

Oral Questions

1. From Councillor Hart to the Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources

The City Council owned property, previously used as a Nursery School in Wadloes Road, Abbey, has been unoccupied for nearly a year. I understand that the Council is seeking another tenant. The property is maintained to an adequate level by the property department, however, in recent months local residents have expressed concern regarding the future of this building.

What action has been taken to secure another tenant? And what is the plan of action for the property if it is still empty after one year?

2. From Councillor Herbert to the Leader

What evidence can he provide the Council to justify his press statement that £7.2 million of the council's money, including 80% of the £5,000,000 in Landsbanki in Iceland, is expected to be recovered?

3. From Councillor Hipkin to the Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services

What measures, if any, should be taken to ensure that domestic waste collections are not undertaken at such speed as to result in a stream of litter being left in their wake?

4. From Councillor Howell to Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services

What is the Council doing to find solutions to the problems of damaged grass verges around the City?

5. From Councillor Newbold to the Leader

How many lights were left on at the South Area Housing Office throughout 'Earth Hour' (and are also left on regularly at weekends) contrary to the Leader's press statement calling on everyone else in Cambridge to support the Earth Hour switch off, and to follow the council's supposed example on energy efficiency?

6. From Councillor Wright to the Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources

How many agency staff are currently employed by Cambridge City Council, is this an increase on recent years? What, if any, is the extra cost involved to the council by employing agency staff and what impact might this have on the ability of the council to deliver continuity of service to the public and to members?

Questions 1 – 6 were covered during the 30 minute allocation at the Council Meeting. The Mayor requested that for the remaining questions, a written response be made (see below)

7. From Councillor Walker to the Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources

What rights do residents have in the 'Love Cambridge' Partnership?

Answer from Council Cantrill, Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources

- As Councillor Walker is aware, prior to the launch of Love Cambridge – considerable efforts were undertaken to ensure that residents as a stakeholder group are intimately involved in the partnership – despite the defused nature of such a group.
- This included extensive publicity regarding seeking a resident as a Director on the partnership board – both in general and to resident associations across the city.
- The response from residents was good. If she recalls the residents meeting where she was present saw individuals from a significant component of the resident associations attend
- Also at that meeting, both I and officers explained in detail the rights that the various stakeholder groups have within the partnership in particular residents
- In general terms we are encouraging residents to join as representatives for particular residents associations.
- However if there is a particular individual who is not a member of a residents association but feels that they can make a positive contribution to the work of the Partnership, the Articles of Association does allow for them to join.

8. From Councillor Howell to Executive Councillor for Environmental and Waste Services

How many instances of graffiti have been cleaned off by the City Council since May last year i) Across Cambridge ii) in Coleridge ward, and how many of these resulted in reports to the police and a crime being recorded?

The total number of instances of graffiti cleaned off by the Council in the period since May 2008 is 4256. Coleridge Ward unusually recorded 583 incidents in this period, the norm for this Ward is approximately 33 incidents per month.

The pattern and level of graffiti changed significantly in January 2009 with 106 incidents and again in March 2009 with a further 187 incidents. These incidents consisted of small to medium sized tags, mostly on street hoardings fronting development sites in Rustat Road and Clifton Road. The record shows repeat offending at both of these two locations. All reported graffiti has been removed or painted over within 5 days of the report . In addition all instances have been reported to the police at the end of each month with Streetscene officers working with the police with the aim of apprehending offenders.

9. From Councillor Herbert to the Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources/Executive Councillor for Housing

Why were Coleridge Ward Councillors not told the value or detail of major works that the Council agreed a developer would undertake to former Tiverton House sheltered housing, before the building has still to be sold by the Council, and what did Executive Councillors know about these works?

It is very likely that we will exchange contracts on the sale of Tiverton House on 22 April with completion in mid-May. It has been agreed that the purchaser can enter the property and undertake specified works between exchange of contracts and completion. They have agreed the extent of the works with us and will pay a 20% deposit rather than the usual 10% as a result. This will enable the property to be brought back in to beneficial occupation that bit sooner.

10. From Councillor Wright to the Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources

How many solar panels have been installed to date by Cambridge City Council? Have technical problems been experienced in their operation? What plans are there to increase the number of such installations?

Answer from Council Cantrill, Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Resources

I'm aware of the following 11 solar panel installations on Council properties: 9 solar hot water and 2 photovoltaic electricity panels.

Facility	Site	Renewable system	Installation date	Details	Problem to date	Officer
Public toilets	Lammas Land	Solar hot water	2006	These were fitted as part of the modernisation of these facilities in 2006. Because these facilities are beside a heavily used outdoor children's paddling pool, a parent room was added to the facilities complete with a shower.	None	Bob Kerry
Public toilets	Cherry Hinton High Street.	Solar hot water	2006	Solar panels were fitted as part of the modernisation of these facilities in 2006.	None	Bob Kerry
Public toilets	Arbury Court	Solar hot water	2009	Solar panels were fitted as part of the modernisation. these facilities are due to open next Wednesday (29th April)	None	Bob Kerry

Sheltered housing	Rawlyn Court	6 solar hot water systems	2005	6 solar hot water systems fitted as part of major refurbishment project, with external grant funding and Sustainable City project grant.	Although there were a few technical problems (as with any relatively new technology) and some end user issues, these were all resolved	Sam Griggs
Depot	Mill Road depot supplies building	Photovoltaic solar electricity panels	2007	Consisting of 26 Sharp 162Wp PV modules supplied by solarcentury, the array covers a total area of 34m ² and is capable of producing a total peak DC power of 4.212 kilowatts. The estimated annual energy yield for the array is 3500 kilowatt hours.	None reported.	Jonathon Church
Council house	Calder Houses Refurbishment Project	Photovoltaic solar electricity panels	2002	1.28kWp PV module installed on 3-bed family house as part of wider refurbishment programme.	Some initial problems with arranging export metering.	Will Barfield

Regarding future plans for solar panel installations, Sam Griggs (Home Energy Officer) reports that there is a MTOPI (1d, energy efficiency) that covers the total number of renewable energy installations on Local Authority housing stock and this has a target of 14 by end of 09/10.

There is an energy review of the Council's pools and leisure centres to identify opportunities for carbon reduction investments. As the attached analysis shows (which was undertaken to assess the feasibility of a micro turbine on Jesus Weir), there are more effective measures from a carbon and financial perspective that should be prioritised before renewable energy options are considered. Therefore I would not expect to see proposals for renewable installations on our pools and leisure centres as part of this work, and given the much better carbon reduction options which I suspect will be identified.

Cambridge City Council has very challenging carbon reduction objectives and I think it is right that these are not tied to any targets associated with particular technologies. The Climate Change Fund prioritises investments with a payback of less than 5 years and which cost less than £100 per tonne of CO₂, and current renewable technologies often do not meet these criteria, whereas many other investments do. Setting targets for installations of renewables would I think prevent us from securing the biggest carbon saving for the available budget.

In addition to the renewable installations listed we have fitted solar panels to 6 pay and display parking machines.