherry Hinton Hall to ensure that only residents could enter with residents' discounted tickets. The problem diminished significantly in 2008.

The Working Party did not discuss contractual arrangements and was not intended to do so. Nor did I participate in any discussions about the contract for 2008. However, members did raise the need to test the robustness of the on-line system technically as there had been a few problems in 2007. This happened as requested.

Regarding the non-payment of the income for online ticket sales, I first became aware that there was a problem in autumn 2008, and received a written briefing about the scale of the problem on 20th October.

4. From Councillor Herbert to the Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services

- a) What budget provision and improvements has his department delivered for verge protection measures in the last 12 months ?
- b) What budget and action is planned in the next 12 months to roads like Perne Road, Birdwood Road and Chalmers Road?, and
- c) What further measures does he plan to block vehicles driving off the road and on to grass verges where vehicles have other non-damaging parking alternatives ?

Answer from Councillor Rosenstiel, the Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services

- (a) It is important to note that grass verges form part of the highway and are consequently the responsibility of the County Council.

However, the City Council has accepted responsibilities for verge protection and this is split between the Environment & Planning and City Services departments. In the case of the Environment & Planning department, there is no specific budget set aside for improvements. However, Area Committees are in a position to bring forward schemes from within the Environmental Improvement Programme. During 2009/10, the total budget for the Environment Improvement Programme is £1,314,000 (based on January 2009 rephasing proposals reported to Full Council).

Enforcement for the verge parking by-law sits within the City Services department. The budget for verge parking enforcement is £8,270. Officers spend an average of 12 hours a week (including some early mornings, weekends and evenings) patrolling the streets in a pilot scheme and taking enforcement action as and when required.

- (b) A list of the current potential projects raised by Area Committees under the Environmental Improvements Programme and which have an element of verge protection measures is attached as an Appendix.
- (c) The Department for Communities & Local Government has recently introduced a timetable for the implementation of a new by-law making powers included in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. They advise that the new powers will be available in the summer of this year.
In view of the much improved enforcement provisions provided for under that Act, the City Council has no realistic option but to wait until it can use those powers.

Officers at the County Council intend taking a report to the Area Joint Committee in July to explore suitable parking controls for the ring road and for the radial routes. In the wider context of managing parking on verges, County Council officers would expect that whatever emerges from this process will set the framework for other streets in the city.

I believe that a programme of introduction of new by-laws should be linked to improvement works to affected verges to be led by Area Committees using their Environmental Improvement budgets.

Proposed and Current Environmental Improvement Schemes related to verge parking and damage

Projects Title	Project Detail	Ward
<u>East Area</u>		
St. Margarets Square yellow lining	Introduction of yellow lines	Coleridge
Staffordshire Street verge parking	Introduction of parking area to avoid parking on grass verges	Petersfield
Newmarket Road verges	Newmarket Road verges from rail bridge to Barnwell Road – provide parking bays and re-cultivate verges.	Abbey
Birdwood, Chalmers and Perne Roads verges	Recultivation of grass verges on Birdwood, Chalmers and Perne Roads	Coleridge
<u>South Area</u>		
Hills Road verges	Cultivate and re-seed to repair parking and over run damage	Queen Ediths
Fisher's Lane	Installation of parking areas to avoid parking on verges.	Cherry Hinton
Church End	Installation of parking areas to avoid parking on verges.	Cherry Hinton
Cherry Hinton High Street	Introduction of parking areas to avoid parking on verges.	Cherry Hinton
<u>North Area</u>		
Campkin Road	Creation of parking areas to replace parking on grass verges	Kings Hedges
Primary Court, Chesterton	Introduction of bollards to soft landscaped area to stop parking and overrunning.	East Chesterton
<u>West/Central Area</u>		
None		

5. From Councillor Newbold to the Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation

Since taking the role of Executive Councillor for Arts & Recreation, what have been your personal achievements and which areas do you feel still require improvement?

Answer from Councillor Smith, the Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation

My view of my personal achievements is a matter for me and no-one else. Others will no doubt have their own views on my performance.

6. From Councillor Dryden to the Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation

What have been the forecast and actual income declared by SLM at Cherry Hinton Village Centre 2006/07 2007/08 and 2008/09, and what are the major percentage components in each year's figures?

What has been the revenue receipt to the City Council in each of the above years, and what formula was used to ensure that the Council benefits from any increase in Village Centre income?

Answer from Councillor Smith, the Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation

This information is potentially commercially sensitive and so a summarised response is provided. A detailed response can be provided upon request to Committee Services

SLM advise the Council that accounts for 2008/09 are not yet finalised and will be ready at the end of April. Figures for this period can be provided then.

Looking at the previous 2 years, figures for 2007/08 show an increase in income of over that taken in 2006/07 of 3.4%, which is broadly in line with inflation.

Income receipts can be broken down approximately across a number of areas. The majority of this is income related to the sports hall

2006/07

Sports Hall use: 65%
Activities for adults: 3%
Activities for children: 2%
Function room hire: 22%
Parties: 2%
Vending: 5%

2007/08

Sports Hall use: 63%

Activities for adults: 3.5%

Activities for children: 2%

Function room hire: 23%

Parties: 3%

Vending: 3%

The Council sets pricing levels and SLM's tender submission indicated anticipated income levels that they advise are being achieved. The Council does not receive any revenue from the contract as it is based on a management fee only. There is a profit share element over the whole contract to allow the Council benefit from any major performance variations, but not on a site-by-site basis.

7. From Councillor Dryden to the Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services

Given that the City Council has additional responsibility for strays previously dealt with by the Police, can you confirm how long has the dog warden post been vacant and when can we expect to see someone in place? What has been the reported incidents of dog fouling reported in 2006/07 2007/08 and 2008/09?

Answer from Councillor Rosenstiel, the Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services

The Police have an agreement with Cambridge City Council since April 2008 to handle out of hour stray dogs and that our Dog Warden arranges to pick up the strays the following day. These are taken to Wood Green Animal Shelter and the details of the dog are available from Customer Services Centre.

The Dog Warden post has been vacant since February 2009. We are currently in the process of advertising for a part time Dog Warden and the advert will be going out on 29th April 2009. Hopefully it will be filled by June 2009. Following the introduction of the Customer Service Centre all vacant posts are reviewed to ensure that all possible alternatives are explored in providing the service.

This review undertaken by Officers has led to a delay in the recruitment. Measures have been put in place, however, to ensure that all statutory functions such as picking up strays and sending information about responsibilities to dog owners about dog fouling have been undertaken by the service for the interim period.

The following are the number of dog fouling complaints Environmental Services have received.

2006/2007 81
2007/2008 56
2008/2009 101

8. From Councillor Newbold to the Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation

The consultant's report on the future of Cherry Hinton Hall grounds was completed earlier this year and feedback on the content was received by the Council on 27 March. A 'detailed project timeline' was promised by officers to move this project forward? Please identify the steps that will be taking place as part of this timeline.

Answer from Councillor Smith, the Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation

1. Options and action plan - this summer
2. Consult and prioritise elements - this summer
3. Consideration of proposals by South Area C'tee- 24th September 2009
4. Build up design and funding options - Autumn
5. Improve Your Neighbourhood/S106 VY South Area C'tee - 19th November 2009
6. Approval of new items onto s106 programme January 2010
7. Project appraisal to commit expenditure - March 2010

2008: TREE MANAGEMENT - ACTIVE COMMUNITIES : FELLING - UNDERTAKEN

Location	No.	Species	Reason for removal	Details of replacement planting
Lammas Land Car Park	4	Ash	Trees damaged by high-sided vehicles	Proposal in preparation for EIP Bid
	1	Willow	Dead	Proposal in preparation for EIP Bid
Lammas Land	1	Willow	Request from Active Communities to facilitate repair of Pump House	Not appropriate
	1	Whitebeam	Request from Active Communities to facilitate repair of Pump House	Not appropriate
	1	Chestnut	Severely decayed	2 Zelkova
	1	Silver leaf maple	Collapsed	To be assessed
Christ's Pieces	1	Cherry	Contractors trenched through the roots	3 No Cherry trees, 2 No Judas tree, 1 No False acacia cv 'Casque Rouge'
Cherry Hinton Hall	1	Scot's pine	Suppressed by adjacent trees	Not appropriate
	1	Ash	Twin stems split at base	Not appropriate
	1	Raywood ash,	Collapsed	Not appropriate
	3	Blackthorn	Dead	Not appropriate
	1	Myrobalam plum	Collapsed	Not appropriate
	1	Ash	Top failed	Not appropriate
	1	Hawthorn	Dead	Not appropriate
	1	Robinia	Decayed - extensive fungal activity	Not appropriate
	1	Poplar and Sycamore	Dead due to competition from each other	Not appropriate
	1	Elm	Dutch elm disease	Not appropriate
Flower Street Play Area	2	Leyland cypress		Replaced with 3 Birch
Histon Road Recreation Ground	1	Unidentified	Dead, risk of collapse	
	3	Willows	Causing subsidence to Murketts Garage	Not appropriate
Green End Road	2	Horse Chestnut	Routine thinning to allow adjacent trees to develop	Not appropriate
	1	Noway maple	Tree collapsed when the included bark at main fork failed. (Emergency)	No Replacement
Queen's Green	5	London plane	1 tree failed, 2 heavily reduced following failure, 2 poor form	7 Oak,
			- 5 surviving trees had included bark that rendered them likely to fail.	
	1	Cherry	Dead.	2 Hop hornbeam
Parker's Piece	1	Alder	Suppressed by adjoining trees	Not appropriate
	2	Lime	To enable a planting scheme for the long term future.	Replaced with 13 Oriental Plane trees to form the boundary to Park Terrace
	6	London plane	Included bark forms and storm damage	Replaced with 13 Oriental Plane trees to form the boundary to Park Terrace
Hobsons Brook	34	Self set sycamore, elder		
	1	Poplar	Decayed	
St Luke's Churchyard, Victoria Road	1	Cherry	decayed - request of Parish Council	2 Cherry
Crematorium	1	Willow	Collapsed into neighbouring property	Not required
Arbury Court Play area	1	Hornbeam	Vandalised	No replacements
Mill Road Cemetery	2	Blackthorn	Self set blackthorn growing into rear garden of 35 Emery Street.	Trees were coppiced. Regrowth will managed as hedgerow planting.
Sheep's Green	2	Willow	Collapsed onto footpath	Not appropriate
	1	Lombardy poplar	Struck by lightning	Under review as part of the assessment of the open space
Alexandra Gardens	2	Crab Apple	Trees were in late stage of decline, large areas of decay in trunks	2 cherry
	91			
Byron's Pool Nature Reserve	61	Sycamore	Woodland management and to improve woodland diversity and trees in danger	1500, (including 25 standard trees) field maple, oak, Black poplar, White willow,
	18	Horse Chestnut	of collapsing into the river	hazel, hawthorn, black thorn, guelder rose: propagated locally
	2	Ash		
	1	Hawthorn		
	5	Wild cherry		
	3	Willow		
	1	Raywood ash,		
	1	Elm		
	92			