

Public Questions: Planning and Transport Committee, 14 January.

Question No 1 -

In last month's devolution white paper, the government committed to the creation of unitary authorities in areas currently served by two tiers of local government.

With this in mind, what steps have been agreed to facilitate increased cooperation and coordination with East Cambridgeshire District Council, which decided in October to commence preparation of a new local plan?

Question No 2 –

Can a property within a conservation area replace wooden windows with UPVC windows?

The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning webpage with information about windows in conservation areas says

Doors and windows

These are important features which add to the attractiveness of buildings and streetscapes. Changes to the size or location of window and door openings need planning permission.

*Replacement materials used in exterior work should be **like** those already in use.*
(My emphasis).

Is a UPVc a material 'like' wood?

I link to the webpage from which I took the quote above here

<https://www.greatercambridgeplanning.org/design-heritage-and-environment/historic-environment/conservation-areas/what-needs-permission-in-a-conservation-area/#a2>

Question No 3 –

The proposals from East West Rail confirm that they will be carrying out work at the Cambridge-Newmarket chord by the Beehive Centre and Cambridge Retail Park. Coldham's Road which has the Cambridge Museum of Computing and Plurabelle's Bookstore are also on the other side of the railway line.

Given RailPen's acquisition of both the Beehive Centre & Cambridge Retail Park, and their substantial plans for the former (and in time, most probably the latter), please could Cambridge City Council amend its draft responses to the consultation and urge East West Rail to open negotiations with RailPEN for contributions towards exploring the possibility of a suburban or light rail stop built around Coldham's Lane Bridge. I've described how this could happen in principle in a blogpost at <https://cambridgetownowl.com/2024/12/31/cambridge-city-council-says-east-west-rail-should-build-an-eastern-entrance-to-cambridge-railway-station/>

At public consultations, the representatives for RailPen have confirmed that Network Rail has not approached them regarding rail-based transport. Please could the council use its offices to ensure that Network Rail and its successors, Great British Rail commence exploratory talks to identify what might be possible regarding a rail/light rail link for The Beehive Centre, and thus substantially reducing any future motor traffic to the redeveloped site.

Question 4 –

I refer to the Annual Monitoring Report for Greater Cambridge 1 April 2023 to 31 Mar 2024 which is an impressive document and I am grateful to the officers who have put so much time into its preparation.

My main question is about the number of housing units completed in the annual monitoring period (AMP) which is the nine months since the end of the monitoring report and the forecast completion in the balance of this current monitoring year.

Para 3.6 says: in the AMP 249 dwellings were completed of which 20 were affordable houses (Para 3.19). The affordable housing completion number is also shown in the tables in the appendices on p.192 and p.197.

I would like to ask how many houses at social rent were completed in Cambridge in the AMP. What are equivalent figures for total completions, affordable housing completions and social rent completions in the nine months to the end of December 2024?

And what are the equivalent three figures for the balance of the current AMP (January - March 2024)?