



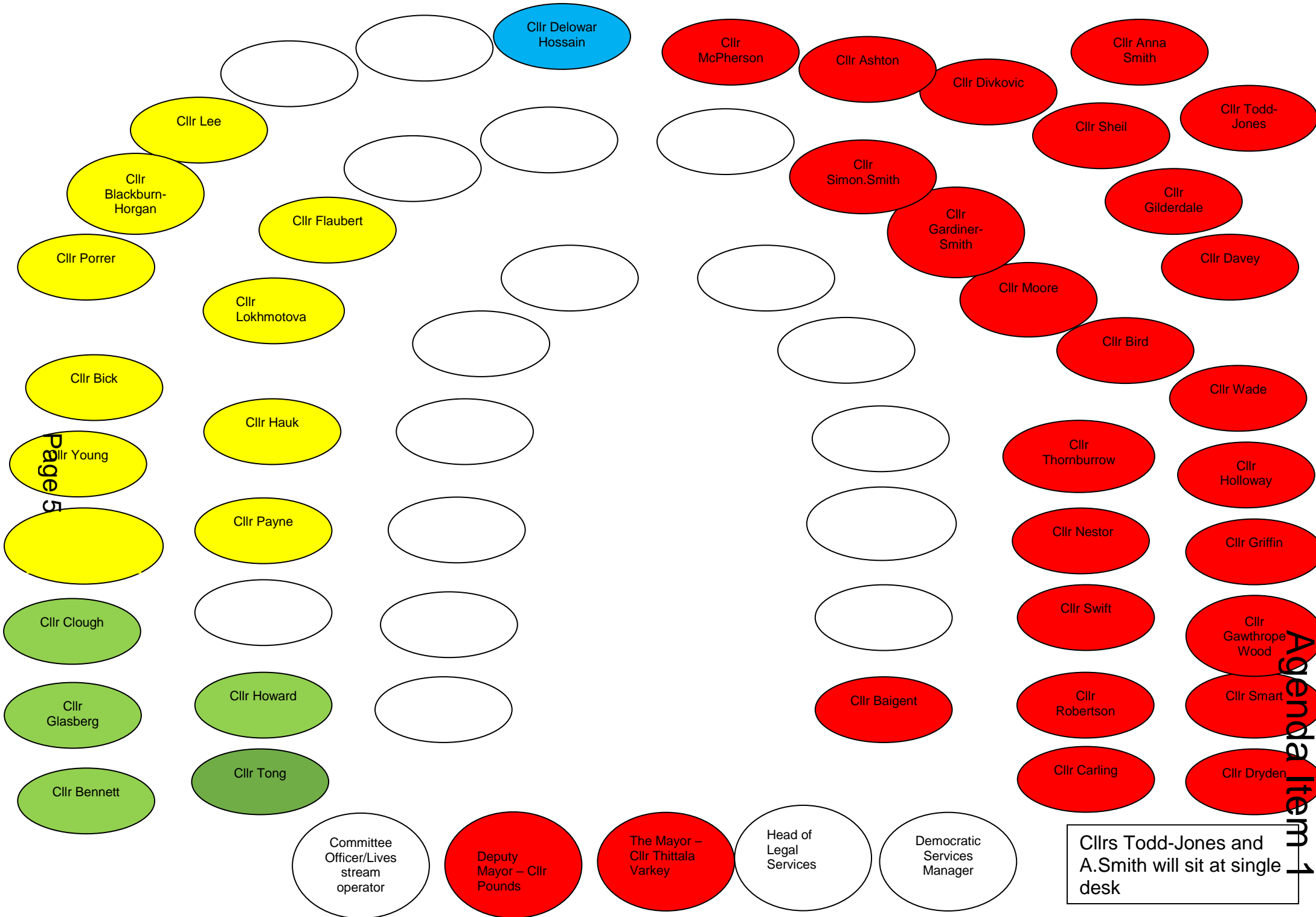
CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

INFORMATION PACK

Date: Thursday, 10 October 2024

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Agenda Item 2

Public Questions for Full Council – 10 October 2024

Question 1.

Question to Cambridge City Council:

Will you consider flying the flag of Palestine at Guildhalls?

We have residents from Palestine living in our community who have family in Gaza and the West Bank which is currently occupied by Israeli forces.

There has been huge support for Palestine from the start of Israeli attacks in 2023 and over the whole of 2024. Cambridge people have shown again and again that we oppose the appalling Genocide of the people of Gaza [1].

Now Israeli forces are openly attacking and occupying the West bank too.

In June 2024 we noticed that the city council flew not only the Pride flag but also the Roma flag (picture attached from June 10th)

We commend this act of solidarity and hope the city council understands how powerful such a simple act can be in bringing our communities together and pushing back against hatred and demonisation of a minority group.

This year we have seen the rise of far right hatred and Islamophobia in the UK. Cambridge, however, has always pushed back against such hate-mongering and on 10th August there was a gathering on Donkey Common against Far Right hatred targeting Muslims and Palestinians and other minorities. Cambridge residents and the students of both universities stand against Far Right racist messaging dividing our communities.

Now is such an important time for the city council to be united with the people of the city.

Earlier in 2024 our petition on [change.org](https://www.change.org) asking the City Council to Fly the Flag of Palestine at Guildhalls got 2767 signatories.

203 of these are Cambridge residents. I have attached the spreadsheet of the Cambridge signatories.

The petition can be viewed at [Petition · Fly Palestine Flag at Guildhalls · Change.org](https://www.change.org/p/cambridge-city-council-fly-the-flag-of-palestine-at-guildhalls)

We ask the city council once again to set a date to fly the flag of Palestine in solidarity with those struggling to survive a Genocide and commemorate all the Palestinian men, women and children that have been killed. The ruling issued by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordered six provisional measures including for Israel to refrain from acts under the Genocide convention, prevent and punish the direct

and public incitement to genocide, and take immediate and effective measures to ensure the provision of humanitarian assistance to civilians in Gaza [2]. In light of this, we ask the Cambridge City Council to join the local and international community in standing in solidarity with Palestine.

[1] [Israel's war on Gaza live: 2.2 million Palestinians in 'urgent' need of aid | Israel-Palestine conflict News | Al Jazeera](#)

[2] [Israel must comply with key ICJ ruling ordering it do all in its power to prevent genocide against Palestinians in Gaza - Amnesty International](#)

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Instagram [cambridgestopthewar](#)

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Rumble [Cambridge Stop The War \(rumble.com\)](#)

Youtube [Cambridge StoptheWar - YouTube](#)

National Website <http://stopwar.org.uk/>

Question 2

The East West Rail Company aim to construct a new railway from Bedford to Cambridge (EWR CS3). While ordinarily one might expect a railway to bring positive benefits to Cambridge residents in terms of modal shift away from roads, reduced congestion and lower CO2 levels, EWRCo's proposals will have exactly the opposite effect. There is no business case for EWR CS3, and the current proposals will cause massive environmental damage and severe disruption to both local residents and local businesses. EWRCo's plans will facilitate massive green-field housing development at Tempsford and at Cambourne. East West Rail Company's own estimates show that growth on the projected scale at Tempsford and Cambourne would lead to a huge rise in road journeys with only a minority of journeys being by rail

Furthermore, EWRCo's plans, set out in their own documents, will mean lengthy periods of partial and full shutdown of Cambridge Station lasting several months, as well as the closure of Long Road bridge for a minimum of 13 weeks. These proposals will mean huge disruption for Cambridge residents who work in London, have family there or make leisure journeys. The closure of Long Road will impact patients, visitors and emergency vehicles accessing Addenbrookes Hospital, students attending Long Road and Hills Road Colleges, as well as thousands of everyday business, family and leisure journeys.

I am therefore asking:

What mitigations are the Council putting in place, should EWR CS3 proceed, in view of the massive negative impacts these proposals will have for Cambridge, in terms of increased traffic congestion, modal shift away from rail, and lengthy closedown periods for both Cambridge Station and Long Road?

What representations have you made, or will you make, to the Secretary of State for Transport and to the Rail Minister to make them fully aware of the negative impact of EWRCo's current proposals on Cambridge residents and businesses?

Question 3

Question for the City Council meeting on 10 October, 2024

How will you, as a Council committed to proper public engagement, help ensure that the creeping, opaque privatisation, begun at East Barnwell Health Centre, does not become the norm?

We are very concerned about the recent surrender of their services contract by the long-standing GPs at East Barnwell surgery in Abbey ward and the re-tendering of the contract by our Integrated Care Board (ICB).

The GPs at this surgery were well loved, knew everyone by name over generations of families and were highly regarded professionally for their excellent quality standards. They had raised difficulties over a long period about the insufficiency of funds offered for their services and building maintenance for their City/NHS? owned premises. We know the 2 new bidders for the contract were actually offered a better deal, with increased payments per patient. We know also that the ICB had been delaying improving matters for the original providers at this practice and thus undermining them, pushing for 'another approach'. We suspect this was all about lowering standards, in a non-evidenced attempt to reduce costs. (see 1 below)

We think this is the first instance of our ICB progressing a privatisation agenda in general practice. We note that where corporate organisations have taken over surgeries elsewhere then inefficiency and staff turnover increase while continuity of care and standards can deteriorate rapidly, as resources are stripped for profit. What we have been warning about for years is coming to fruition. (See 2 below)

You, the Council, have used the example of Abbey ward in your aims for a 'new approach to a fairer Cambridge', that is, 'enabling local communities to have a greater say and influence over decisions, services, and amenities affecting their lives.' (See 3 below)

The 'community consultation' with East Barnwell patients was a mess, badly carried out. People who wanted to contribute to the selection of GP provider (including one of us putting this question) were not properly enabled to do so. In the end, only 2 patients took part in choosing between 2 bidders, about which we and all the patients involved knew nothing. The whole process was opaque. Commercial interests were cited for this lack of transparency.

Although the City Council has no direct oversight over the ICB, our councillors in the Abbey ward are having to deal with their patients' warranted concerns. This cannot be left to individual ward councillors - the ICB's poor move will have potential impact on all wards.

How will you, as a Council committed to proper public engagement, help ensure that this creeping, opaque privatisation, begun at East Barnwell Health Centre, does not become the norm?

1. <https://www.pulsetoday.co.uk/views/guest-opinion/the-very-last-resort-handing-back-our-contract/>

2. <https://keepournhspublic.com/primary-care-and-gps/>

3. Cambridge Matters magazine, autumn edition 2024, page 7.

patient at East Barnwell practice
patient at Lensfield Road practice
Both from Cambridgeshire Keep Our NHS Public.

Question 4

"Given the Government's plan to continue supporting the growth of Cambridge, what are the systems and processes available to the City Council to designate a second urban centre for Cambridge under the existing development plans system, mindful that in the mid-1970s Professor John Parry Lewis recommended such a concept in his report on the Cambridge Sub-Region which made provision for the expansion of Cambridge to 200,000 people by the Millennium. Given that Cambridge is already at

150,000 and with growth set to continue, is now the time to start making provision for this - perhaps on the Cambridge Airport Site as I wrote at <https://cambridgetownowl.com/2024/09/13/cambridge-needs-to-designate-the-site-for-second-urban-centre/> with new civic anchor buildings and institutions at its heart, and provision for evening and night time entertainment away from colleges and residential areas?

Question 5

“Several large planning applications have recently been given consent despite major concerns on the part of the Environment Agency, the City Environmental Health Team, environmental NGOs, and many objections by local residents. The National Planning Policy framework requires development to be ‘sustainable’, and in line with its environmental objective which is: *“to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land,”* and (and I wish to emphasise these final points) *“improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”*

We understand the pressure being put on the City Council by the recent Ministerial Statements relating to water, housing and science centres. We also recognise the conflict between these and the NPPF’s environmental objective; and we acknowledge the risk of developers going to appeal. Nevertheless, we feel that in a city like Cambridge, with a strong aspiration to be a leader in environmental issues, the Planning Committee and the planning officers should, in these major cases:

- a) produce clear explanations of the rationale for their decisions for the benefit of local residents and all those with concerns about the proposals
- b) introduce sufficiently stringent conditions, to ensure that developments do not go ahead if they will have adverse impacts on the environment and the health of local communities
- c) work with relevant agencies to ensure that monitoring and scrutiny of the conditions are done appropriately.

Could the Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure provide some reassurance that these recommendations will be considered? If not, does this not call into question the purpose of the Planning Committee?”

Question 6.

Council are referred to my question to the council at their meeting of July 18th concerning the S106 agreement entered into by the Council and Grosvenor Developments at Parkside Place Cambridge.

Can the Council please give a detailed and comprehensive answer to the question raised on July 18th as noted in the minutes of that meeting and now give a full response to the specific points a), b), c) of that question of July 18th.

For info - Question from 18 July Council meeting

Question on behalf of council tax payers and leaseholders of Parkside Place Cambridge for the meeting of Cambridge City Council in the Council Chamber, The Guildhall Cambridge on Thursday 18th July 2024 at 6pm.

Background

Parkside Place is an estate developed in 2012/2013 in the centre of Cambridge by Grosvenor Developments Ltd, a company that is part of Grosvenor Estates, the family company of the Duke of Westminster. The development is a mixed development comprising private apartments, Affordable Housing Units (AFUs) and **Cambridge Fire Station**. In gaining planning consent for the development, Grosvenor entered into a S106 agreement with Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and The Fire Authority. Under this agreement Grosvenor were obliged to ensure that the service charges of the AFUs did not increase annually by a figure in excess of retail price index (RPI).

Grosvenor, by seemingly calculated alteration of the final leases entered into with the residential leaseholders and the Fire Authority, (without any transparency or prior agreement), placed the obligation to pay any excess charge over RPI for the AFUs on the residential leaseholders and the Fire Authority.

To date the excess service charges for the AFUs amounts to over £320,000 of which in excess of £50,000 has been borne by the Fire Authority and therefore charged to council tax payers under the precept. Residential leaseholders are taking legal action against Grosvenor - quite clearly a civil matter. The question below is raised by council tax payers in relation to the burden of additional costs on the Fire Authority.

The Question

a) Does the council feel it appropriate for council tax payers to bear part of the costs of a developer's obligation under a S106 agreement. (£50,000 to date and increasing annually)

b) If it is felt that this is inappropriate behaviour by the developer, will the council make representations to Grosvenor on behalf of council tax payers.

c) Should Grosvenor feel that there is no obligation to recompense the Fire Authority and therefore council tax payers, will the council acknowledge that this behaviour should be taken into account in any future planning application by Grosvenor Estates or their subsidiary companies.

Connected questions were placed before the Fire Authority at their meeting on June 20th 2024 at Shire Hall. The Chief Fire Officer has indicated that legal advice is being taken on their position.

The Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure responded on behalf of the Leader:

- i. The council notes that the questions relate to the burden of additional costs on the Fire Authority and that the Chief Fire Officer in a meeting on 20 June 2024 indicated they may be seeking legal advice on their position.
- ii. The Section 106 agreement offered some protection to occupiers of affordable dwellings (capped to the retail price index 'RPI') but did not offer any protection to third parties and it was not the place of a planning obligation to offer such protection.
- iii. The service charge to non-affordable leaseholders was a civil legal dispute and was not controlled through the planning permission. It was not for the Local Planning Authority to intervene in this matter notwithstanding how the charge may have been derived.
- iv. There is no identifiable planning breach.
- v. Had been contacted on numerous occasions by groups of residents regarding leaseholders and service charges. Noted the new Government had included a Draft Leasehold and Commonhold Reform Bill. Hoped the injustice of leasehold estates would end soon.

Supplementary question:

- i. Agreed the developer had satisfied the terms of the Section 106 Agreement in that they had satisfied the issue of making certain that the affordable housing units did not pay service charges that went up in excess of the RPI.
- ii. However, the obligation had been moved to other parties; one being the leaseholders of Parkside Place, which was a civil issue. Legal issues were on-going with the developer regarding this.
- iii. The Fire Authority was the other party that the liability had been moved to and they had incurred £50,000 of additional costs, which was passed onto council taxpayers under the precept.
- iv. Whilst they accepted that the developer had not breached the terms of the Section 106 Agreement, they had transferred their obligation to other parties.

The Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure responded:

- i. Noted the comments which had been made by the public speaker. The Leader would note the comments. It may be necessary to speak with the Fire Authority to get further information and to see whether the Council is able to respond more comprehensively.

Question 7

Would the council please explain their current policy and approach towards citizens of colour within the Cambridge community. With specific reference to anti-racism tolerance policy and what steps they have in place to address examples of subtle, back-door racism. Please note do not respond with a link to your out-of-date simplistic webpage which I am fully versed on.

Question 8

South Cambridgeshire District Council recently refused to give permission for 18 Gypsy and Traveller homes off Chesterton Fen Road, despite planning official's acknowledgment of the "clear" need for more homes for Gypsy and Traveller families in the area.[1]

The section of Fen Road where Gypsy and Traveller homes are currently located is within a non-contiguous part of South Cambridgeshire. However, the rest of Fen Road—which is the only vehicle access route for Gypsy and Traveller families—is in East Chesterton. De Facto, these families are a part of the East Chesterton community. They are customers at Chesterton high street businesses; their children attend East Chesterton community schools; they are baptised, married and have funerals at East Chesterton churches.

I have lived in the Fen Road area my whole life, and it saddens me that the most basic needs of a community right next to me, who face an enormous amount of prejudice, so often go unmet.

What can Cambridge City Council do to help meet the housing requirements of Gypsy and Traveller families on Chesterton Fen Road, in the face of South Cambridgeshire District Council's policy of inaction?

[1] <https://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/news/cambridge-news/plans-urgently-needed-gypsy-traveller-29897362>

Question 9

1. During the most recent Herbicide-Reduction Working Group in March 2024 (1), it was agreed that working group meetings would continue on a regular basis. Since March we have been trying repeatedly to schedule a follow-up meeting, including Public Questions to the 27 June Environment and Community Scrutiny meeting (2) to no avail. Can the council confirm please whether there are still plans to continue the Working Group and when the next meeting will be held? There are a number of urgent action points from the last meeting which remain stalled, and on which we would like an update please.
2. It was agreed that the City Council would launch an effective communications plan to inform residents about the dangers of personal use of pesticides, how this might conflict with current policy; how residents and businesses should not, for instance, be using pesticides on the pavement or road outside private properties (not only does this compromise the Herbicide Reduction Plan (HRP), it is also, in our understanding, illegal); and to share information about non-synthetic alternatives. The comms plan also included plans for signage/information boards on selected unsprayed verges to explain and celebrate the the HRP, so as to avoid potential negative feedback of the kind that led to the reversal of the County Council's own herbicide-free policy earlier this year. Can the council clarify what is happening with the Comms plan and whether Pesticide-Free Cambridge will, as agreed, be offered the opportunity to collaborate on this? Again, we have been asking about this for months, and are concerned that the majority of Cambridge residents and stakeholders are unaware of the council's shift to herbicide-free methods, and of the rationale for this shift.
3. Further to what was agreed at the March meeting, has the City Council communicated with other stakeholders such as the County Council, the County Highways Green Team, University of Cambridge Colleges, and contractors from energy firms and so on? We are extremely concerned that herbicides and other pesticides such as insecticidal sprays and powders continue to be used by stakeholders across the city. Will the council commit to taking a lead in encouraging a phase-out such practices that are devastating for biodiversity and human health alike.
4. In March, the City Council announced that they had approved the budget for the purchase of new machinery with which to better manage vegetation on roads and pavements in a range of environments (3). Has this equipment been purchased and will it be implemented this autumn around the city? In this regard, it is notable that throughout the summer, large quantities of vegetation, including some big plants, were building up on major roads across the city. This does little

to inspire confidence in the HRP, especially in the absence of a coherent comms plan.

References:

1. <https://www.pesticidefreecambridge.org/post/record-of-our-meetings-with-councillors-schools-and-partners-groups>
2. <https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/documents/b18186/Public%20Questions%2027th-Jun-2024%2018.00%20Environment%20and%20Community%20Scrutiny%20Committee.pdf?T=9>
3. <https://www.pesticidefreecambridge.org/post/press-release-following-cambs-county-council-return-to-use-of-herbicides>

Revised order	From	To	Question
1	Cllr Hauk	Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services	Could the Executive Councillor please explain why the children's play area between Hobson Square and the skatepark is still not open to the public?
2	Cllr Todd-Jones	Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure	What is the status of the Design Code Trial in north Cambridge, and how is this going to be taken forward?
3	Cllr Howard	Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services	Many residents and their pets find traditional fireworks loud and distressing. Displays based on lasers, drones, and LEDs, with or without music, offer an exciting alternative to these shows. Will the Executive Councillor commit to investigating these options so that our events can be enjoyed by a wider range of residents in future years
4	Cllr Gardiner-Smith	Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure	How has the Shared Planning Youth Engagement Service been working with schools in our City? How many schools and children have been engaged?

5	Cllr Divkovic	Executive Councillor For Communities	Can the Executive give an update on work that is being done with young people in the city in line with our upcoming Youth Strategy?
6	Cllr Pounds	Executive Councillor For Housing	In early September, the City Council joined over 100 of England's Council landlords to call on the government to save council homes. Please can the Executive Councillor explain the campaign and the key demands?
7	Cllr Robertson	Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources	When can residents expect the public consultation for the budget to begin and how long will this run for?
8	Cllr Porrer	Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services	Could the Executive Councillor please update council on the progress of remediation works to restore the relevant area of Parker's Piece after the removal of the Observation Wheel.
9	Cllr Lokhmotova	Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services	How frequently do litter enforcement officers patrol Trumpington Meadows?
10	Cllr Dryden	The Leader	Following the general election result on 4th July, can the Leader of the Council give us an update on how the Council will be working with the new Labour government and local partners to further support our work in the City?

11	Cllr Baigent	Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services	Could the Executive Councillor update Council on steps being taken to promote our work on herbicide reduction both to Cambridge residents and more broadly in order for other local authorities to share in what we've learnt?
12	Cllr A Smith	Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources	How is the Cambridge Investment Partnership working to support young people into careers in the construction and housebuilding sector locally?
13	Cllr Lee	Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services	Many in my ward have commented on how shabby and overgrown various paths are around the city, with brambles allowed to sprawl, weeds shoot out of pavements reaching over a metre in height, growing in gutters in the road, and hedges making footpaths single file. Could the Executive Councillor for Open Spaces explain firstly whether there is a plan for dealing with the abundance of weeds growing all over and if so what the plan is?
14	Cllr Griffin	Executive Councillor For Housing	With new council houses being built with exciting new technology such as air source heat pumps, how are we ensuring that new tenants are supported to understand how to best use the new technology when they move into their new homes
15	Cllr Bennett	Executive Councillor For Communities	We go to great lengths as a council to ensure that our night time economy is safe for all, particularly young women. What does it say about our city that visitors to our city are greeted by a statue of a bound and chained woman when they arrive at the main railway station? Do councillors feel it comfortable or appropriate for women to be presented with this image? I refer to the statue Ariadne Unwrapped commissioned by Brookgate from the prankster artist Gavin Turk. Now that the Don has been removed , will the Executive Councillor take steps to improve our cityscape by inviting Brookgate to remove the statue?

16	Cllr Sheil	Executive Councillor for Community Safety, Homelessness and Wellbeing	With students having recently returned to Cambridge, what is being done to keep people safe in our night time economy?
17	Cllr Nestor	Executive Councillor for Climate Action and Environment:	The Council has recently published its annual climate change strategy and carbon management report. Please can the Exec for Climate Action and Environment highlight some of the council's key achievements in this area?
Page 20	Cllr Glasberg	Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure	<p>The City Council is committed to reducing carbon emissions and air pollution, and a proven way to do this is through encouraging people to join a car club and hire a vehicle when needed rather than owning one. It also relieves parking pressure and congestion, which are particular problems in Cambridge</p> <p>A recent report from the shared transport charity Collaborative Mobility UK (CoMoUK) using data gathered from operators shows that membership of car clubs in the UK has more than doubled since before the pandemic, growing 122% between 2019 and 2023, and that people who join car clubs cut their total driven mileage by 153 miles per year. It calculates that each car club vehicle operating in the UK last year replaced 26 privately owned cars, and the key reasons given by people joining were to save money and reduce their environmental impact.</p> <p>Richard Dilks, chief executive of CoMoUK, said that, 'The wider benefits to society are clear: a nationwide expansion of car clubs will help to cut congestion, free up space in towns and cities and encourage more public transport use'.</p> <p>These are all important issues for Cambridge, and the introduction of Residents' Parking Schemes is one of the ways that we are looking to address some of them. This is a time when people are very likely to consider how much they need their car and when they may be likely to</p>

			<p>give it up if it is not often used and there is a good alternative.</p> <p>In Cambridge, the City Council website lists Enterprise as providing the official car club, with pay-as-you-go access to more than 40 low-emission hybrid vehicles around the city, and a discount for city residents. This is a joint venture for the City with the County Council, so my question is:</p> <p>With the introduction of a new Residents' Parking Scheme in North Newnham (Wilberforce) is a time when residents there may consider joining a car club. Will the City Council take this opportunity to work with the County Council to actively promote Enterprise, setting out the benefits for car owners in terms of lower cost, greater convenience and reduced environmental impact?</p>
19 Page 21	Cllr Flaubert	Executive Councillor For Open Spaces and City Services	Could you please provide an update on the Council's plan to revise their market powers, and how it is possible for street traders to use open spaces outside of the current consent zone limited to the city centre?
20	Cllr Bick	Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services	Why is there still no plan for the replacement of Jesus Green public toilets?
21	Cllr Tong	The Leader	Since Israel's invasion of the Gaza Strip began on the 27th October last year, many activists in Cambridge have spoken out about their desire to see Cambridge City Council fly the Palestinian flag from the Guildhall to show solidarity with the innocent civilians suffering there. I would like to add my own voice to this call, as the Update to City Council's Flag Protocol, brought to Civic Affairs Committee on the 7th February 2024, clearly notes "that from time to time additional flags [aside from those listed within the appendix of the report] may be flown in special circumstances, where they are consistent with the Council's vision, objectives and obligations, through

			agreement of the Leader and Chief Executive at the time." Would the Leader of Cambridge City Council agree to exercise this power on the 27th October this year, the first anniversary of the most recent all-out offensive on Palestine?
22	Cllr Clough	Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services / Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure	This summer there have been problems with Tourist coaches waiting for long periods on double yellow lines and resident parking spaces including along Barton Road during the day. This is after dropping their tourists and guides along the backs and whilst waiting to return to the backs to pick them up. Coach drivers have complained that there is nowhere for them to park so they have no alternative. Can a City & County working group be set up, including councillors from the wards affected, to discuss how to address this issue and come up with proposals that would resolve this problem and ensure that all tourist coaches are required to use the Park and Ride sites during their lay over periods, where they would have suitable toilet and refreshment facilities?
23	Cllr Ashton	Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services	Can the Executive Cllr for Open Spaces and City Services give an update on the public toilets which have recently been refurbished?
24	Cllr Blackburn-Horgon	Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services	Could the Executive Cllrs for Open Space and city services explain, why are the outside toilets of the Nightingale Community Pavilion still not open after six months

25	Cllr Swift	Executive Councillor for Community Safety, Homelessness and Wellbeing	In light of several recent shop break-ins, what is being done to support and protect local businesses and shop workers?
26	Cllr McPherson	Executive Councillor for Climate Action and Environment:	Residents are being urged not to put batteries in their bins as there have been 7 fires in refuse lorries this year. How can residents make sure they're recycling their batteries and electrical goods properly?
27	Cllr Martinelli	Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services	Would the executive councillor join me and the Friends of Midsummer Common in supporting a scheme to transform the "walled pound" next to Midsummer House into a community garden

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Councillor Thornburrow proposed and Councillor Davy seconded the following amendment to motion 8a. (Deleted text ~~struckthrough~~, additional text underlined.)

Council notes:

- the dire state of public finances left by the outgoing last Government.
- the last Government's unfulfilled, unfunded promise to build 40 forty new hospitals across the country.
- ~~†The new Labour Government's welcome announcement of to a reset of the building programme for new hospitals within a clearly defined financial package, based on regional and national priorities scheme which could jeopardise progress on the Cambridge Cancer Research Hospital at Addenbrooke's.~~
- The importance of the planned Cambridge Cancer Research Hospital to Greater Cambridge's position as a regional centre of healthcare and the continued development of the vitally important life sciences sector in the region.

~~Council believes the new hospital is essential, recognising the deficit of health facilities across Greater Cambridge, the importance of Greater Cambridge as a regional centre for healthcare and the international importance of our area's life sciences sector.~~

Council resolves:

- ~~to direct the leader to write to the Secretary of State underlining this Council's view that the government should not abandon the commitment to developing this hospital.~~
- ~~To direct the leader to write to the new MP for the area of the proposed Cancer Research Hospital, expressing our support for her recent efforts to secure the future funding for it and to request she work further with MPs across the area it would serve to secure funding for the Hospital and other local health facilities.~~

Council welcomes the progress made to date on the development of the hospital and notes that the project falls under the recently announced review of the New Hospital Programme to be undertaken by the Department of Health and Social Care since it does not yet have full business case approval for the main build phase.

Council expresses its full confidence in the project and notes that the full business case is expected to be submitted in 2025, that the project has been given full planning permission by this council, and that pre-

construction works are planned to begin on site in the coming months, putting the project on track to deliver the hospital by 2029.

Council therefore resolves to:

Ask the Director of Planning to write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care reiterating the council's full support for the Cambridge Cancer Research Hospital and offering to work with Director for Delivery, Performance and Assurance in the DHSC New Hospital Programme sponsor team, who is leading the NHP review, to provide any assistance needed during the review to secure the delivery of this vital facility.

Councillor Bennett proposed and Councillor Tong seconded the following amendment to motion 8b. (Deleted text ~~struck through~~, additional text underlined.)

Council notes the recent announcement by the Labour Government to end universal winter fuel payments and restrict eligibility to only those in receipt of Pension Credit and other benefits.

~~Though many agree that universal Winter Fuel Payments are not necessary for them,~~ Council is deeply concerned that many pensioners on lower and middle incomes who need the payments will now not receive them. Across England and Wales the number of people eligible for winter fuel payments will fall by 10 million (from 11.4 million to only 1.5 million).

In Cambridge the number of pensioners affected by the change in eligibility criteria is 13,468. That means 89.7% of pensioners currently eligible for winter fuel payments will no longer be able to claim the payment from this winter onwards.

Council believes that the Labour Government has set the threshold at which pensioners do not qualify for Winter Fuel Payments far too low. Only those receiving a pension of less than £218.15 a week (or £332.95 a week for couples) are eligible for pension credits. This is significantly lower than the Living Wage.

Council is also concerned by the low take up of Pension Credit with only 63% of those eligible nationwide receiving it – and over 880,000 pensioners not doing so. Council recognises the role we as a local authority have to play to increase awareness of benefits such as Pension Credit to ensure people get access to the support they are entitled to.

Council further notes that the Energy Price Cap is due to rise by 10% in October, which, combined with the removal of Winter Fuel Payments, will push thousands of local pensioners into fuel poverty.

Council notes that

- A claim can still be made for pension credit (or other “gateway benefits for Winter Fuel Payment) before 21 December 2024 and backdated for 3 months
- In addition to the 880,000 pensioners who are eligible for pension credit and have not made a claim, there is an unknown number of pensioners who have not claimed the attendance allowance they

are entitled to have. This can make a pensioner whose income is slightly above the normal pension credit threshold able to make a claim

- So there is still time for low income pensioners to secure the payment

Council resolves to:

- Request the Leader write to both MPs covering Cambridge outlining our position in favour of halting the changes to the Winter Fuel Payment eligibility.
- Request all group leaders within the council sign a joint letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for the cutback in Winter Fuel Payment to be suspended and reviewed, and also to consider what support can be given to help people reduce their energy bills and consumption.
- Urgently commence a significant awareness campaign to maximise uptake of pension credits, including using the Low-Income Families Tracker (LIFT) to identify those who are eligible.

Agenda Item 6

Councillor Wade proposed and Councillor Nestor seconded the following amendment to motion 8b. (Deleted text ~~struck through~~, additional text underlined.)

The Council is deeply concerned by the financial failures of the last Conservative government which has resulted in a £22bn black hole in our nation's finances.

Council notes the recent announcement by the Labour Government to end universal winter fuel payments and restrict eligibility to only those in receipt of Pension Credit and other benefits. In addition, the council acknowledges that the decision to award the winter fuel payment to pensioners receiving pension credit was a difficult decision that nobody wanted to make.

Though many agree that universal Winter Fuel Payments are not necessary for them, Council is deeply concerned that many pensioners on lower and middle incomes who need the payments will now not receive them. Across England and Wales the number of people eligible for winter fuel payments will fall by 10 million (from 11.4 million to only 1.5 million).

In Cambridge the number of pensioners affected by the change in eligibility criteria is 13,468. That means 89.7% of pensioners currently eligible for winter fuel payments will no longer be able to claim the payment from this winter onwards.

The council welcomes the government's commitment to protect the most vulnerable in our society by delivering the £150 Warm Home Discount for low-income households from October, extending the Household Support Fund with £421 million, to ensure local authorities can support vulnerable people and families, ensuring around 1.3 million households in England and Wales will continue to receive up to £300 in Winter Fuel Payments.

~~Council believes that the Labour Government has set the threshold at which pensioners do not qualify for Winter Fuel Payments far too low. Only those receiving a pension of less than £218.15 a week (or £332.95 a week for couples) are eligible for pension credits. This is significantly lower than the Living Wage.~~

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~~Pension Credit to ensure people get access to the support they are entitled to.~~

~~Council further notes that the Energy Price Cap is due to rise by 10% in October, which, combined with the removal of Winter Fuel Payments, will push thousands of local pensioners into fuel poverty.~~

Council resolves to:

- ~~• Request the Leader write to both MPs covering Cambridge outlining our position in favour of halting the changes to the Winter Fuel Payment eligibility.~~
- ~~• Request all group leaders within the council sign a joint letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for the cutback in Winter Fuel Payment to be suspended and reviewed, and also to consider what support can be given to help people reduce their energy bills and consumption.~~
- ~~• Urgently commence a significant awareness campaign to maximise uptake of pension credits, including using the Low-Income Families Tracker (LIFT) to identify those who are eligible.~~
- Continue the Council's partnership work with Citizen's Advice Bureau to send out personal letters to local pensioner households, those claiming housing benefit and/or Council Tax reductions to maximise uptake of pension credits.
- Highlight the national DWP campaign to promote Pension Credit over the next few months, targeting 120,000 of the estimated 850,000 pensioners not claiming, and call on the government to increase the number of people targeted to the full 850,000.
- Offer all tenants in sheltered accommodation the opportunity to meet with the Independent Living Service to conduct an income maximisation check, particularly for tenants who don't currently access Council support services.
- Share all the relevant information with other stakeholders in the city including landlords and GP surgeries.
- Continue developing support for residents over the winter period, including through the provision of warm spaces in the winter and emergency food support.

Motion 8c - Councillor Holloway has proposed the following alteration to motion.

Council Procedure Rule 26 – Alteration of motion – deleted text ~~struck through~~, additional text underlined.

Lithium-ion batteries are increasingly common in many household products, including e-bikes and e-scooters, but they can pose a significant fire risk. The recent increase in fires caused by lithium-ion batteries demands that proactive steps are taken to address these risks and ensure the safety of our community.

This Council notes:

1. Lithium-ion batteries are increasingly prevalent in a range of household products, including e-bikes, e-scooters, smartphones and laptops.
2. The number of fires in the UK caused by lithium-ion batteries in e-scooters and e-bikes has increased by four times since 2020.
3. In July 2023, three people tragically lost their lives in a fire at Sackville Close, which was likely caused by a faulty e-bike battery.
4. Battery fires in waste disposal are at record levels, with over 1,200 fires at UK waste sites and bin lorries in 2023, an increase of 71% from 2022.
5. As of the beginning of August 2024, there had been seven bin lorry fires in Greater Cambridge in 2024, likely caused by batteries or electrical products.
6. In September 2023, Cambridge City Council wrote to the government requesting an increased focus on the dangers of lithium-ion batteries in e-bikes and e-scooters, advocating for improved legislation, safety guidelines, and a public awareness campaign.
7. Cambridge City Council continues to work with the Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service to raise awareness of the risk of, and prevent, battery fires.

This Council issues the following advice to residents in relation to battery safety:

- Always use manufacturer approved chargers and follow the manufacturer's instructions for charging, storage and maintenance
- Charge batteries while awake and at home
- Do not overcharge batteries
- Store e-bikes and e-scooters in a safe, cool place with a closed door and a smoke alarm if possible
- Buy e-bikes and e-scooters from reputable dealers, and check they meet British or European standards. Remember that private e-scooters are currently illegal to ride on public roads and footpaths.
- Check batteries for signs of damage and replace if damaged
- Do not dispose of batteries in household waste or normal recycling
- Do not attempt to extinguish a fire caused by a lithium-ion battery but get out, stay out, and phone 999.

This Council resolves:

1. To write to Electrical Safety First and Lord DRon Foster to express its support for The Safety of Electric-Powered Micromobility Vehicles and Lithium Batteries Bill, introduced to the House of Lords by Lord DRon Foster. This Bill is promoted by Electrical Safety First, and supported by, among others, the National Fire Chiefs Council, the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, and the Royal Society for Public Health.
2. To work through the Community Safety Partnership to gain a deeper understanding of data relating to fire risks from lithium-ion batteries in Cambridge, and to use this understanding to work together to mitigate risks.
3. To develop comprehensive safety guidance for Cambridge City Council staff on battery safety, including guidance on the safe use, storage, and disposal of lithium-ion batteries.
4. To work with the Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service to run an awareness campaign focused on the safe disposal of batteries, particularly lithium-ion batteries.

5. To continue to disseminate to residents information on safe practice relating to lithium-ion batteries through *Cambridge Matters*, *Open Door*, and the Council's website and social media channels.
6. To work with Council tenants to, wherever possible, provide them with safe spaces for charging e-bikes and e-scooters.

Notes

Electrical Safety First's Battery Safety Campaign:

<https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/battery-breakdown/battery-safety-campaign>

Full list of supporters of Electrical Safety First's campaign as of May 2024:

<https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/media/pjxh54wy/supporters-may-2024.pdf>

House of Lords Debate 5 September 2024 on Lithium-Ion Battery Safety: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2024-09-06/debates/738EAE4C-F67B-4AF5-AA7A-94759672C9D0/details>

Cambridge City Council's Work on Battery Safety:

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/news/2023/09/14/council-appeals-to-government-to-raise-awareness-around-risks-of-e-bike-battery-fires>

Research on Battery Fires in Waste Sites:

<https://www.materialfocus.org.uk/press-releases/over-1200-battery-fires-in-bin-lorries-and-waste-sites-across-the-uk-in-last-year/>

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Councillor Clough proposed and Councillor Tong seconded the following amendment to motion 8c. (additional text underlined.)

Lithium-ion batteries are increasingly common in many household products, including e-bikes and e-scooters, but they can pose a significant fire risk. The recent increase in fires caused by lithium-ion batteries demands that proactive steps are taken to address these risks and ensure the safety of our community.

This Council notes:

1. Lithium-ion batteries are increasingly prevalent in a range of household products, including e-bikes, e-scooters, smartphones and laptops.
2. The number of fires in the UK caused by lithium-ion batteries in e-scooters and e-bikes has increased by four times since 2020.
3. In July 2023, three people tragically lost their lives in a fire at Sackville Close, which was likely caused by a faulty e-bike battery.
4. Battery fires in waste disposal are at record levels, with over 1,200 fires at UK waste sites and bin lorries in 2023, an increase of 71% from 2022.
5. As of the beginning of August 2024, there had been seven bin lorry fires in Greater Cambridge in 2024, likely caused by batteries or electrical products.
6. In September 2023, Cambridge City Council [wrote to the government](#) requesting an increased focus on the dangers of lithium-ion batteries in e-bikes and e-scooters, advocating for improved legislation, safety guidelines, and a public awareness campaign.
7. Cambridge City Council continues to work with the Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service to raise awareness of the risk of, and prevent, battery fires.

This Council issues the following advice to residents in relation to battery safety:

- Always use manufacturer approved chargers and follow the manufacturer's instructions for charging, storage and maintenance
- Charge batteries while awake and at home
- Do not overcharge batteries
- Store e-bikes and e-scooters in a safe, cool place with a closed door and a smoke alarm if possible
- Buy e-bikes and e-scooters from reputable dealers, and check they meet British or European standards
- Check batteries for signs of damage and replace if damaged
- Do not dispose of batteries in household waste or normal recycling
- Do not attempt to extinguish a fire caused by a lithium-ion battery but get out, stay out, and phone 999.

This Council resolves:

1. To write to Electrical Safety First and Lord Ron Foster to express its support for [The Safety of Electric-Powered Micromobility Vehicles and Lithium Batteries Bill](#), introduced to the House of Lords by Lord Ron Foster. This Bill is promoted by Electrical Safety First, and supported by, among others, the National Fire Chiefs Council, the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, and the Royal Society for Public Health.
2. To work through the Community Safety Partnership to gain a deeper understanding of data relating to fire risks from lithium-ion batteries in Cambridge, and to use this understanding to work together to mitigate risks.
3. To develop comprehensive safety guidance for Cambridge City Council staff on battery safety, including guidance on the safe use, storage, and disposal of lithium-ion batteries.
4. To work with the Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service to run an awareness campaign focused on the safe disposal of batteries, particularly lithium-ion batteries.
5. To continue to disseminate to residents information on safe practice relating to lithium-ion batteries through *Cambridge*

Matters, Open Door, and the Council's website and social media channels.

6. To work with Council tenants to, wherever possible, provide them with safe spaces for charging e-bikes and e-scooters considering particularly the needs of disabled tenants who are more likely to be dependent on battery powered mobility equipment.

7. To consult with planning service and building control officers to draw up guidance on best practice for developers and consider appropriate amendments to the draft local plan as well as model conditions and informatives.

8. To ensure that any guidance reflects the need to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that residents who require to use battery powered mobility equipment may continue to move freely about the city. as advocated by the charity Wheels 4 Wellbeing

9. To reflect that the high cost of commercial EV charging points combined with cost of living pressures encourages unsafe charging practices and consider a pilot for products such as Kerbocharge which permit safe charging on the user's own supply

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Council 10 October 2024 Written Questions and Answers

1. Councillor Hossain

To the Leader:

Protecting Our Elderly: Addressing Fuel Allowance Cuts and Housing Inequality in Kings Hedges.

As you are the leader of the council, I want to address the recent cuts to the fuel allowance that will significantly impact our elderly residents in Kings Hedges. Many of these residents live in social housing that has failed to meet CPC standard C, forcing them to burn more fuel to heat their homes.

'The Labour government' is dramatically reducing the numbers that can claim the winter fuel allowance' at the same time as fuel prices are going up. Many of those who are still eligible to claim winter fuel allowance do not have access to the internet and are not capable of applying online to receive the benefit. Many are vulnerable who are 'just managing' and have worked hard all their lives but are not now eligible.

What specific actions will you take to support these vulnerable members of our community?

How will you ensure that they are informed about the resources available to them during this challenging time?

I am raising this issue on behalf of my constituents to ensure their voices are heard and their needs are met.

Response from the Executive Councillor for Communities.

The Council is using its benefits data to identify households who could be entitled to Pension Credit to make an application by 21 December 2024 as entitlement to Pension Credit means that the household would continue to receive the Winter Fuel Allowance payments. We have partnered with Cambridge CAB, who will be offering assistance in making these applications for Pension Credit.

We have also written to all of our registered housing providers, asking that they use their local knowledge to contact their pensioner households, to encourage as many people as possible to see if they can claim Pension Credit.

The benefits calculator on our webpages [Benefit calculator \(entitledto.co.uk\)](http://Benefitcalculator.entitledto.co.uk) not only calculates entitlement to housing benefit and Council Tax Reduction but also assesses entitlement to Pension Credit.

We will also be offering everyone within our sheltered housing schemes (around 500 properties) assistance with completing the benefits calculator and applying for any benefits they may have identified. We will do the same with those we support via our visiting support service (tenure neutral service providing housing related support to those 65+ in the city).

We can also support the work being done by the benefits team, by using data held, to promote grant funding for private households to improve the energy efficiency of the property for the long term.

For residents under an income of £36,000, they could potentially access funding for insulation and clean heat.

Pension Credit is a qualifying benefit for the scheme, but the income threshold means those that are not eligible for Pension Credit, and therefore, the winter fuel payment, they can still benefit from energy efficiency support through other Government funding available through Action on Energy Cambridgeshire.

Our Winter Open Door issue (due out mid-Nov) will include articles on fuel poverty and financial aid, including using energy efficiently at home, energy grants and discounts, benefits support and advice, 1-2-1 budgeting advice and debt advice.

2. Councillor Hossain

To the Leader:

Improving Safety with Lighting at Nuns Way Recreation Ground

I want to raise urgent safety concerns regarding Nuns Way Recreation Ground. Recently, there was a fire at King's Hedges Recreation Ground, Wooden Castle, which has left residents feeling scared to walk through

parks in the area. Anti-social behaviour is rising, and residents are increasingly uneasy.

This footpath is vital for those travelling to the Science Park, Cambridge Business Park, CRC College, and the mosque. Previously, I mentioned the need for lighting in this area, but no action has been taken yet, despite raising it with our chief executive.

My question: Could the leader of the council provide an update on plans for installing street or footpath lighting along this route to ensure the safety of pedestrians, especially women and children, during darker hours?

Response to follow.

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