

ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 20 March 2025
7.00 - 9.40 pm

Present: Councillors Pounds (Chair), Nestor (Vice-Chair), Ashton, Divkovic, Glasberg, Hauk, Payne and Swift

Executive Councillors: Holloway (Executive Councillor for Community Safety, Homelessness and Wellbeing), Moore (Executive Councillor for Climate Action and Environment), Smart (Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services) and Wade (Executive Councillor for Communities)

Officers:

Director, Communities Group: Sam Scharf

Head of Greater Cambridge Shared Waste: Bode Esan

Community, Sport & Recreation Manager: Ian Ross

Market and Street Trading Manager: Tim Jones

Strategic Delivery Manager: Alistair Wilson

Technical & Specialist Services Manager: John Richards

Waste Policy, Change and Innovations Manager: Rebecca Weymouth-Wood

Equality & Anti-Poverty Officer: Helen Crowther

Projects Officer: James Ogle

Committee Manager: James Goddard

Meeting Producer: Boris Herzog

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

25/15/EnC Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received.

25/16/EnC Declarations of Interest

Name	Item	Interest
Councillor Ashton	25/23/EnC	Personal: Ward Councillor for Cherry Hinton where some tree planting occurred.

25/17/EnC Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

25/18/EnC Public Questions

A list of public questions was publishing on the meeting page available via: [Agenda for Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee on Thursday, 20th March, 2025, 6.00 pm - Cambridge Council](#)

Responses to public questions and supplementary questions were included below:

Question 1: Weekly Food Waste Collections - RARE Team

The Executive Councillor for Climate Action and Environment responded:

- i. Apologised for any confusion caused by her comments on the radio.
- ii. Details in the press release were correct.
- iii. When Re-Gen have a site in England 2025 then waste will go there instead of Northern Ireland.

Question 2: Can the City Council commit to managing the large roundabout at the junction of Chesterton Rd and Elizabeth Way? - On the Verge

The Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services responded:

The City Council supported managing the roundabout. The Highways Authority were responsible but the City Council were happy to work with them. Undertook to provide updates as work progressed.

25/19/EnC Market Traders Terms and Conditions

Matter for Decision

The Officer's report provided details of the proposed changes to Cambridge General Market (General Market) Terms and Conditions, the engagement exercise undertaken with existing traders and its findings, and subsequent recommendations for Scrutiny Committee and Executive Councillor review and approval.

A decision was needed to bring the General Market Terms and Conditions for Cambridge (currently known as Regulations) in line with current industry standards - as recommended by the National Association of British Market Authorities (NABMA) - and enable the Council to continue to operate clean, safe, attractive, and vibrant markets meeting its corporate objectives and the needs of customers.

The General Market Terms and Conditions were relevant to the day-to-day operation of Cambridge Markets and provided clarity on market powers so that there was a reference point for any action the Council may wish to take in respect of protecting and supporting its current and future markets.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Climate Action and Environment

- i. Noted the approach taken to engage with Market Traders and their representatives on proposed changes to their terms and conditions (Section 7 of the Officer's report), and the findings from this exercise (Section 5.4 of the Officer's report).
- ii. Approved the introduction of these new General Market Terms and Conditions.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

See Officer's report.

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee received a report from the Strategic Delivery Manager.

The Executive Councillor said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. The Markets & Street Trading Manager liaised with traders to monitor their carbon footprint. Traders who generated high levels of waste were asked to take it away with them. Traders had waste management certificates that could be monitored.

- ii. The project was to ensure the long-time life of the market, make it a better civic space and create better conditions for traders. It was not a way to cancel the market and get rid of traders.
- iii. Traders were consulted on arrangements but there was a low response rate to liaison.
- iv. Traders may be asked to move on a specific day to make the best use of facilities such as electricity. Traders would not be asked to relocate far, just somewhere else on the market.
- v. Extenuating circumstances would be considered in (ref #7.3 on P50) “Traders that fail to attend the market for a period of 4 consecutive weeks without the written consent of the Market Management Team will be subject to disciplinary procedures”.

In reference to #7.3 and #7.8 the Strategic Delivery Manager said communication would start in writing then move onto other types if no response was received.

- vi. The disciplinary procedure was amended and the objector who raised concerns was informed.
- vii. The market square would always be the market square in the civic quarter plan. Plans were still in development.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

25/20/EnC Weekly Food Waste Collections

Matter for Decision

The Environment Act 2021 required all councils to align their household waste and recycling services with new nationwide requirements known as ‘Simpler Recycling’ by 31 March 2026.

Greater Cambridge Shared Waste (GCSWS) already met many of the requirements, but the most pressing task was to introduce a weekly collection for food waste, for domestic households by 1 April 2026.

Our ability to progress this task has been hampered by a lack of information on additional grant funding from DEFRA. This was still awaited, but due to the scale of the project, Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee was being asked to approve the proposals and associated budget so that a start can be made on planning for the introduction of food waste weekly collections.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Climate Action and Environment

- i. Endorsed the proposed approach for implementing mandatory weekly food waste collections from 1st April 2026.
- ii. Noted the potential costs to implement the weekly collection of food waste including the current capital allocation shortfall of approximately £200,000 and potential revenue shortfall (currently unknown.)
- iii. Noted that costs had been included within the 2025/2026 Budget Setting Report.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

See Officer's report.

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee received a report from the Waste Policy, Change and Innovations Manager. Amended recommendations were set out on the addendum sheet:

- ~~i. Endorsed the proposed approach for implementing mandatory weekly food waste collections from 1st April 2026.~~
- ~~ii. Noted the potential costs to implement the weekly collection of food waste including the current capital allocation shortfall of £464,000 and potential revenue shortfall (currently unknown).~~

- ~~iii. Noted that costs have been included within the 2025/2026 Budget Setting Report.~~
- ~~iv. Delegated the decision to approve the use of The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) funding received to the Head of Finance so that Implementation can commence.~~
- i. Endorsed the proposed approach for implementing mandatory weekly food waste collections from 1st April 2026.
- ii. Noted the potential costs to implement the weekly collection of food waste including the current capital allocation shortfall of approximately £200,000 and potential revenue shortfall (currently unknown.)
- iii. Noted that costs had been included within the 2025/2026 Budget Setting Report.

The Head of Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Would aim to recruit and train up sufficient staff to cover the Waste Service. Agency staff would be used to cover any gaps in the short term.
- ii. Public awareness campaigns would be undertaken to communicate what the Waste Service was doing and why regarding food waste, to maximise uptake and correct use of the new waste collection stream by residents.
- iii. The County Council would be responsible for treatment of the collected food waste.
- iv. Anaerobic digestion was suitable for biodegradable or non-biodegradable plastic bags in food caddies and all food types.
- v. For dry recyclable materials, collected waste would go to a bulking facility in Waterbeach Facility, then onto the newly procured ReGEN MRF (Materials Recovery Facility) in Northern Ireland, and / or in UK Mainland in future.

The Executive Councillor said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Caddies would be provided that could be kept in peoples' kitchens for any type of food waste. Any plastic bag could be used as liner. Central

Government were rolling out a similar scheme nationally. Other local authorities had separate food waste collections to green bins.

- ii. Food waste could be used to produce energy through anaerobic digestion; it was more valuable to use it that way instead of making compost (compost was unsuitable for some types of food such as dairy), and better than sending food waste to landfill.
- iii. It was cheaper to roll out the food waste collection service to all households instead of doing it on an ad hoc basis to some properties. All would receive the same communication even if the household was already composting food waste.
- iv. DEFRA funding for the service had just been confirmed as per details in the amended Officer report.
- v. People (eg in large households or HMOs) could ask for extra bins/caddies as per green bins, but it was hoped the weekly collection service and discouragement of food waste would mitigate demand for this.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

25/21/EnC Leisure Management Contract 2026

Matter for Decision

This report was being presented to update Members and conclude the on ongoing work to review the Council's leisure provision of facilities and services and gain authority to retender Council leisure services.

The review highlights the opportunities to deliver even more cost-effective services in the future and the rationale behind this, as well as the opportunities for contract update, modernisation and expansion, all of which contribute to improved cost efficiencies, and drive the delivery of even greater social value.

This review of leisure services has required consideration of:

- What the Council's core leisure offer should comprise.
- Rationalisation of current facilities and provision if these were no longer required, or assessed not to be fit for purpose.
- Opportunities for alternative and modernised service provision to inform future capital investment and to meet the city and sub regions' changing demands or growth in demand.
- Opportunities for education, community, and commercial providers to join in the future for management of their leisure facilities.
- Models that could help the council to achieve financial sustainability, and accessible leisure provision, in a challenging financial climate.
- Different operating models and management options where appropriate, including community asset transfer, in-house delivery, arms- length trust and external contract (s), and any other arrangements that could be considered.
- In the context of changing leisure trends and demands, the need to make savings to the Council's revenue budgets.
- The need to increase levels of physical activity in the community and contribute to a reduction in health inequalities.
- Partnership opportunities for engaging and delivery of interventions and health improvement programmes with Public Health.

Decisions were needed on:

- To continue with an outsourced contract arrangement.
- The principles and ethos underpinning future contract scope and timescales.
- The length and scope of the immediate next contract.
- Financial envelope available.
- To extend opportunities both inside and outside of the city boundaries to other local providers, school academies and local authority facilities to join the contract for facilities management.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Community Safety, Homelessness and Wellbeing

Agreed:

- i. To retain a core physical activity and leisure service within the City Council.

- ii. The future of leisure services should be focussed on where investment and resources will have most impact on reducing health inequalities and increasing levels of physical activity.
- iii. Development and adoption of a strategic Vision for future provision of physical activity facilities and services across the city.

Facilities

- iv. Authorise Officers to go to the marketplace and procure an outsourced leisure management model for a term of up to 15 years to 31st March 2041, embedding in strategic breaks.
- v. Retain an “Agency Model” within the new contract to realise benefits of changes to reclamation of irrecoverable VAT on leisure services.
- vi. Reduce the financial impact of the leisure portfolio on the Councils finances to:
 - a. Lower the management costs towards a break even position.
 - b. Seek to increase income from the leisure management contract.
 - c. Seek partnership opportunities for investment in facilities.
 - d. Explore opportunities for community asset transfers.
- vii. Ensure any new Contractor will adopt a Real Living Wage remuneration within the local workforce.
- viii. Adopt Community Wealth Building opportunities within the Contract.
- ix. Allow Officers to engage and negotiate an extension of the scope of the new outsourced contract to include:
 - a. Educational establishments sports and leisure facilities within the City Council boundaries.
 - b. Sports and Leisure Facilities within South and East Cambridgeshire District Councils boundaries, including any District Council, Parish Council and Educational Establishment Facilities.
 - c. Any third party operators or clubs facilities in either Local Authority boundaries.
- x. Develop an investment plan reflecting the findings of the Built Facility Strategy. Priority investments for:
 - a. Decarbonisation of the portfolio to reach the Council's Net Zero aspirations by 2030.
 - b. Improvements to Jesus Green Lido.
 - c. Improvements and expansions of fitness suites and studio provision.

- xi. Include Health outcomes aligned with Public Health and NHS Commissioning Boards within the specification with clear KPIs and outcomes to be delivered.
- xii. Allow the procured Contractor to be able to deliver some elements of social prescribing.
- xiii. Work with developers in relation to strategic sites identified in the emerging Local Plan to 2041 for:
 - a. Allocation of offsite funds to new pool locations and existing pool and indoor and outdoor sports improvements.

KPIs

- xiv. Develop a suite of relevant leisure KPIs that reflect and align to corporate priorities which enable the impact of service outcomes to be evaluated and develop a regular reporting process to update and be reviewed by Members.

Partnerships

- xv. Review all grant aid support including National Non Domestic Rate Relief (NNDR); focussing on where it will have most impact on reducing inequalities and decreasing inactivity and improving healthy lifestyles.
- xvi. Work with Public Health and NHS Commissioning Boards to determine areas of investment and collaborative partnerships to deliver Health outcomes aligned to both organisations objectives and with clear KPIs to be delivered.
- xvii. Consider options for asset transfer and report back to Scrutiny committee should there be any changes or requests to transfer assets.
- xviii. Develop the relationship with Friends of Jesus Green Lido for capital investment and fund raising opportunities through their charitable status.

Devolution

- xix. To consider and build in flexibility within the contract term to adjust to any impacts on the Leisure Management Contract that may develop across the District as a result of devolution.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

See Officer's report.

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee received a report from the Community, Sport & Recreation Manager.

The Community, Sport & Recreation Manager said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. The future expansion of the city's population size was factored into the new leisure contract considerations. Contract provision matched expected city size in the future along with the new growth areas and the additional leisure facilities these would provide.
- ii. Various sustainability features were in place such as decarbonising swimming pools and replacing boilers with air source heat pumps. The intention was to get to net zero by 2030 and details were to be set out in the contract specification for investments needed and collaborative working on the proposed district heating network.
- iii. Strategic Break clauses were in place if contractors did not meet their obligations.
- iv. Contractors were responsible for training their staff to keep up to date on current regulations and legislation.

Councillor Ashton sought clarification if current outsourced leisure facilities would be brought in-house? The Executive Councillor said in-sourcing was considered as part of the options appraisal but the City Council did not have the skills to do this currently, and there would be a significant additional ongoing costs to the City Council if this were to be brought back in-house.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

25/22/EnC Equalities Objectives for 2025/26

Matter for Decision

The Officer's report sought approval of new equalities objectives applicable from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 to meet our statutory requirement to produce one or more equality objectives at least every 4 years. The report also meets the council's legal obligations to publish information on general Public Sector Duty compliance regarding people affected by the council's policies and practices every year. It does so by reporting back on progress relating to activity of services across the four years of the Single Equality Scheme that set out the council's objectives between 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2025 (see Appendix A of the Officer's report).

In addition, the Comprehensive Equalities and Diversity Policy has been updated in line with the council's transformation (see Appendix B of the Officer's report), which needs approval.

Finally, the report feeds back on the conversation on the Disabled People's Manifesto at the Equalities Panel in July 2024, as was committed to at Full Council in May 2024 (see section 4.6 of the Officer's report).

Decision of Executive Councillor for Communities

- i. Noted progress made relating to the previous equalities objectives in the Single Equality Scheme, which covers the period between 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2025 set out in Appendix A.
- ii. Approved equalities objectives for 2025/26 and key priorities relating to them set out in section 4.5 of this report.
- iii. Approved the updated Comprehensive Equalities and Diversity Policy at Appendix B.
- iv. Noted the content of discussions relating to the Disabled People's Manifesto that were held at the Equalities Panel meeting in July 2024 and associated activity to support disabled people based on themes raised. This was set out in section 4.6.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

See Officer's report.

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee received a report from the Equality & Anti-Poverty Officer.

The Equality & Anti-Poverty Officer said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. The City Council was a key partner in the Community Safety Partnership to address hate crime etc. It undertook a lot of partnership working such as obtaining Purple Flag status for the city.
- ii. In order to address the diverse health and wellbeing needs of city residents, the City Council worked with different partners to address different groups' equality needs to learn directly from each group eg elderly, homeless etc.
- iii. Referred to paragraph 5 on P147, there was a perception that larger firms seemed to find it easier to win contracts than smaller firms. Issues had been discussed with the Procurement Officer. A social value framework was being developed to inform contractors of City Council expectations. Undertook to liaise with Councillor Ashton on this after committee.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

25/23/EnC Review of the Environmental Improvement Programme**Matter for Decision**

This report provides an update for the Scrutiny Committee, Executive Councillor and ward councillors on the current position with the Council's Environmental Improvement Programme (EIP), considers several options available to the Council, and makes recommendations around future delivery and focus through 2025/26.

The report included an outline and critique of how other Councils delivered similar programmes of environmental enhancement, and how Cambridge's programme might be further adapted to provide additional value to the Council and communities.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services

Agreed to:

- i. Support continuation of the Council's Environmental Improvement Programme (EIP), based on a combination of projects in delivery, those committed and substantially developed, and those committed that still offer value to the Council and will proceed when capacity allows (Appendix A of the Officer's report, Tables 1 and 2).
- ii. Support the allocation of remaining available funds to increase budgets for those already committed projects that would benefit from and can be delivered with a funding top-up (Appendix A, Table 3).
- iii. Support discontinuing with those previously committed projects that were proving difficult to implement or no longer offer good value to the Council (Appendix A, Table 4).
- iv. Support a further review of EIP delivery, and focus, through 2025/26, identifying where existing committed schemes might be further discontinued; and how the programme might be further adapted to continue to provide good, and additional value to the Council.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

See Officer's report.

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee received a report from the Projects Officer.

The Technical & Specialist Services Manager and Projects Officer said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Other local authorities had different funding models so could be more flexible in how they delivered EIP projects than Cambridge City Council.

- ii. The intention was to allocate funding to projects that could be completed. The intention (as per recommendation iii) was to stop projects that could not be delivered.
- iii. Ward based EIP information could be sent to Ward Councillors to show how projects were progressing.

Councillors requested a change to the recommendations. Councillor Divkovic proposed amending recommendation (iii) in the Officer's report:

Support discontinuing with those previously committed projects that were proving difficult to implement or no longer offer good value to the Council (Appendix A, Table 4).

**** Officers to review whether N3 – 2023 - Hazelwood Close seating installation should be removed from the recommendation.**

Reason: Officers to check if seating already ordered and installed. Project to go ahead if so.

The Committee approved this additional recommendation nem con.

Post Meeting Note: Officers confirmed the amendment was not applicable. The project in question was confused with another EIP project which has since been delivered.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendations as amended.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

25/24/EnC Herbicide-Free Weed Management: Work Programme and Communications Plan

Matter for Decision

The Officer's report provided an update on the implementation of the herbicide-free weed management programme for Cambridge. It outlined the

planned work programme and the accompanying communications strategy to ensure effective delivery and public engagement.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Open Spaces and City Services

- i. Approved the work programme (appendix A) to ensure systematic implementation across all wards.
- ii. Approved the communications plan (appendix B) to support public engagement and transparency.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

See Officer's report.

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee received a report from the Strategic Delivery Manager.

The Strategic Delivery Manager said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Officers expected to visit wards one or more times per year to undertake deep clean work. Details would be put on the city council website and communicated to Ward Councillors.
- ii. Deep cleans would be undertaken in addition to general clear up work. Officers preferred to follow a program of work, but could deviate from this if necessary. Various stakeholders such as On The Verge were proactive in communicating issues such as weeds in gutters.
- iii. People could report areas that needed cleaning through a form on the City Council website.
- iv. The City Council was proactive in its communication about work to manage stakeholder expectations.
- v. The City Council would consider supporting other organisations in future clean-up work as a possible revenue stream (for provision of a clean-up service using City Council staff/expertise) or to help volunteers, but would focus on City Council needs in the short term.

- vi. Noted Councillor concerns that it was difficult to liaise with the Highway Agency to cone off parts of roads for a deep clean, but work was undertaken quickly when it went ahead.
- vii. Herbicide free methods were sustainable in the long term. There were time/financial costs in the short term. As technology changed, cheaper electrical versions of equipment should become available that were prohibitively expensive at present, such as electric vehicles to replace diesel ones.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

The meeting ended at 9.40 pm

CHAIR