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Council

Cnl/1

Thursday, 10 October 2024

COUNCIL

10 October 2024

6.00 - 11.00 pm

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

Also present (virtually) Councillors: Baigent, Martinelli and Sheil

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

24/77/CNL Minutes

The minutes of 18 June 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

24/78/CNL To Note the Returning Officer's Report that the following had been elected to the Office of Councillor

It was noted the following had been elected to the Office of Councillor: Romsey – Beth Gardiner-Smith.

24/79/CNL Mayor's announcements

Councillors Baigent, Martinelli and Sheil would participate in the meeting online.

Councillors Lee, Lokhmotova, Moore and Sheil sent apologies as they would be late.

The Mayor made a statement about the situation in the Middle East.

Recent events the Mayor has attended:

- i. August attended the Laying the Ditchburn Stone, a cultural exchange event in association with the Mill Road Traders Assoc in Italy.
- ii. 14 August attended the Mayor's day out in Great Yarmouth which was a great experience and was enjoyed by everyone.

- iii. Had recently attended the Chevin Service and Harvest Festival.

The Mayor then gave a list of upcoming events.

- i. On 9th November there would be the Commemoration of Fallen Indian Soldiers in WW1 and WW2 event. This invite was extended to all Councillors, to attend please contact the Civic team.
- ii. Advised he would be leading a 2-minute silence outside the Guildhall to commemorate Armistice Day.
- iii. There would also be a wreath laying service taking place on Remembrance Sunday, 10th November, at the war memorial on Hills Road. The City Events Team would be organising a gathering there to take place simultaneously with a service at Great St Mary's Church.

Resolution of Thanks

On behalf of the City Council, the Mayor presented Councillor Gawthrope Wood with a framed copy of the Resolution of Thanks for her service as Mayor during the 2023/24.

24/80/CNL Declarations of Interest

Councillor Moore joined the meeting before this item was considered.

Name	Item	Interest
Councillor Baigent, Davey, Glassberg, A. Smith, Tong	All	Personal: Member of Cambridge Cycling Campaign.
Councillor Ashton, Bird, Gawthrope Wood, Pounds, McPherson, Swift	24/84/CNL	Personal: Recipient of state pension.
Councillor Blackburn- Horgan	24/87/CNL	Personal: Employed by the NHS.
Councillor Holloway	24/87/CNL	Personal: Governor of Cambridge University Hospitals.
Councillor Hossain	24/87/CNL	Personal: Ambassador of "Give

		Us a Lift" charity, which campaigns to support the Cambridge Cancer Research Hospital.
Councillor Martinelli	24/87/CNL	Personal and prejudicial: Employed by University of Cambridge and Addenbrooke's Hospital. Withdrew from discussion and meeting (online), and did not vote on this item.
Mayor, Cllr Thittala	24/87/CNL	Personal: Heavily involved in Mayor's charity "Give Us a Lift", which campaigns to support the Cambridge Cancer Research Hospital.
Councillor Ashton, Bick, Bird, Clough, Griffin, Pounds, McPherson, S. Smith, Swift, Todd-Jones	24/88/CNL	Personal: Recipient of winter fuel allowance.
Councillor Baigent and Dryden	24/88/CNL	Personal: Used to receive winter fuel allowance.

24/81/CNL Public questions time

Councillor Sheil joined the meeting before this item was considered.

Members of the public asked a number of questions, as set out below.

The Mayor used his discretion to alter the order of the questions being asked. However, for ease of the reader, these minutes would follow the order of the published agenda.

Question 1

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 hatemongering 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/city-council-fly-palestine-flag-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](#)

Facebook [Cambridge Stop The War Coalition](#)

Instagram [cambridgestopthewar](#)

Twitter [@CamStopTheWar](#)

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

YouTube [Cambridge StoptheWar - YouTube](#)

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

The Leader responded:

- i. The City Council had a statutory duty to promote community cohesion and the safety and wellbeing of all residents.
- ii. The Council did not fly the Israeli flag, as advised by the previous government, and for this same reason did not intend to fly the Palestinian flag.
- iii. The Council had opted for other means of support that were unambiguous and not open to misinterpretation.
- iv. To demonstrate solidarity with the people of Gaza, the Council passed a motion on 23 May 2024. This was the fourth statement about the conflict in the Middle East made by the Council or by the Mayor and leaders of political groups since October 7 2023.
- v. The Council also had a webpage to encourage donations to organisations that provide medical aid and humanitarian relief for people in Gaza: [Support for Gaza - Cambridge City Council](#)

- vi. The Council would continue to condemn all forms of Islamophobia and Antisemitism and work to champion Cambridge a City of Sanctuary and a city free from hate.

The speaker made the following supplementary points:

- i. Actions by Central Government and the City Council meant the speaker felt like she had blood on her hands.
- ii. Took issue with the City Council flying the Ukrainian flag but not Palestinian flag.
- iii. The Council had a building and offices called Mandela House. Mandela was once called a terrorist and now we champion him as the architect who got rid of apartheid in South Africa.
- iv. Please reconsider the decision not to fly the flag of Palestine to show that the Council was in solidarity with the people around the world (specifically in Palestine) that were not able to get aid because they were oppressed.

The Leader responded with the following:

- i. Noted comments by the speaker.
- ii. Referenced a number of historic and current motions such as calling Central Government to stop selling arms to Israel.
- iii. Would review the policy on when flags (specifically the Palestinian flag) could be flown.
- iv. Cambridge City Council had a flag flying protocol. This was agreed at the Civic Affairs Committee in February 2024. It includes established national and international events, such as the Kings Birthday, Pride month and United Nations day.
- v. The only other national flag the City Council had flown other than the union jack was the Ukrainian flag to celebrate Ukrainian Independence Day, most recently over the weekend of the 24/25th August.
- vi. Flying the Ukrainian flag did not pose a risk to community cohesion. It had a clear, unambiguous and non-sectarian significance.

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?

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

- i. Acknowledged extending East West Rail from Milton Kings to Cambridge would cause disruption, but believed the longer term gains for residents, businesses and local tourism would be significant, and the environmental impact would be temporary.

- ii. Trains were now running between Oxford and Bicester with significant shifts from road to rail while the countryside around the route which had been restored.
- iii. Compare rail work with the upgrade to the A241 between Caxton Gibbet and the black roundabout which took considerably more land than the adjacent railway and would move fewer people or loads.
- iv. Responsibility for highways and transport disruption caused during construction lay with the Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority plus Cambridge County Council; and was not something the City Council had control over.
- v. Mitigation for the disruption of railway services was the responsibility of Network rail, it was up to Highways at the County Council and Network Rail to plan for any closure of Long Road bridge relating to work on the railways. City and Ward Councillors were notified in advance of works and diversions so they could comment and help to notify residents of the work being done to create a more integrated transport system for the city.
- vi. As for representations, was a City Councillor for infrastructure, who had the opportunity to discuss transport and infrastructure in many forums and would raise issues there. Specifically:
 - a. Emphasise the need for a joined up transport system and our Ambitions to make Cambridge the best transport city in Europe.
 - b. Some residents were strongly opposed to the east-west rail development.

The speaker made the following supplementary points:

- i. Environmental impacts were not temporary they're permanent so East West rail says 80% of the residents in Cambridge and Cambourne would quintuple and 60% of the residents in Tempsford which was a new town being built in a flood plain close to where flooding occurred for most of the last fortnight.
- ii. 80% in Cambourne would come into Cambridge to work by car this would mean modal shift away from rail and onto road.
- iii. The station, which was one of the ten busiest routes in the whole of Network Rail (Cambridge to Kings Cross) was going to be closed for a minimum of four months and was afraid it's going to come back on this city.

- iv. Council residents cannot work out what the Mayor and local authorities did. This was of no concern to them. They were concerned Long Road would be closed for thirteen weeks and wondered how people would get into Cambridge and Addenbrookes Hospital.

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

- i. Cambridge station was incredibly important to the city.
- ii. Would liaise with relevant agencies when more details were known such as expected delays.

Question 3

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.

The Executive Councillor for Community Safety, Homelessness and Wellbeing responded:

- i. The East Barnwell Health Centre was owned and maintained by the local NHS.
- ii. As referred to in your question, primary care services were going to be provided by Maling Health. That specific procurement exercise was

undertaken by the NHS so was not something the Executive Councillor could comment on.

- iii. Recognised the transition was something that may be difficult for many patients, so the City Council was trying to get various parties to liaise.
- iv. Council officers also worked closely with all the local Primary Care networks and the integrated care system on health and well-being services including budgets resources and plans for developing preventative health initiatives across the city.

The speaker made the following supplementary points:

- i. How were you going to help ensure the quality standards of the Staffing?
- ii. Was concerned Maling would employ Associates who were not qualified doctors.

The Executive Councillor for Community Safety, Homelessness and Wellbeing responded with the following:

- i. Appreciated that people were concerned and would pass these onto primary care providers.
- ii. Re-iterated the City Council was not directly involved.

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?

The Mayor understood the question had been deferred and a return response would be provided to the question.

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?"

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

- i. Agreed with the commitments the speaker asked for. These issues were already considered carefully by both officers and Members of the Planning Committee in sometimes delicate balancing that was required when assessing some of the more complex schemes that came to committee.
- ii. Was confident the shared planning service and Councillors on Planning Committee took their obligations to residents and the environment seriously.
- iii. Recognised the significant public interest in planning matters and would continue to try and find ways of better explaining how and why decisions were made. Was also exploring ways to improve the way Planning Committee worked to make the complex planning process more understandable to residents.
- iv. The objectives outlined by the speaker were already central to council processes.

The speaker made the following supplementary points:

- i. The purpose of planning, as opposed to conditions, was to ensure that a development was viable and had no unacceptable impacts which later conditions may be unable to resolve.
- ii. Conditions accepted that a viable outline design existed that would not create unacceptable impact. The conditions ensure that a detailed design was informed by any further studies and then adhered to during construction and operation.
- iii. So conditions dealt with how a development would be achieved, planning dealt with if a development could be achieved. It seemed the council was using planning conditions to enable planning applications to go ahead when there were still serious issues outstanding that it may not be possible to resolve.
- iv. Would the council ensure that in future developers would be required to submit detailed evidence to demonstrate that the design could be achieved within the site constraints without unacceptable impacts on our local environment in advance of planning approval?

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

- i. The Planning Committee would always like to minimise the number of conditions and also to be assured as much as possible about what could be achieved.
- ii. Would like details upfront from applicants and would always try to work towards that, but there were situations where conditions were unavoidable.

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 taxpayers 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 had 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 had 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 was 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 was able to respond more comprehensively.*

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

- i. The payment of service charges for individual properties was a matter outside of the remit of the planning function of the local planning authority because it did not relate to a planning policy objective such as affordable housing and housing affordability as defined in the Local Plan.
- ii. It was also inappropriate for the Councillor to comment on the historical property transactions made by the Fire Authority and any subsequent liabilities on them or council taxpayers.
- iii. Earlier responses had made clear that there was no breach of the s106 or planning permissions for this site. It would not be appropriate to consider the Applicant's approach to this development in any future planning applications made by them. To give significant weight to this issue as a matter of course would extend beyond the remit of the material planning considerations appropriate to apply to an application of an individual or company where permission itself runs with the land not the applicant. This point had been debated nationally by government in the past.

The speaker made the following supplementary points:

- i. Expressed concern the section 106 agreement (and how it was entered into) was costing council taxpayers money not benefiting them ie the fire authorities costs were transferred to council taxpayers, which was an obligation of the developer under the section 106 agreement.
- ii. Suggested the section 106 agreement was not properly adhered to. A clause in the s106 agreement indicated there had to be an affordable housing scheme document approved by the council before the development could commence. That was not done.

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

- i. This matter had been ongoing for several years.
- ii. Requested the speaker sent in details if there's more information they would like to bring to the attention of Officers and the Executive Councillor.

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.

The Executive Councillor for Communities responded:

- i. Cambridge City Council's [Comprehensive Equalities and Diversity Policy \[PDF, 0.2MB\]](#) outlined our commitment as an employer, as a service provider, and as a community leader to challenge discrimination and promote equality of opportunity in all aspects of our work.
- ii. The Black Lives Matter Council Motion (July 2020) further set out the Council's commitment to tackling structural inequality and discrimination. In this, the Council expressed its solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and welcomed its duty as a public leader to actively tackle racism locally.
- iii. October was Black History Month, which the Council annually supported, which provided opportunity to learn about and celebrate each other's cultures and promote community cohesion. Support from the council included funding partners who run some of the events, providing grants to support the work being done, or by colleagues providing logistical support to the programme.
- iv. In relation to support that Cambridge City Council provides to citizens to directly tackle racism, it:
 - a. Ran a Racial Harassment Service to offer advice and help to anyone living in or visiting Cambridge suffering racial harassment. The Racial Harassment Service would find out what support the person needs and assesses the danger of further incidents. The Racial Harassment Service would also try to contact any witnesses and alleged perpetrators. It did this only with the consent of the victim. If consent was given, it would want to obtain statements from all parties concerned. Findings of any inquiry were considered by the Racial Harassment Service who decide on the best way for the council to respond to what had happened.

- b. Provided community grants to voluntary and community sector organisations tackling economic and social exclusion, including those supporting different ethnic communities. For instance, the council contributes funding to the Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum to support it.

The speaker made the following supplementary points:

- i. Queried what percentage of people of colour were working within the council currently and had that percentage increased since the 2020 motion was passed?
- ii. Asked for written evidence of what steps had been taken to address this imbalance (if there was an imbalance) and future plans.

The Executive Councillor for Communities undertook to provide further information to the supplementary public questions.

Post meeting note:

Cambridge City Council collect and monitor data relating to staffing and protected characteristics. Our [Equality in Employment Workforce Report](#) was published annually (2023/24 pending) and provides a profile of the Council's workforce as at 31st March each year.

Since 2020 there has been a steady increase in the representation of staff who declare themselves as from an ethnic minority, as detailed in the table below:

Date	Percentage of Workforce	Target Percentage
At 31 st March 2020	7.54%	9.5%
At 31 st March 2021	7.71%	9.5%
At 31 st March 2022	8.32%	9.5%
At 31 st March 2023	9.09%	9.5%
At 31 st March 2024	10.3%	10%

One of our actions for 2024/25 was to increase our target of ethnic minority staff representation in our workforce to 20% to align more with the most recent [census data](#) (23.3% in Cambridge).

The Single Equality Scheme Strategy Report ([published in 2021](#)) outlines the approach to help increase representation:

- “Making employment opportunities more visible within BAME communities by showcasing the organisation and our roles during key equality and diversity events.
- Continuing to advertise our roles through networks, groups, and contacts with far reaching and diverse audiences (including local groups supporting BAME communities).
- Advertising our commitment to increasing representation of BAME people in our workforce within our recruitment information.
- Making our roles appear more accessible by advertising training opportunities relating to particular roles and/ or services.
- Encourage equality of opportunity for all by making the recruitment application process more accessible and less prescriptive.”

To develop this further, this year we have monitored our ethnicity pay gap for the first time.

Our mean pay gap shows that our employees who declare they were from an ethnic minority were paid 0.65% less than those who declare they were not from an ethnic minority.

Our median pay gap was in favour of those who declare they were from an ethnic minority group with employees not from an ethnic minority being paid 4.96% less than the median employee who declares they were from an ethnic minority group.

Additionally, recent highlights and achievements include:

- Developed a new People and Culture strategy 2024 – 2027 with a heavy focus on equality and inclusion.
- Working with organisations who support individuals who were seeking/ looking to remain in work (such as REED, DWP).
- Continued activity and support of key events during the calendar, for example Gypsy, Roma & Traveller History Month, Armed Forces Day,

Srebrenica Memorial Day, Black History Month, Anti-Slavery Day, Inter-Faith Week, Diwali, Hannukah, Lunar New Year, Nirvana Day, Ramadan, Holi and Easter. We have also continuous work on our list of dates that we mark in support of our Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging commitments, inviting colleagues to contribute and feedback on events and celebrations that should be marked.

- We have launched our new Values and Behaviours: Accountable, Collaborative, Courageous, Compassionate.
- We were awarded Bronze at the Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion (ENEI) annual Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE) awards.
- Continued accreditation with the Real Living Wage Foundation.
- Partnered with Diversity Jobs Group to engage and attract job seekers to our roles.
- We have remodelled our recruitment process and designed and built a new e-recruitment system that was user friendly for both candidates and recruiting managers, allowing greater flexibility throughout the process and a desirable part of our whole branding and offer.
- We have reviewed our performance review process and introduced a brand-new appraisal process called 'My Conversations' which was a continuous conversational based approach. This incorporates one to one's and appraisals and was more inclusive with a strong focus on wellbeing.
- We had devised 'Flexible Bank Holiday' guidance which provides individuals with greater flexibility and choice (where service requirements allow) when it comes to Bank Holidays and will be launching this in November.
- Undertaken an all-Staff survey, the first for several years at the Council (currently live). This includes questions around belonging and inclusivity and the results of this would be analysed to inform the People and Culture action plan.

Future plans include:

- Exploring the requirements of [Unison's Anti-Racism Charter](#) and what involvement may look like for us as an organisation.
- Encourage candidates (and staff) to provide equality data for monitoring purposes. Update our guidance to accompany the request and

implement a regular update of information by employees on our system(s).

- Improve the exit data that we receive. Design and implement stay interviews and undertake a deep dive into turnover and identify any trends and subsequent actions.
- Review, enhance and relaunch our employee benefits package.
- Plan actions to ensure that the Equality and Diversity aspects of the People & Culture Strategy were prioritised and we create a culture that was truly inclusive.
- Review our reporting categories to make them more relevant and meaningful.

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>

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

- i. Agreed more space was needed for homes for Gypsy and Traveller communities and we want to provide them. It was South Cambs District Council that rejected the application of Chesterton Fen Road and so could only refer the speaker to the application decision notice and delegated report on the planning portal for their explanation of the refusal.
- ii. Residents would use the services and facilities that were convenient and appropriate to them and for those on Fen Road. This was likely to be those provided within Cambridge given the proximity of Chesterton Fen Road to East Chesterton and providing the right facilities was a responsibility for the whole Community.
- iii. The Council had committed to finding a permanent stopping site for Gypsy and Traveller communities. Consultants had been commissioned to prepare and accommodation needs assessment of Gypsies, Travellers and traveling show people for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. It would identify how many additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches and traveling show people plots were needed by 2041 within the greater Cambridge to meet needs. This assessment was due to be published shortly.
- iv. The accommodation needs assessment would feed into the new Greater Cambridge Local Plan. The local plan would set out the pitch and plot requirements for the area and show how the needs would be met. It was not a fast process but it should provide a long-term solution that would meet people's needs.

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 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. [2022-23: PFC / Local Authority meetings & correspondence](#)
2. [\(Public Pack\)Public Questions Agenda Supplement for Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee, 27/06/2024 18:00](#)
3. [Press Release following Cambridgeshire County Council's return to use of herbicides](#)

This question was not asked in the meeting. A written response would be sent afterwards.

24/82/CNL To consider the recommendations of the Executive for adoption**24/83/CNL Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2024/25 (Executive Councillor for Housing)**

Councillor Lee joined the meeting before this item was considered.

Resolved (by 24 votes to 0 with 14 abstentions) to:

- i. Approve proposals for changes in existing housing capital budgets, as introduced in Section 9 and detailed in Appendix F of the document, with the resulting position summarised in Appendix H.
- ii. Approve proposals for new housing capital budgets, as introduced in Sections 6 and 7 and detailed in Appendix E of the document, with the resulting position summarised in Appendix H.
- iii. Approve the revised funding mix for the delivery of the Housing Capital Programme, recognising the latest assumptions for the use of Grant, Right to Buy Receipts, HRA Resources, Major Repairs Allowance and HRA borrowing, as summarised in Appendix H.

24/84/CNL General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 - 2034/35 (Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources)

Councillor Lokhmotova joined the meeting before this item was considered.

Councillor Carling left the meeting as this item was considered.

The Mayor decided that the recommendations highlighted in the Officer's report should be voted on and recorded separately.

Resolved (by 23 votes to 5 with 9 abstentions) to:

- i. Approve the Council's General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2025/26-2034/35, as per Appendix A.

Resolved (by 32 votes to 4 with 1 abstention) to:

- ii. Approve the 2024/25 capital bid of an additional £487,000 for essential repairs of the riverbank at Jesus Green, as set out at page 19 of the MTFS.
- iii. Note the other changes to the capital plan approved under delegated powers since approval of the Budget Setting Report, as set out in section 5 of the attached MTFS.
- iv. Set the General Fund reserve Prudent Minimum Balance at £6.541 million, and the target level at £7.849 million, as recommended by the Chief Finance Officer.

24/85/CNL To deal with oral questions

Question 1

Councillor Hauk to the 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?

The Executive Councillor responded:

- i. The children's play area between Hobson Square and the skatepark was not yet open to the public due to a combination of factors related to ongoing construction, safety inspections, and necessary approvals. Both the Active Recreation Area and the NEAP (Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play) were still under a maintenance and defects process, which would only be triggered once the certificates of completion were issued. Currently, these areas were not considered complete.
- ii. Countryside (the developer) was working with sub-contractors to bring these areas to a state of completion. Once complete, the areas would undergo an independent inspection to ensure safety, which was essential before the certificates of completion could be issued and the temporary fencing removed. Streets and Open Spaces would not issue these certificates until this inspection was satisfactorily completed.
- iii. Further delays had also been caused by factors such as wet ground conditions, the pandemic, and the temporary loss of vehicular access. Officers from Streets and Open Spaces were in discussions with

Network Rail regarding safe vehicular access, which was required to finish the remaining work. While practical completion was expected by spring 2025, there was potential for parts of the play area to open earlier, but this would require agreement with Countryside, who retains control of the site. Officers continue to press for early completion.

- iv. In summary, the delays were due to construction and safety processes, environmental factors, and external dependencies like access issues, with the primary focus being on ensuring the area's safety before opening to the public, and Officers continue to work with Countryside to ensure early delivery and access.

Question 2

Councillor Todd-Jones to the 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?

The Executive Councillor responded:

- i. Hoped the Design Code Trial would soon get into the public domain.
- ii. The Design Code Trial was being renamed.
- iii. It would cover Arbury, King's Hedges and the west part of West Chesterton. Hoped it could include all other city wards in future.
- iv. The Planning Team were in the process of preparing the necessary documents for a formal public consultation. This would include the habitat regulation assessment screening, which had not been completed yet so was holding up the finalization of the trial before it goes out to consultation.
- v. Prior to consultation, the Executive Councillor, the Chair and Spokesperson of the Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee would be able to review the trial. After the consultation a report would be brought to the March 2025 Planning and Transport Scrutiny for consideration and hopefully final sign-off.

Question 3

Councillor Howard to the Executive Councillor for Communities

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?

The Executive Councillor responded:

- i. Would endeavour to seek alternative ways to celebrate this event and keep the event suitable for audiences and residents but currently the costs of this technology were much higher than fireworks.
- ii. Believed that by hosting one large, free, city-wide, pre-organised fireworks display; the number of spontaneous back garden amateur fireworks across the neighbourhoods on and before 5th November would be reduced and thereby reduce disturbance. The Council received great support from the Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service and other civil authorities who also sponsored the event as it reduced the number of fires and other incidents across the city.

Question 4

Councillor Gardiner-Smith to the 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?

The Executive Councillor responded:

- i. The youth engagement service links a building project with a local school and includes two full days of visits. It included discussions and workshops with children, parents, builders, developers, consultants, officers and councillors.
- ii. In the last Civic year, the service conducted four youth engagement workshops in Cambridge. The Youth Engagement Team worked with 419 students.

Question 5

Councillor Divkovic to the 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?

The Executive Councillor responded:

- i. The Youth Strategy recognised we needed to:
 - a. Listen to young people and support their views so they could be widely heard.
 - b. Act as an advocate for change in response to their concerns to empower our city's young people and work alongside them to put in place what they need to thrive.
- ii. More than one in ten young people were living in poverty and Cambridge ranked fifth in the attainment gap between young people from well-off and less well-off households, which impacted on their social mobility. Had launched the city's first Youth Assembly to hear their voices and feedback to decision makers to improve outcomes for young people.

Question 6

Councillor Pounds to the 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?

The Executive Councillor responded:

- i. The campaign stemmed from an urgent need to reform to England's council housing model. Financial pressures and policy changes led to an unsustainable financial model that could see councils facing £2.2 billion deficits in their housing budgets by 2028, and was already causing new social housing schemes across the country to be postponed or cancelled.
- ii. Without urgent action most council landlords would struggle to maintain their existing homes or meet the need to improve them and to build new homes for social rent.
- iii. The Campaign set out detailed plans to reform the five areas:
 1. A new sustainable housing revenue account model including an urgent one off injection of £644 million plus long-term guaranteed rent and debt agreements.
 2. Reforms to right to buy policy.
 3. Remove red tape on existing funding.
 4. A new long-term green and decent home program.
 5. Urgent action to restart building projects that had been postponed or cancelled.

- iv. The above aimed to restore lost income and unlock local authority capacity enabling councils to continue to fund their social housing both improving their existing homes and build new ones.

Question 7

Councillor Robertson to the 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?

The Executive Councillor responded:

- i. The consultation was due to commence on the 23rd of October for six weeks to the 4th of December.
- ii. Encouraged residents and businesses and all other stakeholders in the city to take part and find out for themselves the care the Council was taking to protect staff, serve residents the city and its environment, whilst balancing the budget. This was an important thing to do as it demonstrates to Central Government that this Council was one to be trusted and one to invest in.

Question 8

Councillor Porrer to the 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?

The Executive Councillor responded:

- i. Had seen Parker's Piece get used over the years. It had been damaged and then repaired.
- ii. If this example was another case of that, suggested the big picture was that it gave a lot of people a lot of joy to have events on Parker Piece.
- iii. Remedial works have been carried out by City Services to the footprint after departure. The works included aeration and overseeding; this work was at the expense of the Wheel Operator. Further renovation would take place after the departure of the Christmas in Cambridge event which included the Observation Wheel.

- iv. The placement of the Wheel at this event, whilst on a different orientation, would utilise as much as possible the previous footprint to further mitigate against damage to the park.

Question 9

Councillor Lokhmotova to the Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services

How frequently do litter enforcement officers patrol Trumpington Meadows?

The Executive Councillor responded:

- i. Trumpington Meadows included both the country park and the new build estate.
- ii. The country park was managed by the Wildlife Trust, and the Council did not have any involvement in litter enforcement activities on this land.
- iii. While the Council did not have a specific "litter enforcement team", it had a Public Realm Enforcement Team responsible for addressing issues such as stray dogs, littering, abandoned vehicles, fly-tipping, and other environmental concerns.
- iv. The Council did not operate with fixed patrol routes. Instead, officers respond to requests for service as they arise.
- v. Over the past twelve months, no service requests related to littering or environmental crime had been made for the Trumpington Meadows area. For this reason, it was not possible to provide a specific frequency of visits to the area by enforcement officers.
- vi. Officers covering Trumpington Ward also managed approximately one-third of the city's wards, balancing all of their duties across this wide area.

Question 10

Councillor Dryden to 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?

The Leader responded:

- i. Since the general election the Council had worked with civil servants and ministers at both officer and member level. They committed to

working with the city to improve growth. They see Cambridge as vital in terms of the renovation of the country.

- ii. Cambridge was a prime site for investment in homes and jobs.
- iii. The Joint Director of Greater Cambridge Shared Planning and Councillor Thornburrow (as Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure) were making sure there was sufficient water in the system to deliver what Cambridge required.

A full list of oral questions including those not asked during the meeting could be found in the Information Pack, which was published on the meeting webpage [Agenda for Council on Thursday, 10th October, 2024, 6.00 pm - Cambridge Council](#).

24/86/CNL To consider the following notices of motion, notice of which has been given by:

24/87/CNL Councillor Young - Cambridge Cancer Research Hospital

Councillors Blackburn-Horgan and Martinelli withdrew from the meeting for this item and did not participate in the discussion or decision making.

Councillor Young proposed and Councillor Flaubert seconded the following motion:

Council notes:

- the dire state of public finances left by the outgoing Government.
- the unfulfilled promise to build 40 new hospitals across the country.
- the new Government's announcement of a reset of the new hospitals scheme which could jeopardise progress on the Cambridge Cancer Research Hospital at Addenbrooke's.

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.

Councillor Thornburrow proposed and Councillor Davy seconded the following amendment to motion (deleted text struck through and 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.

The amendment was carried by 23 votes to 13.

Resolved (by 26 votes to 0) that:

Council notes:

- the dire state of public finances left by the last Government.
- the last Government's unfulfilled, unfunded promise to build forty new hospitals across the country.
- The Labour Government's welcome announcement to reset the building programme for new hospitals within a clearly defined financial package, based on regional and national priorities
- 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 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.

24/88/CNL Councillor Payne - Cutback of Winter Fuel Payment

Councillor Payne altered her motion under Council Procedure Rule 26.1 with the consent of Council so that it incorporated the amendment detailed on page 27 of the information pack.

Councillor Payne proposed and Councillor Blackburn-Horgan seconded the following motion:

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 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.

Councillor Wade proposed and Councillor Nestor seconded the following amendment to motion (deleted text struck through and 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 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 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.~~

~~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 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.

The amendment was carried by 22 votes to 15.

Resolved (by 35 votes to 0 with 2 abstentions) that:

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 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 Wales will continue to receive up to £300 in Winter Fuel Payments.

Council resolves to:

- 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.

24/89/CNL Councillor Holloway - Lithium-ion battery safety motion

Councillor Robertson left the meeting before this item was considered.

Councillor Holloway altered his motion under Council Procedure Rule 26.1 with the consent of Council so that it incorporated the amendment detailed on page 31 of the information pack.

Councillor Holloway proposed and Councillor Gardiner-Smith seconded the following motion:

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/>

Councillor Clough proposed and Councillor Tong seconded the following amendment to motion (deleted text struck through and 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

The amendment was lost by 13 votes to 23.

Resolved (by 36 votes to 0) that:

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.
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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.

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- 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 Don 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 Don 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

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<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/>

24/90/CNL Written questions

Members were asked to note the written questions and answers that had been placed in the information pack circulated around the Chamber.

The meeting ended at 11.00 pm

CHAIR