

## CABINET

THURSDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 2011

### DECISIONS

Set out below is a summary of the decisions taken at the meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 8 September 2011. Decisions made by the Cabinet will be subject to call-in. Recommendations made to the Council are not subject to call-in. The wording used does not necessarily reflect the actual wording that will appear in the minutes.

If you have any queries about any matters referred to in this decision sheet please contact Holly Adams.

#### 1. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) SELF-FINANCING: CONSEQUENTIAL ACTIONS

Cabinet **AGREED**:

- (a) to transfer of the hostel site and nearby properties at Robson Court, Waterbeach, as listed in Appendix 1 to the report to Cabinet, to Sanctuary Carr-Gomm at nil value;
- (b) the demolition of the properties at Robinson Court, Grays Road, Gamlingay and Fairview, Longstanton before 31 March 2017, as listed in Appendix 2 to this report;
- (c) the appointment of a specialist financial advisor to develop options for the raising of the funds required for the Council's self-financing settlement commitment; and
- (d) to delegate authority to the Executive Director (Corporate Services), in consultation with the Leader and Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder, to pursue the Council's credit rating.

#### **Other Options Considered:**

##### **Robson Court, Waterbeach**

The Council could decide not to transfer the properties and retain the buildings in their existing format with similar management arrangements in place. This option will not address any physical problems associated with an aging building and the general needs units will become more difficult to let over time and require additional maintenance expenditure.

##### **Robinson Court, Grays Road, Gamlingay and Fairview, Longstanton**

The Council could decide to retain the current properties but this would require disproportionate investment to bring them up to standard and may result in increased level of voids as unpopular units remain unlet.

#### **Debt**

The Council could approach financial institutions directly over the raising of bond finance. Confidence is a critical factor in the success of this type of transaction, however. Lack of confidence in counterparties, i.e. in this case the Council, or a badly framed approach to the market would be seen as a higher risk for lenders and could be reflected in higher costs. Working with a knowledgeable, independent third party has been shown to reduce the costs to bond issuers and helps to deliver a successful outcome.

Council in November, or even at a later stage in the process, might conclude that the Public Works Loan Board offers a better funding solution over a bond placement. The appointment of a specialist financial advisor now will allow these options to be comprehensively benchmarked against each other in the light of the emerging HRA

Business Plan.

**Reason For Decision:** The transfer of the Robson Court site, scheduled at Appendix 1 of the report to Cabinet, will enable the redevelopment and modernisation of the temporary accommodation available to the Council.

The demolition of the obsolete and unpopular properties, listed in Appendix 2 of the report to Cabinet, will enable re-provision of affordable housing on the sites. A decision is required now so that these properties can be discounted from the Government's calculations of the final HRA self-financing settlement figure.

Should Council in November wish to raise funds through a public or private bond placement there are a number of steps the Council will need to have progressed by that stage. The appointment of a specialist advisor will facilitate the development of these options and will allow the Council to put in place the necessary initial arrangements.

## 2. ESTABLISHING A YOUTH COUNCIL

Cabinet **AGREED** to

- (a) establish South Cambridgeshire District Youth Council from September 2012; and
- (b) to adopt the Action Plan at Appendix A of the report to Cabinet.

**Other Options Considered:** Not to establish a Youth Council. The Council could struggle to find alternative means of demonstrating its commitment to South Cambridgeshire's young people as set out in the Children and Young People's Plan, and could fail to achieve Charter Status for Elected Member Development.

Not to establish a Shadow Youth Council and to formalise the process for elections, the terms of reference and the way that the Youth Council would operate within the Council's existing Constitution before seeking candidates. The recommendation to establish a Shadow Youth Council ensures that the young people have a say in the development of their Council through active participation and consultation, to produce an outcome which best matches the aspirations of the young people within the Council's existing structures.

Young people have an active interest in their local communities and the opportunities afforded by a Youth Council will provide a high level of interest. Young people are very interested in housing development and growth areas because they worry about their own futures as well as those of others in their local communities (eg, where might they live and work). Young people want to see local training and employment opportunities and easier access to facilities across the district. A key area of interest for young people is also climate change and environmental sustainability; all of these areas would very much benefit from the input of young people.

**Reason For Decision:** Establishment of a Youth Council supports the Council's commitments set out in the Children and Young People's Plan to provide opportunities for children and young people to have a say in decisions that may affect them in their local area. It will also support the Council's bid for Quality Charter accreditation for Member Development, by increasing opportunities for elected councillors in their roles as community leaders, working with all sections of the community and supporting the District's young people to become engaged in local government issues.

## 3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES 2011/12

Cabinet **AGREED** the priority actions contained in the appendix of the report, including the restructuring of the £150,000 Economic Downturn Measures budget allocation to be

split £90,000 for 2011/12 and £60,000 for 2012/13.

**Other Options Considered:** None.

**Reason For Decision:** South Cambridgeshire District Council has, since increasing the economic development function in 2008, successfully delivered benefits to the District (residents and businesses) as detailed in this report. The Council wishes to continue its positive contribution to developing and enabling the prosperity of the District, especially with the new responsibilities facing Local Authorities through the Growth Act and the “Localism” agenda; as well as within more challenging economic times (recession and austerity measures).

The appendix contains a schedule of economic development priority actions that include the economic downturn measures support.