

**Community Services Scrutiny Committee**17 January 2008  
2:30pm-7.50pm**Present:** Councillors Slatter (Chair), Blair, Blencowe, Bradnack, James, Kightley, Lynn, Sanders, Shah**Non-voting co-optees:** Brian Haywood, Stan Best (Tenant/Leaseholder Representatives)**Also Present:**

Cllr Smart (Executive Councillor for Housing), Cllr Stuart (Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health), Cllr Smith (Executive Cllr for Arts and Recreation)

**For the Information of the Council****08/CS/01 Apologies**

Apologies were noted from Tony Barnes, Tenant/Leaseholder Representative.

The Chair informed members of the Committee and the public that the order of the Agenda had been revised due to unforeseen circumstances. For consistency, the minutes are given in the order of the original agenda.

**08/CS/02 Declarations of Interest**

Code of Conduct personal interests were declared as follows:

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Item and Interest</b>	
Bradnack	River Boat Moorings: Changes to Policy <i>Lives on Riverside so has interest in mooring issues</i>	08/CS/09
James	Community Development & Health portfolio financial support to voluntary and not for profit organisations Helped to raise money to build ????	08/CS/15
Shah	Petition: Vietnamese Refugee Community <i>Has worked with the Vietnamese Community before but has no current interest</i>	08/CS/04
Shah	Community Development & Health portfolio financial support to voluntary and not for profit organisations <i>Was a member of the Ethnic Community Forum Management Committee until December 2007</i>	08/CS/15
Slatter	Older Persons Housing Strategy 2009-2014	08/CS/11

	<i>Chairman of Trustees for Cambridge United Charities</i>	
Slatter	Learning and Development Service <i>Volunteer for St John's Ambulance</i>	08/CS/12
Slatter	Community Development & Health portfolio financial support to voluntary and not for profit organisations <i>Was Vice-President of Directions Plus</i> <i>Volunteer for St John's Ambulance</i> <i>Trumpington Village Hall Committee</i>	08/CS/15

### **08/CS/03 Public Questions**

Two members of the public spoke about the Moorings item and their statements were heard just before that item (see below).

### **08/CS/04 Petition**

Mrs Trinh John Chair of the Cambridge Vietnamese Refugee Community Committee (supported by Mr Lu, Mrs Dang, Mr Truong, Mr Nguyen and Ms Walker) spoke to the petition in support of the application for increased grant funding.

The text of the petition was as follows:

"Petition on behalf of my family and I, who live in Cambridge and Cambridgeshire.

Following the AGM meeting at An-Lac house on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2007, it was agreed by the members of the community to contact you to explain our position.

The level of funding support in previous years, by the both Councils has not been sufficient to cover our only member of staff in the office, who helps us with many things such as form filling, letter writing, interpreting, social services, DHSS, job centre, GP appointments, dentist surgeries, schools, hospital appointments and domestic matters etc. Furthermore, we would ask the Cambridge City and Cambridgeshire County Councils to support our mother tongue class, which following requests from many members we now have a need to re-introduce, in order that our next generations will understand the mix-cultures between West and East. No other organisation within the Cambridge or Cambridgeshire, seem able to assist us with the above matters. Therefore we urge the City and County Councils to look into these matters with a degree of urgency in the financial year 2008/09.

I will sign this Petition to support the CVRC, in order that the services will not be disrupted.”

The lead petitioner said that members of the community had been living in Cambridge for the last 25 years and had settled and integrated well. They teach people about the Vietnamese culture and language and provide monthly luncheons and Christmas outings for the community. For the older population they also arrange a yearly trip to the temple

A number of charity initiatives support the community and funding has also been granted from Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridge City Council – however this has now been cut

Their support worker, of 6 years, has been forced to leave as they can now only afford a part-time position and the offices are also under threat. As a community they are also struggling to find interpreters for their older population as Cintra only provide for hospital appointments and not GP sessions

The Committee raised the following questions in response:

- Whether the present funding by the ‘Big Lottery’ would continue and if the loss of this was the biggest issue. The representatives replied that the three year funding comes to an end at the end of this financial year and they can no longer apply. The loss of this funding was the single biggest issue
- After 25 years in Cambridge would there be no volunteers in your community that could act as interpreters? The representatives replied that unfortunately the older generation only spoke Vietnamese and the younger ones tended to only speak English and move away to university etc. They previously had funding for a 2 hour teaching class every Sunday but this had been cut. This had been really important as there were still many new people coming to the area with poor language skills.

The Chair noted that with any new funding it would be important for the Community to prioritise the most important areas – either mother tongue lessons or interpreters.

She told the petitioners that the Executive Councillor would make a decision on the funding later in the meeting.

**08/CS/05 Parker's Piece Football Rules Sculpture**

This item requested by Councillor Durrant has been deferred to the next meeting.

**08/CS/06 Financial Support to Voluntary and Not-For-Profit Organisations 2008-09**

The Committee supported the recommendations set out in the officer's report by 6 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

**08/CS/07 Updated Open Space and Recreation s106 Programme**

The Head of Active Communities tabled an amended Appendix C. The amendments to the published report are summarised below:

"a) Open Space and Recreation project ideas for the East Area have now been approved by East Area Committee as follows:

- RC018-1007 Multi Sports surface at Cambridge Leisure Park
- RC12 - Play & Provision to Romsey Recreation Ground
- E29/B - Community Sports Centre
- RC03,04,05,06 - Increase Play equipment at Sleaford Street
- RC11 - Improvements to St Barnabas Play Area
- RC13 Goal Posts & Lights on Ditton Fields Recreation Ground
- RC010 - Extra Tennis Court on Coleridge Recreation Ground
- PL100 - Put football goals on Tiverton Way
- BD003 - Create Community Woodland Area at Barnwell West
- BD002 - Improvements & Increase Coldhams Common Local Nature Reserve

b) The project ideas for 'Inclusive Fitness Gym at Abbey Pools' and 'Improve Abbey Pools Changing Areas' are considered Citywide projects and have been moved to that category.

c) The project ideas to 'Create Community Woodland Area at Barnwell West' and 'Improvements & Increase Coldhams Common Local Nature Reserve' have been included in the East Area list.

d) The existing projects in the East Area list have been amended to withdraw the Historic Simoco projects over to the North List. These are:

- Tennis Court (E026/A PLS)
- Skate Park Facilities (E026C PLS)
- Informal Games Area (E026/C PLS)
- Extend Logan's Meadow Local Nature Reserve (E026/D PLS)

Councillor Bradnack on behalf of East Area and Councillor Blair on behalf of North Area thought that further consideration by these two committees might be necessary to ensure that the order of priority of projects was clear.

Following these representations, the Executive Councillor said that she would decide that day on the projects allocated to the South and West/Central Area Committees along with the City Wide ones and those for East and North when the respective Area Committees had had the opportunity to prioritise their lists.

The Committee supported the amended recommendations by 6 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor approved the amended recommendations ie the projects for South Area Committee, West/Central Area Committee and City Wide projects.

### **08/CS/08 Service Plans for 2008/09, Revenue and Capital Budgets 2007/09 (Revised) 2008/09 and 2009/2010 (Forecast)**

The Committee considered the Service Plans and raised the following with responses (A):

#### **Arts and Entertainments**

- Important to have an interim scoping report on Objective 6a (provide a 5-year Arts Strategy for the city) before the final report was produced in December 2008.
- With regard to the cuts made by the Arts Council to the Arts Theatre, what kind of partnership with the Theatre was envisaged?

A: The Executive Councillor proposed that a letter be sent to the Arts Theatre signed by the Executive Councillor and the Spokesperson expressing their regret about the Arts Council decision.

- With regard to the growth agenda, now was when work to put things in place was required and were the risk factors in relation to that being addressed?

A: There was a new post concerned with the quality of life aspects of growth and the postholder would help heads of service with these issues.

- When the re-tender for the catering contract for the Corn Exchange was undertaken it was important that there be provision for vegetarian meals

required and that an audit of performance against the tender requirements be carried out.

## **Active Communities**

In response to a question from a councillor, the Head of Active Communities confirmed that she was working with the County Council and other local authorities in the region to prepare for participation in the celebration of the Olympics of 2008 and the involvement of local Chinese communities.

## **Planning Policy & Projects**

The Head of Policy and Projects drew attention to the importance of proactive stewardship of trees in the City, including management, replanting and new planting. Risk management is an important issue. A bid for additional resources had been unsuccessful and it would be necessary to review priorities for work in 2008-09.

The Committee supported the recommendations by 6 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor for Arts and Entertainments approved the recommendations.

## **08/CS/09 River Moorings: Changes to Policy**

The Chair informed the Committee that an approach had been made by a local filmmaker to record the meeting for a documentary on boating and mooring issues. After consideration and advice from officers, this request had been turned down. However he was in attendance if members wanted to give their views to him after the meeting.

Councillor Blencowe raised concern the Committee had not been consulted on this issue but was reassured that the reason for this was that the approach had been made at short notice.

Mr Mark Rogers was invited to address the Committee as a member of the local boating community:

*The City Council was congratulated on their recent improvements to the riverbanks and facilities but concern was raised regarding some of the recommendations in the report. It was felt that the removal of the single person occupancy discount would have a detrimental effect and that the consultation questions regarding this issue were very unclear and confusing.*

*Whilst Mr Rogers was pleased with the revised waiting list guidance proposed in the report it was felt that the need to find a boat within 3 months of being offered a licence was impractical. The boating community considered that retaining of the Band A Council Tax was fair and that more stability through the removal of the yearly reviews would be beneficial.*

Mr Collinson, on behalf of the independent punt operators, was then invited to address the Committee. He spoke about the recommendations for the future use of the river bank on Jesus Green (known in the policy as 'Area A')

*Concern was raised over the methodology of the consultation and the fact that not all independent punt operators were given the opportunity to respond. Also the very low figures, 57 polled and 19 responses, on which the decision was made was questioned. Clarification was sought regarding the definition of 'mooring' as this generally did not include punts and the by-laws of the River Cam were noted as a good source of information.*

The Head of Active Communities responded that a full list had been supplied by River Cam Conservators of everyone registered on the river, which would include all punt operators. This list was then used in the consultation process. 'Mooring' was also clarified as any fixation of a vessel on the river.

The Head of Active Communities then introduced the full Report and highlighted the proposed recommendations regarding the Council's River Boat Mooring Policy. There were links between this and wider issues concerning punting and these would be addressed through a report considered by the Leader at a Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Committee meeting on 8 February 2008.

The full recommendations would be subject to approval at this meeting.

A letter concerning the report had been received from Scudamores on 18 January and this was read out in full to the Committee and the public. Whilst amendments were supported concern was raised over 2.1.13c. Did this mean that commercial punts would be prohibited from mooring.

The Director of Community services confirmed that these issues would be looked at during the meeting of Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 8 February.

The Committee then considered each of the recommendations in turn:

### **2.1.1:**

Some members were in favour of keeping the historical link with Council Tax while several others did not think this was a logical link and that the council was not providing cheap accommodation on the River Cam.

A member asked if the point about yearly reviews raised by Mr Rogers could be addressed.

The Head of Active Communities said that it could be possible to review the frequency of reviews in future. The annual increases in Council Tax in 03-04 had been 6.5%, in 04-05, 4% and in 05-06 4%. All of these had been higher than the Retail Price Index.

### **2.1.2:**

Members made suggestions - include single boaters in the concessionary rates, stage the withdrawal of the discount to all other users over a number of years.

### **2.1.3**

If the Council Tax link disappears from 08/09, the discount for the single person will also disappear. The discounts should be based on the same criteria as those for council house tenants.

### **2.1.4**

In response to concerns raised by Mr Collinson and by members, the Executive Councillor said there could be flexibility if people were able to demonstrate that they had made real attempts to acquire a boat.

### **2.1.8**

Concern that these facilities were used by others than the boaters.

### **2.1.13**

In response to concerns raised by members, the Executive Councillor suggested that the phrase "for consideration by the Executive Councillor" be inserted after "rules" at the end of the first sentence.

The Committee supported the recommendations set out in the officer's report by 6 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor said that, having listened to concerns of both the boating community and members, she was proposing changes to the recommendations. She would review the link to Council Tax and would delete recommendation 2.1.2 and would consult on the size of boats proposals and concessionary rates. A report would be brought back to the Scrutiny

Committee in January 2009. She added that it was not her intention to charge fees at a commercial rate such as £2,000.

She tabled a copy of the changes which read as follows (changes highlighted in strikethrough and bold):

2.1 The Executive Councillor is recommended to approve the following:

2.1.1 Retain the pricing association between the full River Mooring Licence (RML) fee and Council Tax band A for 2008/09, but from 2009/10 onwards, increase the fee in accordance with inflation as determined by the RPIX as of 30<sup>th</sup> November the previous year.

~~2.1.2 Withdraw the entitlement to discount on the RML fee based on single person occupancy for 2009/10 onwards, whilst retaining concessionary rates for people on low incomes and students.~~

**2.1.2 Undertake further research into river mooring charging schemes to ensure the Council's scheme is financially robust, comparable, and fair. Identify options for charging by boat length, and reconsider the entitlement to discount based on single person occupancy, whilst retaining a commitment to accessible concessionary rates for people on low incomes and students. Bring forward detailed recommendations for implementation from April 2010 in a report to the Executive Councillor in January 2009.**

~~2.1.3 Undertake more research into comparable river mooring charging schemes, and revisit the possibility and options for charging per metre of boat length in a report to the Executive Councillor in January 2009.~~

2.1.4 Replace the current assessment criteria for the waiting list so that priority for available RMLs is given in strict chronological order to boat owners who will use the boat as a primary residence within 3 months of being offered a RML. The award of a RML shall be conditional to the licence holder owning and living on an appropriately registered boat and taking up a mooring in the permitted areas within three months of the award of the licence. If this is not achieved, the licence shall be withdrawn.

2.1.5 Retain the number of RMLs to be issued at any one time at 70. Administer RMLs for widebeam vessels as recommended in the report.

2.1.6 Include an additional item to be included in the terms and conditions of the RML requiring holders to provide grab ropes or chains on the river facing side of their vessel.

2.1.7 Reconsider the viability of installing mooring rings during 2008/09, and bring forward conclusions and recommendations in July 2008.

- 2.1.8 Consider options, costs and benefits of providing more accessible recycling services, and bring forward conclusions and recommendations in July 2008.
- 2.1.9 Schedule a programme of work to make further improvements to the riverbank.
- 2.1.10 Continue working with the Conservators of the River Cam and river users to ensure that the Council's Moorings policy contributes to an outstanding river amenity for everyone.
- 2.1.11 Note comments on the administration of the scheme and support suggestions for improved communication with stakeholders.
- 2.1.12 Report any additional recommendations arising from the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities' Advisory Document 'Residential Use on Water' to the Executive Councillor in January 2009.
- 2.1.13 That, subject to further consideration by the Leader, the Council's River Mooring Policy shall be amended as below:
- (a) The Council, as a riparian land owner, reserves the right to take legal action to enforce against mooring activity that takes place without its express permission.
  - (b) That, subject to recommendation 2.1.13 (d), mooring is prohibited in Area A;
  - (c) That, without prejudice to recommendation 2.1.13 (b), officers are asked to draw up a scheme which would permit the mooring of a restricted number of permitted punts in Area A for consideration by the Executive Councillor.
  - (d) That the Director of Community Services is given delegated powers to permit punts to moor for short periods to allow their occupants to make leisure use of Jesus Green (picnics etc) and is asked to draw up rules **for consideration by the Executive Councillor**. For the avoidance of doubt, the rules should not permit mooring in connection with the operation of a business.

This was different from the recommendations considered by the Scrutiny Committee. So, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, the matter was subsequently referred to the Leader who agreed that the decision taken by Cllr Smith should stand.

### **08/CS/10 Housing General Fund Grants to Voluntary Organisations for 2008/9**

The Committee supported the recommendations set out in the officer's report by 6 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations

## **08/CS/11 Older Persons Housing Strategy 2009 – 2014**

The report sought approval for the development of an Older Persons Housing Strategy for Cambridge to provide strategic direction for housing provision and housing-related services for older people.

The main areas of scope for the strategy included:

- increased housing choice
- decent, warm and safe homes
- living independently
- accessible advice and information
- strengthening consultation and partnership working
- meeting diversity

It was noted that the consultation would target people aged 50 plus. It would take into account their needs and aspirations to ensure that any development taking place during the life of the strategy was sustainable and would meet the future, as well as, current needs. The implications were noted as staff time, consultation costs and publication costs in relation to the final document.

The Committee raised the following questions/comments in response:

- Whether further timetable information was available and if the consultation would target individuals as well as voluntary organisations.
- A: The consultation would take place from April – June 2008 and that reports would be made to the Corporate Management Team in April and September. Older Individuals would be consulted and also those 50+ that would have needs in the future.
- Was there an opportunity to involve older people when the council was carrying out the next Citizens' Survey.
- A: The Citizens' Survey and the Tenants Survey had just been completed and with 40% of the respondents being 65+ there was a lot of information available.
- The consultation needed to be as broad and fair as possible in order to reflect the diverse needs of older people. Those in the 50-60 bracket and those in the 65+ bracket could have very different needs.
  - It was suggested that churches and religious groups could be contacted as they traditionally have a close connection to older people in the community. The importance of BME communities was also noted.

The Committee supported the recommendations set out in the officer's report by 6 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

### **08/CS/12 Learning and Development Service**

The Committee supported the recommendations set out in the officer's report by 6 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

### **08/CS/13 Procurement of the Housing Stock Condition Survey**

The report informed the Committee that it is strongly encouraged that all Local Authorities carry out a Housing Stock Condition Survey every five years. The information should include:

- Housing Health and Rating System
- Energy efficiency measures
- Empty homes
- Decent homes
- Houses in Multiple Occupations

The Survey would enable the council to feed into the overall housing strategy and hence prioritise resources into areas where required. This information would also enable reporting on whether the decent homes target had been met.

The Committee supported the recommendations by 6 votes to 0.  
The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

### **08/CS/14 Service Plans for 2008/09, Revenue and Capital Budgets 2007/07 (revised), 2008/09 and 2009/10 (Forecast)**

#### **Housing General Fund**

The Director of Community Services introduced this item and informed the Committee that an inspection was expected in the summer. The Service Plans influenced priorities and the carbon footprint. The Community Safety Plan would be updated.

Performance Information and Targets for 2008/09 to 2010/11 were also noted along with the budget for 2008/09

The Committee then considered the individual Service Plans and commented on the following:

### **Environmental Health**

Members raised the following to which officers responded (A):

- Carrying out Equalities Impact Needs Assessments had 5 lead officers. Was this really the case?

A: Each area requiring an assessment has to be identified and an officer allocated to it.

- Many of the key tasks listed as the key strategic risk factor, key worker dependency. Was there a contingency plan?

A: This had been done to flag up that this was a small team and that they would have to re-prioritise the list.

- That raised concerns as presumably particular individuals had particular responsibilities.

The Executive Councillor gave as an example that as there was only one Landlord Accreditation Officer, if that individual were not available, the Head of Service would need to prioritise what was essential to be done by others.

Performance Information and Targets for 2008/09 to 2010/11 were also noted along with the budget for 2008/09

The Committee supported the recommendations by 6 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

### **08/CS/15 Financial Support to Voluntary and Not-For-Profit Organisations 2008-09**

The Grants Manager introduced the report and then commented on the points made by the petitioners. She said it had been helpful that the petition had been addressed to both the County Council and the City Council. She had been in touch with the County Council about the desirability of having a strategy for helping elderly immigrants. In her view this was an area the County Council should take the lead in. For new migrants the problems were focused in schools.

In response to concerns raised by members, the Executive Councillor said there was a cross party group looking at the future of Brookfields and the cut

in funding for Cintra could be added to its work and taken up in the dialogue with the Primary Care Trust who were responsible for the contract with Cintra and the cuts in that provision.

The Committee supported the recommendations by 6 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

### **08/CS/16 Financial Support to Voluntary and Not-For-Profit Groups 2008-09: Economic Policy**

The Economic Policy Officer introduced the report and said that the grants given under this heading were the second largest amounts for this kind of work. He added that it was proposed that this large task would in future be carried out by the incumbent of one half time post.

In response to a suggestion from a member, the Economic Policy Officer agreed that those with Learning Difficulties should be included in the list of those residents who are otherwise restricted from accessing employment and vocational training opportunities.

The Committee supported the recommendations by 6 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

### **08/CS/17 Service Plans for 2008/09, Revenue and Capital Budgets 2007/08 (Revised), 2008/09 and 2009/2010 (Forecast)**

The Committee considered the Service Plans and raised the following:

#### **Bereavement Services**

That the Performance Indicator “reduce number of cremated remains not commemorated on site” should be reconsidered if it did not monitor what the council actually wanted to monitor.

#### **Community Development**

The Head of Community Development introduced the Service Plan and said it was built around five interrelated themes. These were growth, climate change, neighbourhood development, support for community groups and services for children and young people. Key activities during 2008/09 would involve planning community facilities for new communities; working with residents in areas adjoining growth sites to start to build bridges between existing and new communities; reviewing the way in which support for voluntary groups is provided through grant aid and by exploring the potential

for commissioning some services; continuing to develop opportunities for children and young people to become involved in the work of the Council. Targets would also be set for reducing energy consumption at all community centres. He also remarked that it would be important to ensure that City needs were well understood by partnerships allocating resources for work across the whole county. In response to praise about the refurbished Dec Bus, the Head of Community Development informed the committee that there were plans with South Cambridgeshire DC to apply to the Local Strategic Partnership for funding for a second bus to support work in the city centre and in growth areas.

It was noted in considering the budget that Appendix H had been omitted and it was agreed that this would be circulated to members.

The Committee supported the recommendations by 5 votes to 0.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

### **08/CS/18 Date for Special Meeting of Community Services Scrutiny Committee**

Members agreed to meet on Thursday 7 February at 2.30pm

Apologies for that date were given by Cllr Kightley.

### **08/CS/19 Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Before considering the next report, the Scrutiny Committee agreed to exclude members of the public from the meeting on the grounds that, if they were present, there would be disclosure to them of information defined as exempt from publication by Category 1 as defined in the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

### **08/CS/20 Housing Management Board Candidacy**

The Committee agreed to consider this item at the Special Meeting on 7 February 2008.

The meeting finished at 7.50pm

**Chair**