

BUILDING A FAIRER CAMBRIDGE TOGETHER

'One Cambridge Fair for All' - The Next Phase

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Introduction

"I'm a pessimist because of intelligence, but an optimist because of will."
Antonio Gramsci

Cambridge City Council faces a set of daunting challenges in the coming year. They will require all of our reserves of will and intelligence to face down.

We need to give a concerted and fearless response to the continued central government assaults on our ability to deliver the services and housing that Cambridge residents are crying out for. Our financial position is likely to remain challenging in the face of further cuts to our core government funding. Changes to right-to-buy, especially in terms of housing associations, threaten to devastate affordable Cambridge housing for rent. This is on top of the acute housing crisis that this city already faces, with rents, house prices and letting agency charges out of hand.

Furthermore, we face an enormous challenge to protect the poorest in our city from the effects of another round of welfare cuts, as well as the continuation of damaging national policies like the Bedroom Tax. As shown by both the Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy and the recent report on deprivation in Cambridge conducted by 'Cambridge Commons', many people in Cambridge are still struggling at the bottom of the income scale. Health outcomes and life expectancy remain dauntingly unequal. Many residents struggle just to pay for the basics, and even then their efforts are not always enough to avoid hardship. We will be unrelentingly on their side.

Tackling our transport crisis, in combination with our City Deal partners, is another crucial imperative for the Council. The city too often suffers gridlock, especially at rush hour. Public transport remains insufficient and unreliable due to congestion. Only by tackling this acute underlying crisis will Cambridge be able to continue to grow and retain its place as a world-leading, innovative centre of research, education and employment.

In our first year, we took some important first steps in tackling these issues. Our three year budget plan and comprehensive review of reserves has allowed considerable investment in the revenue streams that will help us to better weather the national storm of cuts and austerity. We have worked hard to ensure that our programme of service transformation, including new modes of delivery and shared services, reflects our values of fairness and justice, as well as efficiency.

We will work to protect the core services that residents need by working with our impressive staff team and partner councils to deliver quality services at lower cost. We will continue to emphasise bureaucracy-busting and more efficient internal processes, through our Support Services Review and other transformation projects. We will focus on reducing backroom costs not front line services in making the major spending reductions required as a result of Government spending cuts.

We will continue to implement our plan to invest approximately £26,000,000 of previously underused earmarked reserves in commercial property and general fund housing and deliver far better returns for local taxpayers. This will allow us to ameliorate and minimise the painful impacts of spending cuts in future years. We will also develop detailed and deliverable plans for investment in the intermediate housing-for-rent sector, which will contribute to alleviating the city's housing crisis.

We are building more council houses in Cambridge. We are working in partnership with South Cambridgeshire to build more with them too. We also continue to jointly implement our two Local Plans for 33,000 extra homes, including targets in both for a norm of 40% of developments to be affordable homes. We will prioritise these programmes, seek extra powers to build, and also improve council housing, cut empty homes and make improvements for people in the growing Cambridge private rented sector.

We will continue to share the city's prosperity more fairly by directing extra resources to those who need our help the most through our Anti-Poverty Strategy. Our citywide Living Wage campaign aims to ensure all local employees are paid a fair wage, and can afford local housing and other bills. We will press local employers hard while ensuring that we fulfil ourselves the terms of our own Living Wage Accreditation, particularly by continuing to bring contractors and subcontractors in line with our pro-Living Wage stance.

In the year to come, we will work hard to implement the further recommendations of the Anti-Poverty Strategy. These plans include the implementation of a digital inclusion strategy that will help more and more residents on low-incomes get online.

We will continue to develop and implement our plans to expand the reach and uptake of the services of credit unions in the city. We will continue our work in partnership with organisations like the Citizens' Advice Bureau, the Cambridge Foodbank and Cambridge Re-use to protect existing services and develop new ways to help those left struggling as a result of central government policies.

On transport, we will support radical changes through the City Deal partnership to sort out worsening rush hour gridlock in central Cambridge. We will work to create reliable, expanded and better used bus services, work to make Park and Ride the option of choice for incoming commuters, invest in more safe cycling routes, and improve the main routes into Cambridge, including for those living nearest them.

We also recognise the gravity of the challenge to our community and planet from Climate Change. This is why in the coming year we will oversee a comprehensive review of our Climate Change Strategy. This will include bringing forward a new generation of investments in the Council's energy efficiency, and other projects to reduce our carbon footprint and that of other organisations in the city, by working with external partners.

We have again been given a clear mandate by the people of Cambridge in this year's election to continue and expand our work to make this city a fairer and more socially just place. In the national context, this task will get ever harder, but we have the optimism, will and perseverance to work unceasingly to deliver what we say we will and protect those who lack a voice. We will not shirk from this responsibility. Under Labour, our unique city will be a bastion of hope and positive action in a dark national context.

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1. DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE PROSPERITY FOR CAMBRIDGE AND FAIR SHARES FOR ALL

The Council will:

- Work with businesses, the Universities, Addenbrookes, Local Enterprise Partnership and City Deal partners to deliver and manage sustainable prosperity to maximise the benefits for Cambridge residents and businesses. We will support the new Cambridge Promotion Agency, working alongside other business organisations to achieve our goals and address challenges that accompany growth, particularly the need to improve transport and deliver more affordable housing, particularly for rent.

- Work with councils and business networks to anticipate future significant company moves and expansions in Cambridge, and prepare detailed plans by the partners to successfully manage this growth.
- Continue to share the city's prosperity across Cambridge and target additional resources generated to people who need the Council's help the most.
- Implement the Council's new Anti-Poverty Strategy action plan, in line with agreed timescales and work with city voluntary organisations tackling poverty.
- Work with our colleagues on the County Council to protect the Cambridgeshire Local Assistance Scheme, and, if necessary, consider what further steps are needed to help those seriously threatened by Government welfare cuts.
- Protect our council tax support scheme, ensuring that the poorest are protected against cuts to their income.
- Ensure that Discretionary Housing Payments continue to reach the people who most need assistance.
- Work with employers, our Living Wage co-ordinator, and the Living Wage Foundation to implement our Living Wage action plan, significantly increasing, year after year, the number of Cambridge workers paid at least the Living Wage, so they will have a decent income to live on in the context of high local housing costs. This will involve concerted promotion of Living Wage accreditation to all local employers.
- Respond to anticipated further Government welfare cuts and changes, and make sure the weakest in our community are protected, including by joint work with local credit unions, housing associations and other partners.
- Continue to implement planned projects to assist low income families suffering water and fuel poverty.
- Implement a Digital Inclusion Strategy that will expand training and help for low-income households to get online.
- Work specifically with credit unions and others to develop services that will assist people to get debt and other financial advice. This will include increased access to affordable loans, accounts and other crucial financial products.
- Implement new sports development policies to promote greater opportunities for residents in most need of support to live healthy, active lives.
- Increase use of community, leisure and arts facilities by people on low incomes.

- Fund free swimming lessons for children in low income families, and other children who cannot swim when they leave primary school.
- Promote financial education and saving for young people by implementing a new Junior Savers project in partnership with schools.
- Continue to provide £900,000 per year in funding for community groups, focusing on groups helping the most deprived in Cambridge, including Cambridge CAB, Winter Comfort, and the Women's Aid Refuge, and the provision of high quality advice and support services across Cambridge.
- Work with an NHS surgery to implement a trial with Cambridge CAB to deliver local advice services in a disadvantaged part of Cambridge, and consider possible expansions of the pilot.
- Continue to expand City Council apprenticeships and work with other employers to achieve the additional City Deal target of 420 extra apprenticeships by 2020.
- Work with City Deal partners to establish a new Skills Service partnership to generate new business links with schools and colleges.
- Review the Council's community centre provision to ensure its future sustainability and set up new partnerships to involve the local communities they serve, with a particular focus on promoting the objectives of the Anti-Poverty Strategy.
- Direct future developer funding for community centres to where it will achieve greatest benefit, for new and existing residents.

2. TACKLING THE CITY'S HOUSING CRISIS

The Council will:

- Continue to invest in building more high quality energy efficient council homes along with completing work on the £10,000,000 invested in 2014/15 in new council developments, providing 52 extra homes in Queen Edith's, Abbey, Cherry Hinton and King's Hedges. Lobby strongly with other councils for greater freedom to borrow against the value Council's housing stock, to fund new house building at social rents.
- Develop and embed our Cambridge social rent programme to ensure that existing stock is not converted to the government's Affordable Rent policies and new stock is let at genuinely affordable rents.

- Challenge any proposal from the new Government to extend Right to Buy to Housing Associations, or force the Council to sell off its own stock above a regional median value, as this would present an insurmountable threat to the City's own housing stock and our ability to house our city's low income residents.
- Undertake a comprehensive review of the Housing Revenue Account to achieve the best deal for our existing tenants and invest in our council homes and estates as well as building new council homes for future tenants.
- Develop a Community Charter on how the Council redevelops its own sites to ensure there is a real partnership between local residents and the Council and that local communities benefit from redevelopment and have a strong voice.
- Ensure no City Homes tenant will be evicted solely because of the bedroom tax and continue to lobby government through the MPs for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire for the repeal of the legislation.
- Use General Fund reserves left lying dormant previously to invest in new intermediate homes at affordable sub-market rents for those with low priority for social rent homes, and generate revenue to protect services.
- Work to bring forward proposals to redevelop the Mill Road depot site for housing, including social, intermediate and cooperative housing.
- Continue to improve conditions for private sector tenants, cracking down on rogue landlords who rent out unsafe properties and implementing a comprehensive Cambridge Landlord Accreditation and Safety Scheme. We will also explore the feasibility of a Social Letting Agency.
- Tackle the problem of empty homes in the City.
- Maintain and defend our planning policy for major new developments to achieve 40% affordable housing and continue to lobby against Government measures which let developers off their obligations.
- Work with South Cambridgeshire to jointly implement our two Local Plans once approved by the Planning Inspector and providing 33,000 new homes across the Greater Cambridge area. We will also start work on a single joint Local Plan for the shared growth in our area.
- Set up partnerships to build more affordable homes in Cambridge through the City Deal. We will also create a joint Housing Delivery Agency with South Cambridgeshire and Cambridgeshire County Council to build more affordable homes for rent including 1000 extra homes on public sector owned land in the Greater Cambridge area, over and above those included in the two Local Plans.

- Working with the County Council and the NHS, support vulnerable people to sustain independent lifestyles in their own homes and local communities, and work to meet the needs of an ageing Cambridge population.

3. MAKING CAMBRIDGE SAFER AND MORE EQUAL

The Council will:

- Work in close partnership with the city police to help them tackle citywide and Area Committee priorities, and address new challenges where we can assist them.
- Implement the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for Petersfield Green and the Mill Road cemetery, to end the decade-old problem of Anti-Social Behaviour by intoxicated groups intimidating residents.
- Make the reduction of Domestic Violence a priority, working to implement the conditions of the Council's 'White Ribbon Status'.
- Work to increase the impact and value achieved from the Council's £350,000 community safety budget.
- Influence countywide policing priorities and resources, including support for Cambridge projects.
- Respond to County Council plans to cut overnight street lighting and seek continued provision that meets community expectations and ensures lighting needed for public safety. Continue also work from last year with the County Council, to identify parts of the city centre needing improved lighting.
- Continue to tackle discrimination in Cambridge, so that we retain our welcoming and tolerant city, and work with all local organisations and religious groups committed to tackling inequality.

4. INVESTING IN IMPROVING TRANSPORT

The Council will:

- Contribute to investing over £100,000,000 to 2020 in City Deal funding to tackle the city's transport and congestion problems, with plans including:
 - switching more journeys from cars to buses, cycling and other options by developing initiatives to reduce the frequency of city centre gridlock and increase

bus reliability to enable bus usage to expand. In the process, we will tackle air pollution caused by near-stationary queues of traffic.

- developing interlinked improvement plans for the city centre and Inner Ring Road, and for Histon Road, Milton Road and the new Cambridge North station, the A428 and Madingley Road, and the A1307, Babraham Road and Hills Road.

- Increase investment in on-road cycling and designated city cycle routes via the City Deal, including implementing the £8.4 million investment in the Chisholm Trail and the creation of a new cycle and pedestrian bridge over the River Cam.
- Press for further transport investments in addition to the City Deal, including seeking funding for additional rail and cycling investments. Seek Government support for adding rail and station capacity, including a new station at Addenbrookes, extra investment in the line to Newmarket and Ipswich, links to Soham and Wisbech, the reopening of the East West rail line linking Cambridge and Oxford, and opportunities for new sustainable housing developments along these routes.
- Complete the implementation of 20 mph across Cambridge, with continued public involvement and education, and seek support from the police for enforcement too.
- Seek an end to extra charges at Park and Ride sites and work with the County Council to provide alternatives to on-street commuter parking where it contributes to congestion or road safety problems. This will require joint and joined up action by the Council and the County Council.
- Develop a plan for the redevelopment of Park Street car park.
- Represent the city's interests at the public inquiry into the Highways Agency's Detailed plans for the A14 and prepare for any mitigation needed after this construction work, integrating measures with wider city Deal investments.
- Limit the number of licensed taxis to deal with oversupply and resulting problems with over-ranking in the city centre.
- Work with the police to stop vans and other vehicles blocking bus routes and cycle lanes. Work with the County Council to reduce on-street parking on main routes where it adds to congestion or road safety problems, and to reduce congestion at bottlenecks and increase safety for cyclists and pedestrians, for example through yellow box junctions.
- Increase the number of cycle parking spaces available in the centre of Cambridge.

5. PROTECTING OUR CITY'S UNIQUE QUALITY OF LIFE

- Continue to make improvements to play areas and public spaces while respecting their character.
- Implement our City Centre Access Review to make the centre more accessible for all, including older people, the disabled and families with children.
- Run a repeat of the successful 2015 Community Fair early 2016, to celebrate the diversity of local community groups and assist them gain volunteers and offers of support.
- Implement community facilities in new development areas in South Cambridge and NW Cambridge and add community development and sports initiatives in NW Cambridge.
- Produce a new public tree strategy and policies for the successful management of the city's tree stock.
- Review the Council's moorings policy, including the services we provide, and associated fees and charges.
- Implement our limit on the number of taxi plates to deal with the oversupply of local taxis and resulting problems including over-ranking in the City Centre.
- Further extend free Wifi in the City Centre and in disadvantaged parts of the city, and work with Cambridge University and others to extend super-fast broadband and mobile reception to parts of the city with inadequate provision currently.
- Invest resources in Local Environmental Improvements, and ensure that those schemes are promptly delivered. We will also continue to implement our plans for improving Local Centres.
- Work closely with local retailers and businesses to promote flourishing local retail services, particularly in partnership with our 'Chesterton Co-ordinator'
- Commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the end of WWII at the Big Weekend and other summer events, working with South Cambridgeshire, and involve those who served Britain in wartime and their families.

6. TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE, AND MAKING CAMBRIDGE CLEANER AND GREENER

The Council will:

- Conduct a comprehensive review of our Climate Change Strategy. As well as investigating how we can work better with local voluntary organisations to reduce the city's carbon footprint, we will also review our Carbon Management Plan and invest in a new generation of projects designed to reduce our own carbon footprint, and increase our energy efficiency. We will build upon the work the Council has done to promote the Green Deal, as well as our work with Cambridge Retrofit, to become a leader in tackling Climate Change.
- Investigate options and implement viable schemes to expand the range of recycling available for Cambridge residents and businesses, assisted by joint working with South Cambridgeshire, and increase the composting of commercial food waste.
- Run campaigns to encourage greater recycling by Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) including blue bins and a trial for collecting food waste from a typical block of flats to and establish if these schemes can be expanded further.
- Further increase the number of permanent litter and recycling bins, and increase emptying frequency for city centre parks in summer.
- Effectively engage all Area Committees, using Environmental Data Reports, to set a rolling programme of locally targeted public realm actions, including education and enforcement.
- Pilot a Cambridge civic pride campaign, engaging community groups and individual volunteers in looking after their local environment, including Friends Groups, 'Rivercare' and community litter picks.
- Set up a partnership project to tackle the issue of abandoned bikes/ locks in the city by raising community awareness, especially amongst students, supporting the community to report issues, and maximising the recycling/ re-use of abandoned bikes and locks.
- Expand initiatives to tackle dog fouling and unruly or stray dogs, including more education visits and patrols, assisted by new bin stickers designed by local schoolchildren.

- Continue our ward blitzes and Community Clear-Out Days, and increase enforcement against fly tipping, littering and related environmental crimes.
- Continue to crack down on illegal punt operations and nuisance punt touts by building the proposed gate at Garrett Hostel Lane, and continuing legal action against offenders.
- Work to reduce air pollution in the City Centre and near major city roads by implementing the Council's 2015 Air Quality Action Plan.
- Develop a plan to improve uptake of low emission taxis and work through the bus quality partnership to seek an increase in low emission buses. We will also submit a bid to the Office for Low Emission Vehicles, with the County Council, to support the introduction of hybrid and electric vehicles into the bus and taxi fleets in Cambridge.

7. PROTECTING ESSENTIAL SERVICES AND TRANSFORMING COUNCIL DELIVERY

The Council will:

- Implement our three-year sustainable savings plan to achieve our savings targets, and develop our financial strategy for future years to 2020, taking account of any further Government cuts to our core funding. We will do everything in our power to ensure that this plan minimises and ameliorates the need for cuts to core services.
- Continue to reinvest the £26,000,000 previously sitting in near-nil interest bank accounts in commercial property and in 'Invest for Income' schemes, including building new housing for rent, and in the process generate added income of over £1,000,000 per year to protect essential Council services for the future.
- Implement new procedures for capital projects to ensure that our capital plan is delivered efficiently and on time, thereby reducing delays and slippage.
- Implement our office accommodation strategy to ensure that we make more efficient use of our buildings and introduce more 'hot-desking' and flexible working, while retaining a city-centre site to accommodate our Customer Service Centre. We will consider expanding the range of services provided at the Centre to seamlessly integrate the services we and other community groups provide to residents, particularly those struggling with low incomes.

- Invest in efficient shared services with South Cambridgeshire and other councils to deliver waste collection and recycling, legal and computing services, CCTV, building control and planning, and some financial services.
- Implement the Support Services Review, and undertake wider reviews across the Council to ensure we are more efficient and entrepreneurial, using new technology to improve services to our customers, Cambridge residents and businesses.
- Implement our Destination Management Organisation to improve tourism management and leadership, working jointly with representatives of local tourism businesses.
- Ensure, as a good employer, that we support our staff through a major ongoing change programme, including increasing their input on change plans and staff support provided by their trades unions assisted by increasing the Facilities Agreement.
- Continue work to implement the National Living Wage in our contracts, work with contractors to help them achieve Living Wage Accreditation, and ensure that we rigorously implement the terms of our Living Wage Accreditation.
- Develop a Young People’s Engagement Project to give young people more say about their city and local service priorities.
- Press the new Government to devolve more powers to Cambridge City and Cambridgeshire Councils, working with other councils, with our two MPs and with business, University partners and the voluntary sector, as the local Cambridge partnership is best placed to manage Cambridge growth and address local challenges successfully.
- Continue to argue the case locally and nationally for one Cambridge area Council, responsible for all local services and decisions, and for effective partnerships and funding to secure the best possible future for all our residents.