

**PRESENT:** Councillors Katie Porrer (Chair), Jenny Gawthrope Wood (Vice Chair), Jamie Dalzell, Dinah Pounds, Tim Griffin, Hugh Clough, Patrick Sheil

**Officers:** Matthew Stickley, Sarah Michael, Ben Binns, Tom Conlon, Lynne Miles, Sean Cleary, Jane Whiteman-Turl, Jody Etherington

**Other:** William Rooke, Julian Russell, Esther Warboys (all consultants for item 6 - Civic Quarter)

**In attendance:** Councillors Cameron Holloway, Martin Smart, Karen Young, Tim Bick, Rachel Wade, Rosy Moore, Richard Swift

The Chair welcomed those present, giving particular welcome to Councillor Dinah Pounds, newly appointed member of the committee. The Chair thanked Councillor Dave Baigent, previous member of the committee, for his service to the committee.

The Chair advised the committee that she would reorder the agenda to take item 7 - Work Programme - prior to item 6 - Civic Quarter.

### **Apologies**

There were no apologies for absence.

### **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **Minutes**

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 June 2025 were agreed as an accurate record.

### **Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

### **Budget-setting consultation**

Councillor Simon Smith, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, introduced the report.

Officers explained that the draft consultation was still being finalised but would be circulated to members before publication. Members expressed concern that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had not yet seen the draft questions, though reassurance was given that any proposals requiring further consultation would be subject to additional scrutiny in due course.

The Committee noted that:

- The Council was ahead of its savings targets, having achieved £4.9m against a two-year requirement of £6m.
- Updated government proposals on the fair funding review, reflecting population growth and changes in the balance of funding streams, placed the Council in a stronger financial position than previously anticipated.
- The consultation would be high-level, accessible and strategic, with scope for bespoke consultations to follow if required.

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the progress towards the Council's medium-term savings targets.
2. To request that Cabinet ensure Overview and Scrutiny Committee members are consulted on draft consultation questions at an earlier stage.
3. To recommend that Cabinet draw upon lessons from last year's consultation process to inform this year's design.
4. To recommend that Cabinet provide assurance that any budget bids requiring additional consultation will be subject to further scrutiny.

#### **5a Procurement at Cambridge City Council**

Jane Whiteman-Turl, Chief Procurement Officer, gave a presentation.

The Committee noted:

- More notices would now be required at certain thresholds (7–12 compared with 3 previously).
- Publication of a procurement pipeline was a requirement of the new procurement regime.
- The new regime increased administrative requirements and oversight, while in some instances EU law obligations remained.
- Around 200 contracts had been let in the previous year.

Members discussed the usefulness of:

- An overview to be available to councillors on the Council's procurement activity.
- Training and development opportunities for members on procurement processes.

The Chair noted that the Services, Climate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee might consider the subject of Community Wealthbuilding in the future, and noted that this may include reference to the council's intentions to secure social value through its procurement processes.

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the update on the new procurement regime.
2. To request that officers provide councillors with an overview of procurement activity.
3. To recommend that Cabinet consider member training opportunities on procurement and contract oversight, including for non-Cabinet members.

## **5b Cabinet: Strategic Procurement Pipeline for Repairs, Maintenance, and Compliance Contracts**

Sean Cleary, Strategic Delivery Manager, presented the report.

Officers explained that an internal procurement dashboard was in place and that a KPI reporting process was being developed.

In discussion, the Committee raised:

- The need for clarity on success criteria and measurable metrics.
- The importance of customer experience in service delivery.
- The ability of the Council to amend or terminate contracts where performance was unsatisfactory. Officers confirmed that termination clauses were included in all contracts.
- That KPI models and parameters should be shared with members. Officers confirmed that a workshop on the subject would be provided in the autumn with members being able to shape the design of the performance management dashboard.
- That wider sharing of KPI data (for example with the Housing Board) would be valuable.

### **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the report and broadly support the proposed procurement pipeline.
2. To recommend that Cabinet ensure that:
  - Clear and measurable KPIs are established and shared with members, with models and parameters circulated at the earliest opportunity.
  - Customer experience outcomes are given appropriate weight in monitoring performance.
  - Contract provisions remain flexible to allow amendment or termination in cases of underperformance or new requirements.
3. To request that officers explore options for wider sharing of KPI data (for example, with the Housing Board).

The meeting was adjourned from 19:02 - 19:15. Councillor Dinah Pounds left the meeting at 19:27.

## **6 Cabinet: Civic Quarter**

Councillor Simon Smith (Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources), Jody Etherington (Chief Finance Officer - Section 151 Officer), and Ben Binns (Assistant Director of Development) presented the report supported by external consultants.

### **Open Session**

The Committee discussed:

- The importance of full consultation with Camcycle cycling charity and Living Streets Cambridge pedestrian charity.
- Ensuring that bus services were rerouted appropriately and that Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) provided for traders, taxi access and disabled users.

- Strong support for a circular horseshoe chamber with tiered seating, and full accessibility.
- The need for demountable stalls in the market to be fit for purpose; confirmation was provided that there remained time to refine designs after planning permission.
- Broad support for submitting the scheme to planning, which could unlock grant funding.
- Opportunities for the Guildhall to better showcase the city's history, including potential partnership with the Museum of Cambridge.
- The need for improved ventilation in the Guildhall's chamber and meeting rooms.
- That the "Do Nothing" option would still require expenditure of around £60m while delivering fewer returns.

The Committee noted that the consultants considered their cost estimates and project viability to be strong and felt the information provided to the committee was robust.

### **Closed Session**

The Committee resolved to exclude the press and public under paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 in order to consider exempt financial information.

The Committee considered detailed financial modelling and business cases. Officers confirmed that borrowing would not affect service provision.

In discussion:

- A majority of members supported Option 4 as the preferred approach.
- Members emphasised the importance of the Guildhall as the civic heart of the city, particularly in the context of potential local government reorganisation.  
It was noted that the project represented an investment rather than a cost, with opportunities for revenue from the Corn Exchange and from high-quality office accommodation.
- There was majority support for the use of the Guildhall as the heart of any future local authority following local government reorganisation, and members supported ensuring flexibility of design and use to accommodate a future unitary chamber.

### **RESOLVED:**

1. To support the principle of proceeding to the planning stage of the Civic Quarter project, recognising that this may unlock future funding opportunities.
2. To recommend that Cabinet:
  - Ensure full consultation with Camcycle, Living Streets and other key stakeholders.
  - Safeguard bus service provision in Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) and provide for adequate wayfinding and space in the market area.
  - Confirm that demountable stalls are fit for purpose and that their design can be refined post-planning.
  - Retain the chamber in a horseshoe layout with tiered seating, ensuring it remains accessible and central to the city's civic life.
  - Deliver improved ventilation and accessibility within the Guildhall.

- Develop opportunities for celebrating the civic history of the Guildhall, including potential collaboration with the Museum of Cambridge.
- 3. To note that while some reservations were expressed about aspects of the scheme, the majority of members supported Option 4, recognising the proposals as financially resilient even in the context of local government reorganisation.

## **7 Work Programme**

The Committee reviewed the work programme. Members agreed to:

- Note that Peter Freeman, Chair of the Cambridge Growth Company, had accepted an invitation to the committee's 4 November 2025 meeting.
- Consider the Local Plan at either the 4 November 2025 meeting or a meeting close to that date, subject to confirmation of the dates the Local Plan would be presented to the Cabinets of both Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils.
- Hold a Member workshop on KPIs in October, with formal review in the new year.
- Establish a Task and Finish group on Housing in due course.
- Note that a review of the 3CICT improvement plan would be scheduled for March 2026.

### **RESOLVED:**

1. To agree the updated Work Programme as set out above.

The meeting ended at 21:05.