

Written questions - Council 21 May 2009

1. From Councillor Bradnack to the Leader

Why have you so far been able to tell neither Ravensworth Gardens residents nor Petersfield Ward Councillors your reasons for securing the withdrawal of a report on a request from the Ravensworth Gardens Residents' Association to enable the railings around the play area there to be raised? Will you now have the courtesy to explain why this happened? And will you now take all reasonable steps to ensure a positive outcome of the residents' request?

Answer from the Leader

Restricting access to any play area is a decision the Council cannot take lightly. In my view, the original Safer City grant application by Ravensworth Gardens Residents Association (RGRA) to the Council did not provide enough detailed background history to evidence an adequate case for funding for this scheme. In addition, I had serious concerns about the implication of such an action, and needed to fully understand why it was necessary to consider such a drastic step.

I asked for a full history of the issue to be collated and presented to myself and the Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation in order that we could examine the request in detail, and agree a way forward. It is apparent that this situation does present some exceptional circumstances, namely it is a raised play area in close proximity to people's windows in the adjacent housing. In addition, I am now aware of a documented and evidenced history of anti social behaviour, also the extent to which consultation has revealed local support for these proposals.

I have agreed with the Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation that I will consider a safer city grant application from RGRA if the Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation is minded to approve the principle of restricting access to the play at night time for a trial period. A report on this will be considered at Community Services Scrutiny Committee on June 25th.

I have written in these terms to both RGRA and ward councillors.

2. From Councillor Bradnack to the Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation

Is the Executive Member aware that Active Communities officers find themselves currently unable to set standards for open space provision in the city, because they are waiting for a study to be carried out following the publication of 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities: a Companion guide to Policy Planning Guidance 17? When will she be directing that work to be done? And what guidance are Active Communities officers given in the meantime in respect of this important element of their responsibilities?

Answer from Councillor Smith, Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation

There are adopted and approved standards for a range of Open Space provision in the City and these are contained in the Cambridge Local Plan 2006. Environment and Planning, in liaison with Active Communities, are working together to produce a new assessment of all open space in the City. The work is resourced and scheduled to take place during this summer. The first draft of the Parks and Open Spaces strategy has been approved for consultation; this has been postponed until the election period has ended. A final draft is scheduled for Scrutiny in October 2009, and this will both inform and be informed by the development of wider work being undertaken by E&P.

3. From Councillor Newbold to the Leader

How much of his stated £7.2 million recovery of City Council funds in Icelandic banks will be recovered in 2009 and what percentage of the £9m + interest will that represent?

Answer from the Leader

The Local Authority Accounting Panel (LAAP) issued, at the end of last week, further guidance for local authorities with Icelandic bank deposits. The guidance, based on the best information that is currently available, sets out the percentages and repayment profiles that is considers local authorities should anticipate in preparing their accounts for the year ended 31 March 2009. A summary of the guidance has been produced for circulation to all members.

Based on this guidance, it is now estimated that 80% of the claimed principal and interest relating to the Council's deposits with Heritable Bank Ltd will be recovered and that 95% of the claimed principal and interest relating to deposits with Landsbanki Islands hf will be recovered. A schedule setting out the respective investments and claimed sums is attached at the end.

The administrators for Heritable Bank Plc, Ernst and Young, have indicated that an interim payment of 15% of claims will be paid in July or August 2009. This interim payment would amount to £610,756 representing 6.65% of the total claimed amounts of principal and interest of £9,189,902.

4. From Councillor Lynn to the Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation

Given that the recent Jesus Green HLF grant was unsuccessful. What developments can we expect on the Green in the future, how will this be funded and what will be the consultation strategy to ensure that residents, Green users and other stakeholders will be fully involved?

Answer from Councillor Smith, Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation

A stakeholder group which represents a wide range of interests has been established. The Council held a meeting with the group on 20th April to discuss the outcome of the HLF bid.

Consultation will take place with all stakeholders over the summer to revise priorities for improvements. A meeting to begin this process will take place on 15th June.

An update on the current position will be brought to the meeting of Community Services on 25th June and a decision on the way forward will be made.

A report identifying proposals, priorities and potential funding sources will be brought to the meeting of Community Services Scrutiny Committee on 8th October for approval to progress. Potential sources of funding include section 106, repair and renewal funds, the Environmental Improvements Programme, the Council's capital programme, Heritage Lottery Fund, WREN (Waste Recycling Environmental Limited) and SITA Trust (via the Landfill Communities Fund).

5. From Councillor Walker to the Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources

In the changes arising out of the Customer Access Strategy,

- What job restructuring has and will occur, including deleted positions agreed at the time and for the future?
- When was the restructuring negotiated?
- What and when did consultation take place with opposition councillors?
- What vacant posts have not been filled or are being held vacant?

Answer from Councillor Cantrill, Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources

What job restructuring has and will occur, including deleted positions agreed at the time and for the future?

The Council approved the business case for the Customer Access Strategy in July 2006. The business case was based on the assumption the Council would completely reconfigure the way it provided services to customers to

make them more joined up and effective from the customer's point of view and to generate efficiencies.

The core business case was based on detailed analysis of 17 of the Council's services with the highest level of customer contact. The business case showed that all activities within those services were being delivered by 233 full time equivalent (FTE) staff. Of these staff, 137 FTE staff provided services that were more complex and were likely to continue to be provided by expert staff in the back office. Of the remaining 96 up to 42 FTE staff would be transferred into the new centre and the Council would expect to reduce overall staffing levels by 54 FTE.

The business case assumed that each service would move more straightforward transactions into the customer service centre to achieve those 54FTE reductions. The current way services were being delivered across the Council dispersed those transactions across a wide number of staff. The business analysis showed that a percentage of the workload of most of the 233 full time staff in customer facing services would move out of service. Where a larger number of staff were doing relatively small proportions of customer facing working, the service would need to radically reorganise their functions including the structure the work of their professional staff to reflect these changes.

The numbers of staff to come out of each service were analysed by looking at quantitative data such as call volumes and visitor numbers and work with staff and managers to estimate the time spent on customer facing work. The numbers for all services were based on the assumption the CSC would handle all of the short and simple and all of the long and simple transactions and 50% of the short and complex transactions. Each service was given a target number of posts to come out of the service as part of the business case.

When was the restructuring negotiated?

Trade Unions were consulted at each stage of the development of programme through a Trade Union negotiating group set up for that purpose. It was agreed that those staff who handled high levels of customer facing work would be placed in a ring fenced group for prior consideration for jobs in the customer service centre and these numbers and the staff affected were agreed with the unions through the negotiating group. Those staff were given prior consideration for jobs in the Customer Service Centre and a significant number were recruited into the new service and have moved into the centre as "their" service has moved across.

It was also agreed that each service head would then consult separately on their back office structures on a timetable that meant that their services would restructure at the same time their tranche of services moved into the Customer Service Centre.

What and when did consultation take place with opposition councillors?

There was significant consultation with councillors of all parties and member briefings as the Customer Access Strategy was developed. The Business case for the programme was agreed at Council as part of the MTS in July 2006. Formal reports were submitted to the following scrutiny committees leading up to that date:

Customer Services and Resources

15 November 2005

11 January 2006

4 July 2006

Housing Management Board

26 June 2006

The CAS strategy agreed overall numbers to come out of service and the shape of the Customer Service Centre, but each individual service affected has needed to consider what structure to put in place in the “back office” as their service has moved into the customer service centre. Actual numbers of staff affected have been refined as part of the detailed planning for each tranche.

The consultation on the new structures has been lead by the individual Heads of Service who have consulted staff, the unions and members as they have planned to go live in the CSC. The format and timing of this has varied from service to service.

The Constitution does not require all members to be consulted about restructuring proposals within services and the primary responsibility to organise structures and staff rests with senior managers in consultation with Executive Members and Scrutiny Committee Spokespersons responsible for the relevant service areas.

Page 83 of the Constitution (**section 9.3.13 (g)**) says that each Director is authorised to make decisions on a number of things including:

“changes to the management and staffing structures of his/her department, including the creation/deletion of posts and changes to gradings and job descriptions, subject to consultation with the relevant Executive Councillor and spokesperson/s of the relevant scrutiny committee in the case of changes to the staffing structure which:

*(i) would result in job losses;
(ii) involve changes to the first and second tier of management; or
iii) would have an effect on service delivery; or would have major implications for the operation of the department; or would have implications for other departments.”*

In the time available it has not been possible to confirm exact dates of some of the consultation processes but a summary is outlined below:

Revenues and Benefits

The restructuring of the whole Service Area was negotiated during February and March 2008 and a range of members were copied into consultation documents and kept updated via newsletters

Home-Link and Housing Options teams

These teams went live in the CSC at the same time Home-link was implemented and the changes to the service were consulted upon as part of a wider restructure to implement both changes. The main formal consultation with staff took place in September and October 2007. The Head of Service and Service Manager who undertook the consultation are no longer in post, so it has not been possible to confirm exact details.

Environmental Services

The main consultation with staff and unions took place in the Summer 2008 although follow up consultation took place all the way up to the end of 2008. There was an oversight within the service, which meant spokespersons were not formally consulted in line with the constitution, as they should have been, as part of the original consultation in the summer 2008.

Once that oversight was apparent steps were taken to consult with members. Discussions were held with the Leader of the Labour Group on 13 Oct 2008, with Cllr Walker on 18 December 2008 and with Cllr Newbold on 23 January 2009.

Steps have been put in place to ensure that this oversight does not happen again for future CAS tranches. Consultation will be undertaken in respect of detailed proposals for Environment and Planning and City Homes North and South before those services go live in Tranches 5 and 6 respectively in coming months. A report is going to HMB in June to outline how tenants will also be consulted about Tranche 6.

What vacant posts have not been filled or are being held vacant?

The Council's organisational change policy says that staff will be redeployed into other posts, where suitable alternative posts exist, in order to minimise redundancies. Staff who are at risk of redundancy are put in a redeployment pool and offered the opportunity to apply for any vacant posts before they are advertised.

This is a very broad question and it is not possible to track in detail what posts were held vacant at key points during the development of the strategy. In most services posts have been held vacant and filled with temps pending decisions about final structures to ensure as many staff as possible could be redeployed into those posts rather than made redundant.

6. From Councillor Walker to the Executive Councillor for Environmental Health and Waste Services

How much waste is collected from our parks and open spaces and can this be recycled?

Answer from Councillor Pitt, Executive Councillor for Environmental Health and Waste Services

Two types of waste are collected from Parks and Open Spaces, Green waste and General Litter. The green waste is classified in Cambridgeshire as trade waste and is kept separate from other street related or household green waste.

Green waste is managed in separate bays at our Mill Road Depot and from these bays transferred for recycling via Cambridgeshire County Council.

The tonnage is seasonal and influenced by prevailing weather conditions.

The tonnage for parks green waste for 2008/09 is 207.74 tonne all of which is composted.

There are no separate records for parks and spaces however, tonnage of general Streetscene waste for 2008/09 including parks litter, street cleaning waste and fly tipping is 3193.76 tonne.

The Council is presently piloting a litter bin recycling initiative at four locations in the city centre, the outcome of which will be used to inform the potential for extending the scheme to other areas. The Council is also piloting collection of glass for recycling, from Jesus Green starting June 2009.

The pilot scheme shows that recycling can be successfully undertaken but that contamination is present which affects the ability to recycle. The introduction of mixed dry recycling (household co-mingled) this year offers potential for the extension of on street and parks litter recycling.

7. From Councillor Herbert to the Leader

Further to his public statement in January 2009 that 'we appointed a firm called SecureTicket UK in December 2007 to sell tickets for the 2008 folk festival',

- a) what was the month by month sequence of key events involved in inviting tenders, assessing tenders and awarding the contract, and
- b) in which month did the Council first state in writing to SecureTicket UK that they were to be awarded the contract, and which council departments were involved in that communication ?

Answer from the Leader

- a)
 - 6 September 2007: quotes were invited for the provision of ticketing
 - 5 October: closing date for receipt of quotes; credit checks requested
 - 15 October: credit checks provided by Finance Dept and considered
 - Consideration and evaluation of tenders throughout late October and November
 - Early December: decision taken to appoint SecureTicket
 - 13 December: members told that SecureTicket had been selected at officer/member meeting
 - 16 January 2008: SecureTicket informed they were awarded the contract
- b)

SecureTicket were first informed that they were to be awarded the contract by e-mail on 16 January 2008. The communication was from an Arts and Entertainments staff member. No other departments were involved in the communication; however Finance Department staff were involved in the process leading to the award of the contract.

8. From Councillor Herbert to the Executive Councillor for Climate Change and Growth

What have been the key dates including original approval, scheme estimate and costing, and main progress dates for delivering two agreed but long delayed environmental improvement schemes in Coleridge ward

- a) Cherry Hinton road shops improvement?
and
- b) St Margaret's Square yellow lining ?

and when has there been formal communication on each with the County Council as Highways Authority to seek their agreement in implementing both schemes, and what are the estimated dates for commencing work and completing these schemes ?

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

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

Delayed environmental improvement schemes in Coleridge ward

[illegible]

9. From Councillor Lynn to the Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation

What is the outturn budget for the 2008 Cambridge folk festival, including detailed breakdown into the main expenditure and income elements, and what is the comparative budget and breakdown for the estimated budget for the 2009 festival?

Answer from Councillor Smith, Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation

Cambridge Folk Festival

	2008 Outturn £	2009 Budget £
Expenditure		
Staffing	103,790	100,570
Transport	26,373	27,600
Artists' Fees	203,341	203,290
Production Costs	277,359	289,620
Premises & Utilities	169,668	147,340
Administration	21,233	23,450
Marketing	14,614	13,320
Security	70,494	73,550
Licences	26,070	26,380
Bank & credit card charges	6,440	6,720
Merchandise costs	12,290	10,540
Health & safety	13,460	14,150
Departmental Recharges	<u>158,850</u>	<u>166,000</u>
	1,103,982	1,102,530
Income		
Grants & sponsorship	55,713	91,270
Sale of goods	35,206	39,610
Concessions	116,675	126,100
Ticket income	973,855	985,220
Advertising	7,985	8,870
Other fees & charges	63,329	67,860
Other income	<u>746</u>	<u>100</u>
	1,253,509	1,319,030
 Net surplus	 149,527	 216,500

Notes

The 2008 ticket income includes £548,894.47 net bad debt provision.
The discrepancy between this figure and the reported loss figure is due to the subtraction of VAT.

Cambridge City Council
Icelandic Investments Analysis of Claims and Potential Recovery
Based on Guidance contained in LAAP Bulletin 82 - May 2009

Counterparty	Principal	Interest Rate	Invest Date	Maturity Date	Claim Date	Interest to Claim Date	Amount Due to Claim Date	Anticipated Repayment %	Anticipated Repayment £
	£					£	£		
Heritable Bank Plc	1,000,000	5.65000%	09-Jan-08	09-Oct-08	06-Oct-08	41,949.32	1,041,949.32		
Heritable Bank Plc	1,000,000	6.21000%	13-Jun-08	22-Dec-08	06-Oct-08	19,565.75	1,019,565.75		
Heritable Bank Plc	2,000,000	6.00000%	05-Sep-08	05-Mar-09	06-Oct-08	10,191.78	2,010,191.78		
	<u>4,000,000</u>					<u>71,706.85</u>	<u>4,071,706.85</u>	80	3,257,365
Landsbanki Islands hf	2,000,000	6.22000%	30-Jun-08	06-Jan-09	14-Nov-08	46,692.60	2,046,692.60		
Landsbanki Islands hf	1,000,000	6.35000%	01-Jul-08	24-Apr-09	14-Nov-08	23,660.27	1,023,660.27		
Landsbanki Islands hf	2,000,000	6.42000%	01-Jul-08	22-May-09	14-Nov-08	47,842.19	2,047,842.19		
	<u>5,000,000</u>					<u>118,195.06</u>	<u>5,118,195.06</u>	95	4,862,285
Total	<u>9,000,000</u>					<u>189,901.91</u>	<u>9,189,901.91</u>		<u>8,119,650</u>

Repayments currently anticipated in 2009:-

15% of Heritable Bank Plc claim

£ 610,756

2009 repayments as % of total claims

% 6.65