

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING4 December 2008
6.05pm – 11.10pm

Present: The Mayor (Councillor Dixon), Councillors Al Bander, Baker, Benstead, Bick, Blackhurst, Blair, Blencowe, Boyce, Bradnack, Cantrill, Dryden, Ellis-Miller, Hart, Herbert, Hipkin, Howell, Levy, Liddle, Lynn, McGovern, McPherson, Newbold, Nimmo-Smith, Pitt, Reid, Rosenstiel, Sanders, Shah, Smart, Smith, Stuart, Taylor, Todd-Jones, Upstone, Walker, Ward, Wright, Zmura

For the Information of the Council**08/70 MINUTES**

An amendment was proposed and agreed to the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of 11 September 2008 to note Councillor Taylor as being in attendance.

Subject to that amendment, the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting and the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 11 September 2008 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Mayor.

08/71 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were noted from Councillors Armstrong, Holness and Kightley

2. CITY CENTRE WORKERS' CAROL SERVICE

The Chaplaincy to the People at Work organised a Carol Service at one of the City Centre churches attended by people who work in the Centre of the City. This year's event would take place on Monday, 8th December at the Wesley Church, Christ's Pieces. Mince pies would be served from 6.30 pm with the service starting at 7.30 p.m. The presence of Councillors would be greatly valued.

3. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

The City Council's event to mark Holocaust Memorial Day was scheduled to take place on Tuesday 27th January 2009.

4. THE PREACHING OF THE CHEVYN SERMON

The Chevyn Service at St. Bene't's Church in Bene't Street would take place on Sunday, 1st February at 10am. It was hoped that Members would make an effort to join the Mayor as this would be the first time, certainly in living memory, that a civic service had been held in St. Bene't's. Considered to be the oldest surviving church in the City, dating from 1025, it was a beautiful, atmospheric building, and the Mayor was looking forward to Members presence on the day.

5. CHARITY EVENT

The second of the Mayoral charity events would take place in the Guildhall on Wednesday, 25th February and would take the form of a wine tasting evening. Members were asked to note the date and come along if at all possible. Details would again be sent out in the New Year.

The annual quiz night for employees of the Council took place on 26th November, and £1,265 was raised for the Mayor's two chosen charities. Thanks went to Robert Osbourn for once again organising this fun evening and to everyone for attending

6. PROMOTING LOCAL DEMOCRACY

In connection with the promotion of local democracy, the Mayor had the pleasure of having two young people shadowing him on Friday, 7th November. They served as Mayors for the Day and also took part in a Question Time session with Neil McGovern, Rob Hammond, a member of the Children's and Young People's Participation Service and the Mayor.

A Political Speed Dating event took place on 3rd December at Cambridge Regional College. Councillor Hipkin won the event and was invited to step forward to receive a certificate.

7. MAYORS FOR PEACE

The Mayor recently signed a letter of appeal calling upon all people to contribute to the preparations for the United Nations Decade for Disarmament 2010-2020. This initiative had been promoted by the organisation 'Mayors for Peace'.

8. LIZ WHITCHER AND GEORGE SWINDLES

Both Liz Whitcher and George Swindles were due to retire shortly. Liz would be leaving at the end of December and George at the end of January, so this would be their last Council Meeting. There would be opportunities to say farewell to them both, but the Mayor asked that the Council's sincere appreciation of their work over the years be placed on record.

08/72 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following personal interests were declared:

Councillor	Item	Interest
Howell	08/82	Member of 'NO2ID' Campaign
Levy	08/82	Member of 'NO2ID' Campaign
Liddle	08/82	Member of 'NO2ID' Campaign
Pitt	08/82	Member of 'NO2ID' Campaign Wife works at Cambridge University
Nimmo-Smith	08/82 08/84	Member of 'NO2ID' Campaign Landlord
Reid	08/82 08/84	Member of 'NO2ID' Campaign Landlord
Rosenstiel	08/82	Member of 'NO2ID' Campaign
Shah	08/84	Landlord
Smith	08/73 and 08/75	Received box of fruit and vegetables from local allotment holders as part of a press story. Made a contribution to a local charity in response
Stuart	08/84	Landlord
Taylor	08/73 and 08/75 08/84	Member of Rock Road Allotment Society Landlord
Upstone	08/82	Member of 'NO2ID' Campaign
Ward	08/82 08/84	Member of 'NO2ID' Campaign Landlord
Wright	08/84	Received rent under the Housing Allowances Scheme on behalf of a member of her family

08/73 PETITION

A petition had been received containing 715 signatures stating the following:

We the undersigned, being registered parliamentary electors in Cambridge City and/or liable for council tax in Cambridge City, respectfully request that you fulfil your statutory duty to make available suitable and sufficient allotments to meet the needs of the residents of Cambridge.

Allotments provide a wide range of benefits to the community and the environment. They combine physical activity with social interaction, learning and skills, recycling and the production of food which is healthy, fresh and local. They contribute directly to the sustainability and biodiversity of our city.

The current supply of allotments is insufficient. Hundreds of people are waiting for an allotment plot in Cambridge, and the waiting lists are lengthening. Some people are put off from applying because they expect a long wait. Others travel some distance, often by car, to an allotment because no plots are available near their home. Meanwhile, dense housing development is bringing new residents who, lacking garden space suitable for growing food, are more likely to desire an allotment than residents of older houses.

We welcome the planned provision of new allotments in Cambridge's urban extensions. However the area of new allotment land for the new residents has been calculated based on existing provision, not on demand, so it is also likely to be insufficient. We note that this new provision is not intended to address demand from existing residents.

We therefore believe that there is an increasing and unmet demand for allotments in Cambridge. We note that if an allotment authority is of the opinion that there is such a demand, it is required under Section 23 of the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 to provide a sufficient number of allotments and to let them to persons residing in its area who want them.

Dave Fox spoke to the petition. He made the following points:

- Allotments provide an opportunity to stay fit and exercise
- Local school children visit the allotments to learn about growing produce
- Allotments are a good source of fresh, local and affordable produce
- A quarter of green house gases are as a result of the processing and packaging of commercially grown produce
- Hundreds of people are currently on waiting lists for allotments in Cambridge and the number has increased this year
- As food prices rise, fossil fuels run out and new homes have smaller gardens the need to grow your own produce will increase
- Allotments need to be higher up the Councils planning agenda

Members considered the petition and asked questions of the petitioner.

The Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation responded to the petitioners and said that this was an identified issue across the whole country. In Cambridge the Council managed 140 sites, 280 people were currently on waiting lists, 9 plots were vacant and there was a 93.19% cultivation rate.

The Council was working closely with the Allotment Society to identify new sites and there was a commitment to allotment provision in the Cambridge Local Plan and the Cambridge East Area Action Plan.

08/74 CHANGE OF AGENDA ORDER

Under paragraph 4.2.1 of the Council Procedure Rules, the Mayor used his discretion to alter the order of business to take the motion on Allotments (minute number 07/45) next.

08/75 MOTION: Allotments

Councillor Walker proposed and Councillor Dryden seconded the following motion:

The Council, as the allotment authority for Cambridge, acknowledges:

1. the importance of allotments to the community and the environment
2. the importance of meeting unmet demand in the City
3. that we must fulfil our statutory duty to make available suitable and sufficient allotments to meet the needs of the residents of Cambridge.

The Council therefore calls on the Director of Environment and Planning and on the Director of Community Services to submit a report to the Executive that:

- establishes how many allotments are required to provide for the needs of present residents
- identifies land that can be made available to let as allotments to fill this need
- considers whether the potential number of allotments required in the new development areas is adequate for new residents and makes proposals to address any shortfall
- sets out a programme and budget recommendations to ensure that all allotments have basic facilities including water and onsite toilets by 31 March 2010.

Under Procedure Rule 13.8.1, it was agreed to deal with the business at the meeting.

Councillor Smith proposed and Councillor Blair seconded the following amendment:

Delete second paragraph commencing "The Council" and replace with:

The Council calls on the Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation to bring forward a report to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee which:

Delete final bullet point and replace with:

sets out proposals to ensure that all allotments have basic facilities, including water and onsite toilets, including a clear timetable and financial implications.

The amendment was carried by 24 votes to 11

RESOLVED (by 38 votes to 0) that

The Council, as the allotment authority for Cambridge, acknowledges

1. the importance of allotments to the community and the environment
2. the importance of meeting unmet demand in the City
3. that we must fulfil our statutory duty to make available suitable and sufficient allotments to meet the needs of the residents of Cambridge.

The Council calls on the Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation to bring forward a report to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee which:

- establishes how many allotments are required to provide for the needs of present residents
- identifies land that can be made available to let as allotments to fill this need
- considers whether the potential number of allotments required in the new development areas is adequate for new residents and makes proposals to address any shortfall
- sets out proposals to ensure that all allotments have basic facilities, including water and onsite toilets, including a clear timetable and financial implications

08/76 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Mr Woodcock, as a representative of the Cambridge and District Trade Union Council, asked a number of questions in relation to the collapse of Icelandic Banking Institutions and its affect on Cambridge City Council. He demanded that the Council be bailed out by central government and felt that the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Report should state this desire more clearly.

He asked about possible service cuts and stated that an increase in Council housing stock would be a safer investment than banking institutions.

The Leader confirmed that he had replied in writing to Mr Woodcock's concerns and a full copy would be made available to all Councillors. As yet the government had given no commitment to 'bail out' Local Authorities but it was stated that there were no immediate cash flow issues for *this* Council. The Council did have a number of challenges as a result of this issue but there were also a number budget pressures unrelated to this.

In response to a supplementary question from Mr Woodcock, the Leader stated that the Council was actively trying to reclaim the funds and there would be no reduction in workforce as a direct result of this issue. However, unrelated service reviews were ongoing in order to make Council services more efficient and cost effective.

08/77 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

A Joint Section 29 Planning Policy Committee – Draft Regulations

Resolved (by 36 votes to 0)

- To approve the draft regulations
- To agree that the draft regulations specify that a Joint Local Development Scheme be submitted to the Secretary of State within 6 months of the order coming into effect

B The Cambridge Climate Change Strategy & Action Plan

Resolved (by 25 votes to 0)

- To increase the maximum sum that may be invested with HSBC Bank plc, the Council's bank, from £6 million to £10 million.
- To set a maximum sum which may be invested with counterparties belonging to the same company group at 1.5 times the level for a single named institution on the Council's approved counterparty list.
- To suspend overseas financial institutions and their UK subsidiaries from the Council's Counterparty List pending the outcome relating to investments with Icelandic Banks.
- To approve the changes to the Counterparty List, detailed in appendix A of the officers report

- To approve the revised Counterparty List attached at Appendix B of the officers report
- To continue to work with the LGA to seek to recover the outstanding amounts with Icelandic banks, and identify any lessons in terms of treasury management practice

08/78 ORAL QUESTIONS

1. Councillor Taylor to the Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services

What are the revenues for our recycled materials for the last quarter, and for the same period last year?

2. From Councillor Bick to the Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation

Would the Executive Councillor provide an update on the progress of the Councils bid for Heritage Lottery funding for Jesus Green?

3. From Councillor Herbert to the Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources

Given the central importance of Quayside to the life of the City, and overriding issues of public interest, what public consultation is planned before proposals for potentially permanent changes at Quayside are implemented?

4. From Councillor Levy to the Leader

How does the Leader propose that the Council respond to motions on matters that are already listed on the forward plan?

5. Councillor Howell to the Executive Councillor for Climate Change and Growth

What is the total value of s106 payments currently being held by Cambridge City Council that could be spent in Coleridge Ward, how much of these payments are subject to repayment clauses with the developer if not spent and how much from developers' s106 contributions has been spent so far this financial year on projects in Coleridge?

6. From Councillor Walker to the Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation

Why is the big playground at the Accordia site on Brooklands Avenue STILL not open, and what are you doing about it?

7. Councillor Pitt to the Executive Councillor for Climate Change and Growth

Could the Executive Councillor give an update on the status of the Cambridge East development?

8. From Councillor Todd Jones to the Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources

Following the move of the Park and Ride from Cowley Road to Milton, can he assure the hundreds of regular users of the weekly weekend Cowley Road car boot sale that there will be a site for the event to continue?

9. From Councillor Wright to the Executive Councillor for Climate Change and Growth

Acknowledging the concern of the Leader of the Council at the demolition of certain significant buildings within the city, including Milton Road Junior School, I seek reassurance that a proactive scheme is now in place in relation to potentially listed buildings and buildings of local interest. What initiatives are now being taken to safeguard such buildings?

10. From Councillor Dryden to the Executive Councillor for Climate Change and Growth

Over a year the Council welcomed plans for the temporary ban on parking on grass verges in Mowbray Road and Fendon Road to be made permanent. The ban had been in place for a year as a pilot, which could be extended to other areas of the city, what other areas of the city has the pilot been extended to at this moment.

Oral Questions last a maximum of 30 minutes

At the conclusion of the 30 minutes set aside for questions and answers, the following questions remained. The Mayor asked the Executive Councillor or Leader as appropriate to make a written response to the Councillor asking the question.

11. From Councillor Reid to the Leader

In the light of the Sustainable Communities Act, how does the City Council plan to work with members and the public to develop ideas for improvements in Cambridge using its powers under the Act?

12. From Councillor Lynn to the Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation

Will the Council be taking up the Government offer to fund free swimming for people over 60, including by working with South Cambridgeshire who have supported the Government scheme?

13. From Councillor Walker to the Executive Councillor for Climate Change and Growth

Is it true that as part of the CB1 development the majority of trees within the application site will be removed, including the avenue of limes on Station Road; and approximately how many trees will that be?

14. Councillor Howell to the Executive Councillor for Housing

When is City Homes going to fix the fence around the Davy Road flats?

15. From Councillor Wright to the Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation

Notwithstanding consultation in relation to possible developments to Jesus Green, widespread concern remains with both the process used to date and with many of the proposals. Can the Council give reassurance that an open and transparent process will be adopted by which these concerns will be given a fair hearing ahead of any commencement of works?

16. From Councillor Herbert to the Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation

What action is the Council taking to tackle erratic pool maintenance and repeated freezing conditions for swimmers at its Parkside Pool?

08/79 MOTION: Full Scrutiny of 2009 Executive Budget

Councillor Herbert proposed and Councillor Blencowe seconded the following motion:

Given budget demands on the Council in 2009 including:

- maintaining quality service delivery despite increased pressures on the Council's budget
- the need to switch priorities to respond to the recession, and assist people affected by it
- taking opportunities for building more affordable housing, including on Council land
- reduced current capital reserves following the £9m investment in the Landsbanki group, and the continuing need to recover these funds
- the need for improved risk management by the Council,

the Council asks the Chief Executive to add an extra budget Scrutiny Meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee with the Executive to address each of these issues before the 2009 Executive budget is adopted.

Under Procedure Rule 13.7.1, it was agreed to deal with the business at the meeting.

Councillor Nimmo-Smith proposed and Councillor Smart seconded the following amendment:

DELETE ALL AND REPLACE WITH

The Council recognises the many financial and policy pressures facing it in preparing the budgets for the coming financial years, which include

- the prospect of only a 0.5% increase in Cambridge's revenue support grant in the next two budgetary years while year-on-year inflation is currently running at 4%;
- the impact of falling interest rates on the Council's investment income;
- the shortfall of at least £1.3m in central government provision for the national 'free' concessionary fares scheme;
- the uncertainties regarding the eventual recoverability and impacts relating to investments in the Landsbanki group currently in administration;
- the need for improved risk management by the Council;

as well as

- the desire to maintain quality service delivery;
- the need to respond to the recession, and to assist people affected by it; and
- the importance of taking appropriate opportunities for building more affordable housing, including on Council land.

While noting that the four Scrutiny Committee meetings scheduled in January afford ample opportunities to consider the detail of the budget proposals, the Council requests the Executive to extend their statutory meeting on Thursday 29 January to allow for exploration of issues of budgetary strategy by any member of the Council prior to the Executive's decision on what budget for 2009/10 to recommend to Council for final scrutiny and decision.

The amendment was carried by 23 votes to 0

RESOLVED (by 28 votes to 0) That the Council

recognises the many financial and policy pressures facing it in preparing the budgets for the coming financial years, which include

- the prospect of only a 0.5% increase in Cambridge's revenue support grant in the next two budgetary years while year-on-year inflation is currently running at 4%;

- the impact of falling interest rates on the Council's investment income;
- the shortfall of at least £1.3m in central government provision for the national 'free' concessionary fares scheme;
- the uncertainties regarding the eventual recoverability and impacts relating to investments in the Landsbanki group currently in administration;
- the need for improved risk management by the Council;

as well as

- the desire to maintain quality service delivery;
- the need to respond to the recession, and to assist people affected by it; and
- the importance of taking appropriate opportunities for building more affordable housing, including on Council land.

While noting that the four Scrutiny Committee meetings scheduled in January afford ample opportunities to consider the detail of the budget proposals, the Council requests the Executive to extend their statutory meeting on Thursday 29 January to allow for exploration of issues of budgetary strategy by any member of the Council prior to the Executive's decision on what budget for 2009/10 to recommend to Council for final scrutiny and decision.

08/80 MOTION: Taxicard

Councillor Blencowe proposed and Councillor Walker seconded the following motion:

The Council is committed to retaining and improving the taxicard scheme and asks the Executive Councillor for Climate Change and Growth to bring forward improvements in the 2009 budget to address issues raised by users, disability organisations and COPE including greater flexibility on vouchers and entitlement.

On a show of hands, under paragraph 13.8 of the Council Procedure Rules, 20 members voted against dealing with the motion at the meeting and 12 in favour. The motion therefore stands referred without discussion to the Environment Scrutiny Committee for consideration and recommendation and to the Executive Councillor for Climate Change and Growth for decision.

08/81 MOTION: Dry Recycling

Councillor Newbold proposed and Councillor Herbert seconded the following motion:

The Council is concerned:

- that Cambridge City recycling performance on paper, glass and other materials is falling behind that by neighbouring and other Councils
- that plans for major recycling collection changes in 2009 have not been adequately shared with the public or Councillors

and calls for detailed consultation with households before any significant recycling changes are made, including to make sure that any changes address the different needs and sizes of homes and households across the City.

On a show of hands, under paragraph 13.8 of the Council Procedure Rules, 19 members voted against dealing with the motion at the meeting and 11 in favour. The motion therefore stands referred without discussion to the Environment Scrutiny Committee for consideration and recommendation and to the Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services for decision.

08/82 MOTION: National ID Car Scheme

Councillor Pitt proposed and Councillor Ward seconded the following motion:

The City Council welcomes the decision of Cambridgeshire County Council on 21 October 2008 to oppose the National ID card scheme.

The Council also notes with concern many recent developments in the development of the database state:

- 1) The introduction of biometric ID for foreign nationals here for legal reasons such as study and as the spouses of British nationals.
This could have an impact on Cambridge's universities.
- 2) The decision to make national ID cards compulsory for air-side workers at airports which will add no extra security.
- 3) The decision to potentially fine people £1000 for not telling the government about changing their name after marriage.
- 4) The implementation and extension of the universal child database.

The Council reaffirms its motion of 24 February 2005.

The Council regrets the decision of the County Council not to affiliate to the No2ID campaign and calls on the County Council to reconsider.

The Council also calls for other local authorities to join the County and City in opposition to the scheme.

Under Procedure Rule 13.8.1, it was agreed to deal with the business at the meeting.

Resolved (by 22 votes to 0) that the motion be agreed as set out above.

08/83 MOTION: Duration of the Meeting

Resolved at 10.30pm under Council Procedure Rule 10.1 that the meeting not be adjourned.

08/84 MOTION: Local Housing Allowance Scheme

Under paragraph 26 of the Council Procedure Rules, the Council gave its consent to permit Councillor Cantrill to alter the published motion as follows:

Councillor Cantrill moved and Councillor Levy seconded the following motion:

The City Council:

- Recognises the importance of helping residents of Cambridge, in particular those on low incomes, during the current economic crisis.
- Understands that up until April 2008, many eligible residents renting from private landlords had their rents paid in full by the City Council under the Housing Benefits Scheme.
- Is deeply concerned that the Government replaced the Housing Benefit Scheme with the new Local Housing Allowance Scheme and changed the rules that determined how much can be paid in Cambridge. As a result of this Government action, tenants found that the allowance did not cover their rents and they had to find the rest, which for those on low incomes is very difficult.
- Notes that the Government has told the City Council that people affected should be prepared to move out of Cambridge to find cheaper rents.

- Believes that the position taken by the Government is totally unacceptable and is causing considerable distress to residents within the City.
- Welcomes the action taken by the MP for Cambridge in Parliament to force the Government to agree to review the rules on this issue.
- Asks the Government to urgently reinstate the original basis of calculating the average rent.
- Requests all political parties on the Council to write to the Government requesting this change.
- Asks Executive Councillors and officers in the meantime to work to find ways of assisting those residents impacted, such that their financial distress is minimised.

Under Procedure Rule 13.8.1, it was agreed to deal with the business at the meeting.

Councillor Herbert proposed and Councillor Newbold seconded the following amendment:

Delete all after second bullet point but KEEP the last bullet point and insert two new bullet points in the gap created:

- Welcomes the commitments given by the Work and Pensions Junior Minister Kitty Ussher MP on 18 November that amendments will be moved to the regulations on the Rent Service Order at the earliest opportunity, and again the following week that 'Cambridge will be one of the local authorities that will be reviewed following the amendments to the Rent Service Order.'
- Asks officers to monitor how this issue affects City residents until it is resolved.

On a show of hands the amendment was lost by 18 votes to 7.

Resolved (by 19 votes to 0) that

The City Council:

- Recognises the importance of helping residents of Cambridge, in particular those on low incomes, during the current economic crisis.

- Understands that up until April 2008, many eligible residents renting from private landlords had their rents paid in full by the City Council under the Housing Benefits Scheme.
- Is deeply concerned that the Government replaced the Housing Benefit Scheme with the new Local Housing Allowance Scheme and changed the rules that determined how much can be paid in Cambridge. As a result of this Government action, tenants found that the allowance did not cover their rents and they had to find the rest, which for those on low incomes is very difficult.
- Notes that the Government has told the City Council that people affected should be prepared to move out of Cambridge to find cheaper rents.
- Believes that the position taken by the government is totally unacceptable and is causing considerable distress to residents within the City.
- Welcomes the action taken by the MP for Cambridge in Parliament to force the government to agree to review the rules on this issue.
- Asks the Government to urgently reinstate the original basis of calculating the average rent.
- Requests all political parties on the council to write to the Government requesting this change.
- Asks Executive Councillors and officers in the meantime to work to find ways of assisting those residents impacted, such that their financial distress is minimised.

08/85 TO RECEIVE RECORDS OF DECISION MADE BY MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE

The Council received the records of decisions made by Executive Councillors as set out in the agenda.

08/86 WRITTEN QUESTIONS/INFORMATION MINUTES

Members noted the written questions and answers circulated around the Chamber and received the minutes of Committees which were for information.

The Council concluded its business at 11.15pm

MAYOR