

CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 5 DECEMBER 2018

DECISIONS

Set out below is a summary of the decisions taken at the meeting of the Cabinet held on Wednesday, 5 December 2018. 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 Ian Senior.

1. **2018-19 Q2 POSITION STATEMENT: PERFORMANCE, FINANCE AND RISK**

Cabinet reviewed the provisional forecast outturn position, together with the performance indicator results, set out in the report and appendices, and identified the following actions:

- Risk Register to be updated
- The underspend in the Planning Service to be addressed so as to prevent staffing levels becoming a risk to the Council
- Explore the possibility of 'upskilling' Technical Support Officers to deal with straightforward planning applications
- Focus on training and retaining staff

Other Options Considered: None specified

Reason For Decision: These recommendations are required to enable Members to understand the organisation's financial position and performance. This contributes to the evidence base for the ongoing review of priorities and enables, where appropriate, redirection of resources to reflect emerging priorities and address areas of concern.

A workshop to set out the new Administration's vision of the Strategic Risk Register will be set up to follow on from the Risk training workshop provided on 13 November 2018. This will form the basis of the refreshed Strategic Risk Register, which will be then presented to Members.

2. **GREATER CAMBRIDGE HOUSING STRATEGY**

Cabinet agreed to submit the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy to public consultation.

Options Considered: Cabinet is asked to agree the draft Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy (Appendix A) to go out to wider public consultation.

If it is considered that the draft Strategy is not ready to go out to consultation during the week commencing 10 December, it is likely to delay approval of the Strategy until at least Summer 2019, due to the need to align with Cambridge City's approval process and taking into account their purdah period. This may also impact on the delivery of the Housing SPD.

Reason For Decision: This will enable the draft Strategy to go out for wider public consultation.

3. **LOCALISED COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2019-2020**

This recommendation to Council cannot be called in

Cabinet recommended to Council that, at its meeting in February 2019, the Income Bands Discount Localised Council Tax Support Scheme (Option2) be adopted for 2019-2020.

Other Options Considered: Option 1:

- Amended the scheme based on Fixed Benefit periods based on risk for UC Claimants and harmonise the rules within LCTS to match those currently within Housing Benefit to enable the scheme administration to be simplified.
- Working age Scheme to harmonise the rules with those in Housing Benefit to enable the administration of the scheme to be simplified

Option 2: Amended scheme based on Income Bands Discount Scheme for LCTS for working age claimants.

Option 3 – Continue with the current LCTS scheme

Reason For Decision: The proposed scheme will enable residents to have more certainty in respect of the amount of Council Tax they have to pay. The Banded scheme would result in fewer amendments to Council Tax Support and as a result less amendments to the amount of Council Tax payable.

The recommended scheme will be designed so that those claiming LCTS should not be worse off as the main principles of the current scheme will remain, as the changes relate in the main to more administration aspects.

The current LCTS scheme currently in place, which has broadly replicated the former Council Tax Benefit scheme, is considered not be fit for purpose going forward as the rollout of Universal Credit (UC) continues.

The resulting increased workload with continuation of the current scheme cannot be delivered within the current staffing structure.

The introduction of Universal Credit (UC) will mean significant changes for residents. The design of UC and its direct links to HMRC earnings data mean that residents in receipt of UC will see a significant number of changes to their LCTS entitlement over the year. If the current scheme remains in place some residents will have changes in their entitlement and payments from month to month.

The option recommended has been implemented successfully by other Local Authorities where UC has been in place for a longer period.