SERVICES, CLIMATE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 21 September 2026
5.30 - 8.45 pm

Present: Councillors Glasberg (Chair), Martinelli (Vice-Chair), Davey, Davison, Gardiner-Smith, Haithcock, Hauk, Hossain, Sage and Swift

Officers:
Sam Scharf, Communities Director
Keryn Jalli, Strategic Resettlement and Community Equity Lead
James Goddard, Democratic Services Officer
Justin Long, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Officer

Other councillors in attendance:
Councillor Katie Thornburrow, Leader of the Council
Councillor Martin Smart, Cabinet Member for Nature, Open Space and City Services
Councillor Jacqui Whitmore

Joining Remotely:
Alistair Wilson, Assistant Director Public Realm & Environment
Robert Martyr, Project Lead - Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project
Rachel Veysey, Drainage and Flood Resilience Manager
Heather Jones, Deputy Director Planning and Building Quality
Guy Belcher, Biodiversity Manager
Jonathan Dixon, Planning Policy Manager
Councillor Rosy Moore, Cabinet Member for Climate Action and Environment

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

During the meeting, the Chair used their discretion to alter the order of agenda items. For ease, the below minutes follow the order of the published agenda.

26/1/SC&C Apologies

It was noted that since the publication of the agenda there had been a change to the membership of the Committee with Cllr Swift replacing Cllr Griffin.

26/2/SC&C Declarations of Interest

Cllr Davey declared an interest in Item 6 as a member of the Friends of Logan's Meadow.

26/3/SC&C Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2026 were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman.

26/4/SC&C Public Questions

There were no public questions.

26/5/SC&C Equity Strategy Update

The Committee considered the emerging Equity Strategy and the engagement undertaken with residents and community organisations.

The Committee was invited to provide feedback on:

- The engagement methodology and themes identified.
- Areas where the Council could have the greatest impact.
- How the Council could use its position to leverage systemic change.

During discussion, Members:

- Welcomed the engagement approach and supported the emphasis on lived experience and working through trusted community organisations.
- Highlighted the importance of the Council acting as a visible leader and champion for inclusion, equality and diversity, particularly where Full Council had previously adopted resolutions on such matters.
- Suggested that communications should form a key part of the strategy, especially in terms of articulating the Council's values and commitment to equity.
- Discussed the need for information and services to be available in accessible formats, including alternative languages and formats suitable for people with differing literacy levels and disabilities.

- Emphasised that equity should be embedded throughout all Council services and policies rather than treated as a separate area of work.
- Discussed the role of planning and housing functions in reducing inequality and supporting marginalised communities.
- Recognised the value of both quantitative and qualitative measures in evaluating the success of the strategy, acknowledging that some outcomes, such as trust, belonging and community confidence, may be difficult to measure through traditional performance indicators.
- Welcomed that proposed action plans would include clear objectives, measures of success and baseline information where appropriate.
- Discussed the importance of improving access to English language provision and the role this can play in supporting inclusion and access to services.
- Highlighted the need to ensure both existing and new communities benefit from investment, community facilities and opportunities.
- Noted the importance of community spaces, informal support networks and local places where residents can access information, support and services without formal appointments.

Members noted that while some issues raised during the consultation (such as transport) fell outside the Council's direct control, the Council had an important leadership, convening and influencing role.

The Committee endorsed the overall direction of the proposals and welcomed the opportunity to provide input at an early stage in the development of the strategy.

26/6/SC&C River Cam, Chalk Streams and Tributaries

The Committee considered a report submitted in response to the resolution of Full Council regarding the River Cam, its chalk streams and tributaries.

In introducing the item, the Chair noted that the Rights of the River motion had been unanimously approved by Full Council and highlighted the distinction between the rights contained within the motion and the Council's aspirations to achieve those rights through practical action.

The Committee welcomed the comprehensive nature of the report and the breadth of activity being undertaken by the Council and its partners.

During discussion, Members:

- Sought clarification regarding the strategic leadership and governance arrangements for river and water management, particularly the role and remit of the Water Scarcity Group.

- Received an update on the work of the Water Scarcity Group, including its role in bringing together key stakeholders to address water resource challenges, support sustainable growth and develop long-term solutions relating to water supply and water efficiency.

- Raised concerns regarding future water availability, water scarcity and the long-term resilience of water supplies within Greater Cambridge.

- Discussed water recycling schemes and barriers presented by current national regulations, specifically at the Eddington development where recycled ‘grey water’ cannot be used for drinking due to current drinking water regulations.

- Discussed the impact of abstraction, climate change, pollution and agricultural runoff on the River Cam and the wider chalk stream network.

- Highlighted the importance of chalk streams as internationally significant habitats and discussed opportunities for enhanced protection including the current Private Members Bill on the subject.
- Welcomed the progress made through the Greater Cambridge Chalk Stream Project and the transition towards a coordinated city-wide chalk stream restoration programme.

- Recognised the positive outcomes achieved through restoration projects including Logan's Meadow and Hobson's Brook, particularly in relation to habitat enhancement, water quality improvements and community engagement.

- Considered proposals relating to the Jesus Green River Wall and discussed the reasons for the increased project costs following detailed engineering and site investigations.

- Expressed some concern regarding the financial position of the Conservators of the River Cam and questioned the future funding of repair works to Jesus Green Lock.

- Supported continued partnership working with statutory agencies, environmental organisations, local communities and academic institutions.

Members requested that:

- Additional information referred to within the report be circulated to Committee Members including the water supply documents in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan and Water Resource plans from Cambridge Water and Water Resources East.

- A representative of the Water Scarcity Group be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee to provide a detailed update on progress and future plans.

- The Cabinet Member for Nature, Open Space and City Services write to Government regarding regulatory barriers affecting water recycling schemes.

The Cabinet Member welcomed the Committee's comments and reiterated the importance of the River Cam to the city's environment, biodiversity, recreation, heritage and identity as well as noting that many of the current challenges stemmed from the privatisation of the water industry in the 1980s.

The Committee **Resolved** unanimously to endorse the recommendations contained within the report that will be considered by Cabinet on 23 September 2026.

26/7/SC&C Work Programme

The Committee considered the forthcoming work programme.

Members noted that an update on the Herbicide-Free Weed Management Programme would be presented to the November meeting and welcomed the opportunity to review progress since the matter was last considered. The Chair also advised that an officer briefing would be sought in advance of the meeting.

The Committee discussed future consideration of cultural matters and agreed that these could be more appropriately explored through a Task and Finish Group.

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm

CHAIR