

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on
Monday, 14 November 2022 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor Bridget Smith (Leader of Council)

Councillors:	John Batchelor	Lead Cabinet Member for Housing
	Bill Handley	Lead Cabinet Member for Communities
	Peter McDonald	Lead Cabinet Member for Economic Development
	John Williams	Lead Cabinet Member for Resources

Officers in attendance in the Council Chamber for all or part of the meeting:

Aaron Clarke	Democratic Services Technical Officer
Kirstin Donaldson	Service Manager - Acquisitions and Development
Peter Campbell	Head of Housing
Peter Maddock	Head of Finance
Jonathan Malton	Cabinet Support Officer
Rory McKenna	Monitoring Officer
Liz Watts	Chief Executive

Officers in attendance remotely for all or part of the meeting:

Anne Ainsworth	Chief Operating Officer
Gareth Bell	Communications and Communities Service Manager
Lesley Beevers	Service Manager (People Protection and Planning)
Rory Cosgrove	Principal Officer (People and Protection)
Dawn Graham	Benefits Manager

Councillors Dr. John Loveluck, Brian Milnes (Deputy Leader and Lead Cabinet Member for the Environment), Dr. Lisa Redrup and Heather Williams were in attendance remotely.

1. Announcements

There were no announcements.

2. Apologies for Absence

There were Apologies for Absence from Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Lead Cabinet Member for Planning.

3. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Council, and Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Resources, declared non-registerable interests for item 7 Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards Policy, being landlords to properties within South Cambridgeshire.

Councillor John Batchelor, Lead Cabinet Member for Housing declared a non-registerable interested for item 9, Future Use of Plots of HRA Land, regarding Horseshoes Lane, Weston Colville.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Cabinet **authorised** the Leader to sign, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 12 September 2022.

5. Public Questions

There were two public requests to speak at Cabinet:

a) From Sylvia Sullivan, Little Gransden Parish Council

Councillor Bridget Smith invited Mrs. Sullivan to make her statement during item 9, Future Use of Plots of HRA Land.

b) From Dr. Douglas de Lacey

I am delighted to see the proposed expansion of the warm packs grants to include other vulnerable residents in our community (Item 10.27). The pack is proposed to include a water bottle, blanket, thermal socks, gloves, and a hat, and possibly an electric blanket. It also includes a thermos flask.

While I applaud this initiative, may I request that it should also include a pamphlet explaining how the flask might be used. I ask because a very intelligent neighbour of mine, in discussion with me, had never considered using a flask, of which he had several, to keep the surplus water from his kettle hot and so reduce his energy usage. To achieve his, of course, the flask needs to be of the quality to guarantee keeping the water hot for 12 hours; many on the market fail this test.

Response from Councillor Bill Handley, Lead Cabinet Member for the Community

Thank you for the question and positive endorsement for the work we are doing to support residents.

Officers are primed and ready to award a contract for the additional warm packs we are being asked to agree at Cabinet today. The specification for the thermos flask will ensure high quality and to keep liquids warm for 12 hours.

I have asked officers to consider how further tips and advice could be provided as part of the warm pack to maximise the benefit. Until we confirm a supplier and how the packs will be distributed, I cannot give a cast iron guarantee we will be able to include the extra information. But officers will be asking suppliers if this is feasible, and we will aim to do it if it is logistically feasible.

Thank you again for the question and helpful suggestions for this important scheme.

Dr. Douglas de Lacey was invited to ask a supplementary question and commented on an article he had written for Girton Parish Council. Councillor Bill Handley responded that an article is currently being drafted for South Cambs magazine but requested if Dr. de Lacey's article could be shared with the Communications and Communities Service Manager.

6. Issues arising from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee

Cabinet noted the Scrutiny and Overview report summarising the meeting held on Thursday, 20 October 2022, relating to the following agenda item:

- Fees and Charges

7. Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards Policy

Cabinet received the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards Policy. After previously declaring an interest, Councillors Bridget Smith, Leader of the Council, and John Williams, Lead Cabinet member for Resources, left the Council Chamber for this item. Councillor Peter McDonald, Lead Cabinet Member for Economic Development, assumed the Chair, and moved the recommendations.

Councillor Brian Milnes introduced the report, commenting that this policy complied with Government regulations, and thanked the Principal Officer (People and Protection) for his work on the report.

Councillor John Batchelor, Lead Cabinet Member for Housing, commented that the properties that were part of Ermine Street Housing, along with the Council's housing stock, which were not required to meet the standards set out in the policy, were already compliant.

After a short discussion, Councillor Peter McDonald closed the item, and Cabinet:

Approved the proposed Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards policy.

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

Cabinet received the Fit and Proper Persons Policies and Fees and Charges for Mobile Homes. Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Council, moved the recommendations. Councillor Brian Milnes, Deputy Leader, and Lead Cabinet Member for the Environment introduced the report, commenting on the importance for the policies for residents, and thanked the Principal Officer (People and Protection) for his work on drafting the policies.

After a short discussion, 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.

9. Future Use of Plots of HRA Land

Cabinet received the Future Use of Plots of HRA (Housing Revenue Account) Land. Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Council, invited Sylvia Sullivan, the Clerk for Little Gransden Parish Council, to make her statement:

“Little Gransden has no public open space area and no playground. Our residents have no space to meet up in an outdoor area to socialise, or to partake in group outdoor exercise. We wish to provide a carefully designed playground area with a variety of biodiverse stations that can be educational in the appreciation, care and preservation of native plants, trees and flowers.

We propose to consult residents and actively involve them in its design. Many members of our local community have professional expertise and skills in land management, wildlife conservation, biodiversity and horticulture. We shall make a pitch to recruit and coordinate a rota of volunteers in its up-keep and future developments.

The sub-group of Parish Councillors allocated to this project will also be conferring with organisations, including the local branch of the Wildlife Trust and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC) to obtain the best advice on the type of plants to grow to attract insects, birds and other wildlife to the area.

Our exciting vision for developing this green space for our community intends to explore and implement innovative ways so that our residents can enjoy a peaceful space as well as having the opportunity to plant commemorative trees and shrubs in celebration of important life events, such as birthdays and anniversaries. We hope also to make the space a focal point where visitors are reminded about the urgent need to address climate change and how they can contribute towards a Zero Carbon Community.

Our ambition is to secure and realise this acquisition in time to commemorate the coronation of King Charles III in May 2023.”

Councillor Bridget Smith moved an alternative recommendation for the plot of land at Primrose Walk in Little Gransden to defer the decision until the Cabinet meeting scheduled for Monday, 12 December 2022.

Councillor Heather Williams commented that while affordable housing was required, she request the Cabinet refer back to a previous planning application on Primrose Walk discussed at Planning Committee on Wednesday 17 January 2022, noting the refusal was not due to the Parish Council’s preference for a green space.

Councillor Bridget Smith summarised the discussion, and Cabinet:

Noted the history of the self-build project and **approved**:

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

Councillor John Batchelor, Lead Cabinet Member for Housing, introduced the report, commenting on the sites across the district, and referred to Councillor Heather Williams' comment on the request of affordable properties for each of the relevant plots of HRA Land.

After a short discourse, 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;
- 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;
- h) Balsham Road, Linton: offer land on license to adjoining council tenant

After previously declaring an interest regarding the plot of land at Horseshoes Lane, Weston Colville, Councillor John Batchelor left the Council Chamber for this item.

Councillor Bridget Smith moved the recommendation for this item and after a short conversation, Cabinet:

Noted the history of the self-build project and **approved**:

Horseshoes Lane, Weston Colville: seek market valuation and sell without self-build restrictions;

10. Cost of Living Crisis Support for Residents

Cabinet received the Support for Residents proposals for the Cost-of-Living Crisis. Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Resources, introduced the report, noting the package of support for residents throughout the winter.

Councillor Bill Handley, Lead Cabinet Member for Communities, commented on the Council's continued support for residents across the district.

After a short discussion, Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Council, closed the item, and thanked Officers for their continued work with supporting residents, and Cabinet:

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

11. **Local Council Tax Support**

Cabinet received the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2023-2024. Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Resources, introduced the report, explaining that this report formed part of the Support for Residents during the Cost-of-Living Crisis, expected to be voted on during the Council meeting in February 2023 and the support scheme expected to come into effect by April 2023. There would be a consultation expected to last until the end of December 2022.

After a short discussion, Cabinet:

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

12. **2021/22 Provisional General Fund Revenue and Capital Outturn**

Cabinet received the 2021/2022 Provisional General Fund Revenue and Capital Outturn. Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Resources, introduced the report and commented on the lateness of the report, due to the closure of the 2021-2022 accounts.

After a short discussion, Cabinet:

- a) **Acknowledged** the 2021/22 general fund revenue outturn position as summarised in Appendix A, and the net overspend (after income from Taxation and Government Grants) in the year of £0.698 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 £2.514m to around £14.5m;
- 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.

13. **Fees and Charges**

Cabinet received the Fees and Charges for 2023-2024. Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Resources, introduced the report and commented on the review from the Scrutiny & Overview Committee.

Councillor John Batchelor, Lead Cabinet Member for Housing, noted the Council could not determine the rents for the Council's housing stock for 2023-2024 and was awaiting a final decision from the Government on the rent cap.

After a short discussion, 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.

14. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

Cabinet **agreed** by affirmation that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of item 15 in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) (exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act). Paragraph 3 refers to information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

15. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting - Exempt**

Cabinet **authorised** the Leader to sign, as a correct record, the exempt Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 12 September 2022.

**The Meeting ended at
10.49 a.m.**
