

## **Cabinet**

**Monday, 7 February 2022**

### **Decisions**

Set out below is a summary of the decisions taken at the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 7 February 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. 2020-2025 Business Plan**

Cabinet:

- a) **Considered** the proposed 2020-25 Business Plan at Appendix A (with the Action Plan primarily focused on delivery 2022-23) and recommend it to Council for approval, with any amendments as required.
- b) **Authorised** the Chief Executive to make any minor wording changes required to final drafts, in consultation with the Deputy Leader.

**Options Considered:** Cabinet could have:

- a) Not updated the Business Plan, but it would make it difficult to provide clarity about priorities for the year 2022-23 and to measure progress.
- b) Requested a new approach to Business Planning, a completely new process of Business Planning to be undertaken and reject this report. This would however: be contrary to the consultation which was undertaken in 2019-20 which underpinned the 2020-25 Business Planning process; undermine the continuity in the process which allows for progress to be clearly outlined and issues to be identified; create delays to the publication of a Business Plan; and stretch resources currently directed to support those in need during the pandemic.

**Reason for Decision:** The Business Plan outlines clear and measurable actions that the Council will carry out up until 2025 to achieve the overarching priorities, with a focus on activities in 2022-23. The Business Plan is used to ensure officer and financial resources are allocated appropriately to achieve the actions and objectives detailed within it.

#### **2. Civil Parking Enforcement in South Cambridgeshire**

Cabinet:

**Supported** an application by Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) to the Department of Transport (DfT) to introduce Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) across South Cambridgeshire and **granted** delegated authority to the Head of Transformation, in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport, to provide feedback on behalf of the Council to the

application for CPE to DfT and the Funding Agreement between CCC and Greater Cambridge Partnership.

**Options Considered:** Cabinet could have:

- a) Asked officers to provide further information before making their decision at a future meeting.
- b) Not supported the application to Department for Transport by Cambridge City Council.

**Reason for Decision:** To tackle illegal and inconsiderate parking in the district through a CPE scheme that includes Enforcement Agents issuing penalty notices for illegal parking.

### 3. **Authority Monitoring Report for Greater Cambridge 2020-2021**

Cabinet:

- a) **Agreed** the Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council - Authority Monitoring Report for Greater Cambridge 2020-2021 (included as Appendix A) for publication on the Councils' websites.
- b) **Delegated** any further minor editing changes to the Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council - Authority Monitoring Report for Greater Cambridge 2020-2021 to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development, in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member for Planning Policy and Delivery, including the final designed version of Appendix 3.

**Options Considered:** Cabinet could have:

Not agreed to publish the Authority Monitoring Report for Greater Cambridge 2020-2021. However, the Council has a statutory duty to publish an Authority Monitoring Report on an annual basis.

**Reason for Decision:** Local planning authorities have a statutory duty to publish an Authority Monitoring Report on an annual basis. Approval to publish the AMR for Greater Cambridge 2020-2021 is being sought from Members at both Councils.

### 4. **Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document**

Cabinet:

- a) **Considered** the main issues raised in the public consultation, and responses to the representations received and the proposed changes to the SPD as set out in the Statement of Consultation (Appendix A of this report);
- b) **Approved** the amended Greater Cambridge Biodiversity SPD (appendix B of this report) and to delegate authority to make any necessary editing changes to the Supplementary Planning Document prior to publication to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development, in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning Policy and Delivery.

**Options Considered:** Cabinet could have:

Not adopting the Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document, and seeking further amendments.

**Reason for Decision:** To review and recognise the comments received in response to consultation on a draft document and to amend it as proposed to reflect those comments, and to ensure the Council has up to date guidance in place for its communities and developers relating to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity at development sites. The SPD promotes a more sustainable and more nature-friendly approach to development.

## 5. **Summary General Fund Revenue Budget 2022/2023**

Cabinet:

- (a) **Noted** the detailed budgets presented at Appendix B, and summarised at Appendix A, with an estimated General Fund Gross Operating Expenditure for 2022/2023 of £78.807 million, estimated Gross Operating Income of £52.728 million and estimated General Fund Net Operating Expenditure of £26.079 million.
- (b) **Acknowledged** the key factors which have led to the proposed 2022/2023 General Fund Revenue Budget, with service pressures summarised at Appendix C and offsetting efficiency savings/policy options summarised at Appendix D.
- (c) **Acknowledged** that the 2022/2023 General Fund Revenue Budget gross expenditure is covered by forecast income sources (assuming no change in Government grant) and, therefore, any addition(s) to expenditure that are made by the Cabinet or Council will need to be met from the General Fund Balance.
- (d) **Approved** the 2022/2023 General Fund Revenue Budget taking into account the statement by the Chief Finance Officer on the risks and robustness of the estimates as required under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 (reproduced at Appendix F).
- (e) **Approved** the Council Tax Requirement for 2022/2023 at £10,489,403.
- (f) **Approved** an increase in the District element of the Council Tax of £5 per annum, giving an average Band D Council Tax of £160.31, plus the relevant amounts required by the precepts of the Parish Councils, Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire Police & Crime Commissioner, and the Cambridgeshire Fire Authority.
- (g) **Authorised** the Head of Finance, on the basis of the proposals set out in the report, to prepare the formal Council Tax Resolution for presentation to Council at its scheduled meeting on 22 February 2022.
- (h) **Approved** the estimates of the amounts required to be made under the Non-domestic Rating (Rates Retention) Regulations 2013 as set out in paragraphs 44 and 45.
- (i) **Approved** the acceptance of any grants made during 2022/2023 by the Government under Section 31 of the Local Government Act

2003 in respect of Business Rates.

- (j) **Approved** the use of the additional income from the Business Rate Pool, estimated at £1,100,000 in 2022/2023, for transfer to the established Renewables Reserve for priority projects.
- (k) Subject to any changes to the recommendations above, **recommended** to Full Council:
  - (i) The 2022/2023 General Fund Revenue Budget based on known commitments at this time and planned levels of Service/functions resulting in a Budget Requirement of £22.668 million.
  - (ii) The District Council Precept on the Collection Fund (Council Tax Requirement) of £10.489 million in 2022/2023 (based on the Provisional Government Settlement) and a Band D Council Tax of £160.31.

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

**Options Considered:** Cabinet could have:

Not recommended to Full Council the General Fund Revenue Budget as presented, which included all items required to deliver council services and member priorities. The gross expenditure is covered by forecast income sources (assuming no change in Government grant) and, therefore, any addition(s) to expenditure that are required will need to identify matching savings and/or additional income if the proposed level of Council Tax is not to change.

**Reason for Decision:** To enable the Cabinet to recommend to Full Council the 2022/2023 General Fund Revenue Budget.

## 6. **Housing Revenue Account Budget 2022/2023**

Cabinet:

**Recommended** to Council to

- a) Approve the HRA revenue budget for 2022/2023 as shown in the HRA Budget Summary as presented at Appendix A.

### HRA: Review of Rents and Charges

- b) Approve that council dwellings rents for all social rented properties be increased by inflation of 3.1%, measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) at September 2021, plus 1%, resulting in rent increases of 4.1%, with effect from 4 April 2022.
- c) Approve that affordable rents (inclusive of service charge) are reviewed in line with rent legislation, to ensure that the rents charged are no more than 80% of market rent, with rents for existing tenants increased by no more than inflation of 3.1%, measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) at September 2021, plus 1%, resulting in rent increases of up to 4.1%. Local policy is to cap affordable rents (inclusive of all service charges) at the Local Housing Allowance level. As the Local Housing Allowance was

increased significantly in late March 2020, affordable rent increases will be capped at 4.1% from April 2022, which is still well below the 2022/23 Local Housing Allowances levels.

- d) Approve that garage rents be increased by inflation of 3.1% measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) at September 2021, plus 1%, resulting in increase of 4.1%, with effect from 4 April 2022.
- e) Approve that council dwelling rents for properties with an EPC rating of A or B are increased to 105% of target rent on re-let.
- f) Approve the proposed service charges for HRA services and facilities provided to both tenants and leaseholders, as shown in Appendix D.

#### HRA: Capital

- g) Approve the required level of funding for new build investment between 2022/2023 and 2026/2027 to ensure that commitments can be met in respect of the investment of all right to buy receipts currently retained or anticipated to be received by the authority for this period. This expenditure will take the form of HRA new build, with the 60% top up met by other HRA resources.
- h) Approve the HRA Medium Term Financial Strategy forecasts as shown in Appendix B.
- i) Approve the Housing Capital Programme as shown in Appendix C.

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

**Options Considered:** Cabinet could have:

Requested other options regarding the budget setting, but the budget as presented represented the best use of resources within the constraints that exist.

**Reason for Decision:** To enable the Cabinet to recommend to Full Council the 2022/2023 HRA Revenue Budget and Capital Programme.

## **7. Capital Investments Programme 2022/2023-2026/2027**

Cabinet:

**Recommended** to Full Council the revised General Fund Capital Programme outlined at Appendix A.

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

**Options Considered:** Cabinet could have:

Requested variations of the capital programme, but the allocations included reflect Business Plan priorities and decisions previously made by the Council, including the last update to the capital programme on 6 December 2021 and any further slippage identified since then.

**Reason for Decision:** To enable the Cabinet to consider variations to the Capital Programme 2021/2022 to 2025/2026 that was approved by Council at its

meeting on 6 December 2021.

## **8. Treasury Management Strategy**

Cabinet:

**Recommended** to Council the updated Treasury Management Strategy attached at Appendix A to the report which sets the policy framework for the Council's treasury management activity, including (i) the Treasury Management Policy Statement, (ii) Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and (ii) Treasury Indicators.

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

**Options Considered:** Cabinet could have:

Not adopted the revised Treasury Management Strategy, which is not considered to be appropriate. The CIPFA Code of Practice (2017) requires the Council to approve the Strategy before the start of each financial year. Local politicians and officers operate within local governance frameworks of checks and balances to ensure that decision-making is lawful, informed by objective advice, transparent and consultative. Good governance means that proper arrangements are in place to ensure that an authority's intended treasury management objectives are achieved and establishing a policy framework for the development, management and monitoring of all treasury management activity.

**Reason for Decision:** To establish and approve an updated Treasury Management Strategy that complies with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) revised Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.

## **9. Capital Strategy**

Cabinet:

**Recommended** to Full Council the updated Capital Strategy attached at Appendix A to the report which sets the policy framework for the development, management and monitoring of capital investment, including Prudential Indicators.

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

**Options Considered:** Cabinet could have:

Not adopted the revised Capital Strategy, although this not considered to be appropriate. Local authorities are accountable to their communities for how they spend their money and for ensuring that this spending is prioritised and represents value for money. Local politicians and officers operate within local governance frameworks of checks and balances to ensure that decision-making is lawful, informed by objective advice, transparent and consultative. Good governance means that proper arrangements are in place to ensure that an authority's intended objectives are achieved and establishing a policy framework

for the development, management and monitoring of all capital investment and the prioritisation of the Council's capital resources must be a key commitment to ensure that authorities remain financially sustainable and respond efficiently and effectively to service needs.

**Reason for Decision:** To establish and approve an updated Capital Strategy that complies with CIPFA's revised Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (2017 edition) and Prudential Code Guidance Notes for Practitioners (2018 edition), CIPFA's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes (2017 edition) and revised Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments (3rd Edition) issued in February 2018.

#### **10. Local Council Tax Support**

Cabinet:

**Recommended** to Council, at its meeting on 22 February 2022 the adoption of Option 1, comprising the Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) Income Bands scheme currently in operation, with an uprating of calculation figures in line with the Consumer Price Index.

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

**Options Considered:** Cabinet could have:

Continued with the current scheme in place without any adjustments to calculation to allow for inflation. This option would be broadly similar in cost to 2021/22 excluding increases to the Council Tax charge. This option meant that some low-income households would be paying more council tax although the numbers were small; cost of living rises in income claimant received might not cover all increases in living cost and they might have been financially worse off.

**Reason for Decision:** The current Income Bands LCTS scheme was introduced on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 to enable the roll out of Universal Credit (UC) to be accommodated by minimising the number of amendments to Council Tax Support arising from UC thereby affording the Council and claimants some stability by not needing to constantly amend the amount of Council Tax payable which would have additional costs for the Council.

There is still economic uncertainty due to COVID 19 and the current LCTS scheme has supported South Cambridgeshire's residents to pay their Council Tax. and expenditure within the existing budget.

An uprating of scheme in line with Consumer Price Index (CPI) will ensure that those residents in receipt of benefits and limited means will not be worse-off due to inflation.

#### **11. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Asset Management Strategy 2021 - 2026**

Cabinet:

**Approved** the HRA Asset Management Strategy 2021-2026, as set out at Appendix A, subject to the Foreword being agreed with the Lead Cabinet

Member for Housing.

**Options Considered:** Cabinet could have:

Not agreed the HRA Asset Management Strategy 2021-2026. Without an up-to-date HRA Asset Management Strategy, the Council is unable to demonstrate a strategic vision and its key priorities to ensure our council homes and other housing assets are future-proofed, are of a high quality and meet the needs of the District.

**Reason for Decision:** To ensure we have an up-to-date Strategy that provides clear direction for the key priorities for investment in our housing stock, so that homes are future-proofed, are of a high quality and meet the future needs of our tenants and leaseholders.

**12. Acquisition 60 Affordable Homes and Commercial Unit at Northstowe 2B**  
Cabinet:

**Approved** the Property Acquisition as specified in paragraph 9 of the exempt report.

**Options Considered:** As specified in paragraphs 38 and 39 of the exempt report.

**Reason for Decision:** As specified in paragraphs 10-12 of the exempt report.

**13. Acquisition 34 Affordable Homes, Gamlingay**  
Cabinet:

**Approved** the Property Acquisition and onward sale as specified in paragraphs 7 and 8 of the exempt report.

**Options Considered:** As specified in paragraphs 27 and 28 of the exempt report.

**Reason for Decision:** As specified in paragraphs 9-12 of the exempt report.