

Cabinet

Monday, 14 November 2022

Decisions

Set out below is a summary of the decisions taken at the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 14 November 2022. 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 Jonathan Malton.

1. Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards Policy

Cabinet:

Approved the proposed Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards policy.

Options Considered: Cabinet could have:

- a) Approved the proposed policy with amendments.
- b) Refused the approval of the proposed policy.

Reason for Decision: The Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015 enable Local Authorities to impose financial penalties on landlords who let sub-standard properties in breach of the regulations (up to a maximum of £5,000 per property).

The Council has the discretion to decide the amount of financial penalty up to the maximum limits set by the regulations, as detailed above. It is therefore incumbent upon the Council to agree a policy on how it intends to levy these financial penalties. The policy (Appendix A) fully outlines this and provides Council Officers with a means to calculate a financial penalty that is well reasoned and proportionate to the breaches of the regulations in question.

2. Mobile Homes (Fit & Proper Person Policies and Fees & Charges)

Cabinet:

Approved the two proposed Mobile Homes – Fit & Proper Person policies (determination policy and fees policy) as well as the proposed fees & charges for Mobile Homes.

Options Considered: Cabinet could have:

- a) Approved the proposed policies and fees & charges structure with amendments.
- b) Refused the approval of the proposed policies and fees & charges structure.

Reason for Decision: Local authorities are required to introduce a fit and proper person test for mobile home site owners, or the person appointed to manage the site, unless they are eligible for an exemption under the Regulations. The determination policy and accompanying fees policy will provide the Council with the framework and be able to do this in a fair, consistent and transparent way. Furthermore, the introduction of a new fees and charges structure for Mobile Homes will ensure that the Council is able to accurately recover its costs for Mobile Homes related enforcement and administration.

3. Future Use of Plots of HRA Land

Cabinet:

Noted the history of the self-build project and **approved** the below actions on a site-by-site basis:

- a) Blakeland Hill, Duxford: seek market valuation and sell without self-build restrictions;
- b) Coploe Road, Ickleton: offer on license to the neighbour as garden land;
- c) Falkner Road, Sawston: retain as garages and explore clustering development opportunity in future;
- d) Church Street, Harston: explore opportunities to support Doubling Nature Strategy;
- e) Horseshoes Lane, Weston Colville: seek market valuation and sell without self-build restrictions;
- f) Orchard Close, Cottenham: explore opportunity for “clustering” with other Council projects in the village. If viability cannot be established at tender, seek valuation and sell without self-build restrictions;
- g) Primrose Walk, Little Gransden: delegated authority be granted to the Lead Cabinet Member for Housing in consultation with the Head of Housing to conduct negotiations with the Parish Council and defer the recommendation to Cabinet in December 2022;
- h) Balsham Road, Linton: offer land on license to adjoining council tenant

Options Considered: Cabinet could have:

- a) Proceeded with alternative options in relation to each of the sites listed above, [presented in paragraphs 14 – 21 of the report](#).
- b) Requested alternative recommendations and instruct officers on that basis.

Reason for Decision: Where market sale is proposed, removing any caveats associated with the historical self and custom build project from the conditions of sale would ensure that SCDC achieve a full market value for the sale a public asset, and remove the risk of incurring further costs associated with legal actions to enforce any such conditions.

4. Cost of Living Crisis Support for Residents

Cabinet:

Approved the priorities and allocated funding set out in paragraphs to support South Cambridgeshire communities during the current cost-of-living crisis.

Options Considered: Cabinet could have:

- a) Not progressed with any of the recommended options set out in the report and either do nothing or ask officers to carry out further work.
- b) Approved some of the recommended options set out in the report Cabinet and provide officers with feedback on those to be prioritised.

Reason for Decision: The Council declared a cost-of-living crisis at its September 2022 Council meeting. Below are the recommended options that officers have developed following the agreed motion at Full Council and engagement with the Lead Cabinet Member for Resources and Lead Cabinet Member for Communities. The recommendations recognise support for vulnerable people needs to include those who are just about managing in our communities. A number of these are people who have not needed to seek support before. Each option includes cost implications. Some of the additional work can be funded through a grant provided by the ICS and others will require the use of available funding being earmarked for this purpose.

5. Local Council Tax Support

Cabinet:

Approved Option 1 for consultation with residents, stakeholders, including Precepting Authorities and Parish Councils.

Options Considered: Cabinet could have:

Approved Option 2:

- Maximum of 100% reduction scheme for all working age claimants of LCTS
- Uprate LCTS calculation annually in line with September CPI mirroring DWP uprating arrangements for income-based benefits

This support residents but less incentives to encourage residents to actively seek employment and secondly would not enable the council to fully utilise the automation software.

This proposal would require the council to consult with residents and stakeholders

Approve Option 3, continue with current scheme

- Protected Scheme -100% Maximum scheme for those working age families with disabilities, carers, including lone parents with children under 5
- Working Age Scheme – 95% for those who do not meet the requirements for the protected scheme.

This option would mean that some low-income households would be paying

more council tax although the numbers are small; cost of living rises in income claimant received may not cover all increases in living cost and they may be financially worse off.

This proposal would not require the council to consult with residents and stakeholders

Reason for Decision: There is considerable economic uncertainty due to the current cost of living crisis and the LCTS has supported South Cambridgeshire's residents to pay their Council tax.

The Council has announced a cost-of-living Crisis and changes to LCTS will increase the support to the most vulnerable residents.

The recommended option (Option1) will increase the support provided to residents, including those who are on lower incomes and in work, and enable the service to expand the use of automation software. The software enables most of the income changes for Universal Credit to be processed automatically without manual intervention.

6. 2021/22 Provisional General Fund Revenue and Capital Outturn

Cabinet:

- a) **Acknowledged** the 2021/22 general fund revenue outturn position as summarised in Appendix A, the operational underspend of £0.490 million, and the shortfall after income from Taxation and Government Grants in the year of £0.747 million, and the explanations provided for the variances compared to the revised 2021/22 revenue budget;
- b) **Acknowledged** the consequent increase in the General Fund as at 31 March 2022 of £2.955m to around £14.7m;
- c) In relation to the Capital Programme:
 - i) **Noted** the 2021/22 capital outturn of £32,420 million;
 - ii) **Acknowledged** the performance achieved in relation to the Capital Programme schemes substantially completed in 2021/2022, summarised in Appendix B.
 - iii) **Recommended** to Council the carry forwards of £3.344 million in relation to General Fund capital projects due mainly to slippage.
 - iv) **Noted** that a full review of the Capital Programme will be submitted to Cabinet at its December 2022 meeting to include re-phasing of the existing programme and new Capital bids for the next budget cycle.

This is a recommendation to Council, and not subject to call-in.

Options Considered: Cabinet could have:

Not agreed some or all the carry forward amounts or the additional funding for the lighting scheme. This is not recommended as delays would be introduced and unfinished works would occur.

Reason for Decision: To advise the Cabinet of the 2021/22 revenue and capital outturn position, the impact that this will have on the General Fund and to consider the carry forward of slippage within the 2021/22 capital programme.

Also, to note that a full review of the Capital Programme including new bids will be carried out and presented to this committee on 12 December 2022.

7. Fees and Charges

Cabinet:

- a) **Approved** the fees and charges as detailed in Appendix A of the report to take effect from 1 April 2023 (unless otherwise stated) or the earliest feasible date thereafter.
- b) **Noted** the proposed variations to fees and charges in comparison to the prevailing inflation rate detailed in the report.

Options Considered: Cabinet could have:

Not adopted the revised fees and charges from 1 April 2023, but this was not considered to be appropriate. The Council is required by law to set a balanced budget and the additional income from fees and charges contributes to this, albeit marginally. In determining the new fee scales, due regard has been given to the sensitivity of price increases on service demand.

Reason for Decision: To ensure that the Council receives income from fees and charges where allowable to contribute to the funding of services, to enable discretionary services to be provided and to assist the Council in preparing its Revenue Budget for 2023/2024.