

## **Council**

**Thursday, 22 September 2022**

### **Decisions**

Set out below is a summary of the decisions taken at the meeting of the Council held on Thursday, 22 September 2022. 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 Democratic Services.

#### **2021/22 Provisional Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Outturn (Cabinet 12 September 2022)**

Council

**Agreed to**

- A)** Note the 2021/22 revenue outturn position and the net overspend in the year of £0.029 million, and the explanations provided for the variances compared to the revised 2021/22 revenue budget;
- B)** Note the overall increase in the Housing Revenue Account balance as at 31 March 2021 to £5.681 million;
- C)** In relation to the Capital Programme:
  - (i)** Note the 2021/22 capital outturn of £17.485 million;
  - (ii)** Acknowledge the performance achieved in relation to the Capital Programme schemes substantially completed in 2021/2022, summarised in Appendix A.
  - (iii)** approve the carry forwards to 2022/23 of £0.836 million in relation to HRA Housing improvements due mainly to slippage.
  - (iv)** approve the carry forward amounts of £1.896 million to 2022/23 in relation to HRA housebuilding during 2021/22, due to slippage.
  - (v)** Note 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.

#### **West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan**

Council

- A)** Notes that the referendum for the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan took place on 11 August 2022,

- B)** As it was a successful referendum ‘makes’ (adopts) the West Wickham Neighbourhood Plan (The made version of the plan is Appendix 1 of this report).

### **Appointment of IRP Member** Council

**Agreed** to approve the appointment for a three year term of office, expiring on 30 September 2025, of Ged Dempsey and Amanda Orchard.

### **Review of Political Proportionality** Council

**Agreed**

- A)** The allocation of seats on committees as set out at Table 2 in Appendix A;
- B)** The nominations of the Political Group leaders to seats on the Scrutiny and Overview Committee and Licensing Committee as set out in Appendix B.

### **Standing in the name of Councillor Pippa Heylings** Council **agreed** the following motion:

Despite repeated calls to put a stop to the dumping raw sewage in our precious rivers and chalk streams, the latest annual assessment (published this July) by the Environment Agency showed a “shocking” decline in performance<sup>1</sup> on pollution for most of England's water and sewage companies, much worse than previous years. Anglian Water was given just 2 stars for performance for 2021, meaning they require significant improvement.

South Cambridgeshire residents are rightly concerned about the health implications of the poor water quality in our chalk streams especially at a time in hot summer months when local children and families would expect to be able to bathe and enjoy nature-rich river banks.

The latest study by Cam Valley Forum<sup>2</sup> has shown that the levels of E.coli are highest downstream of Anglian Water's small sewage works in and around our villages, such as the one at Haslingfield, that are frequently discharging raw, untreated sewage into the rivers Mel, Rhee and Granta

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/water-and-sewerage-company-performance-on-pollution-hits-new-low>

<sup>2</sup> <https://camvalleyforum.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/20403-CVF-Report-on-faecal-indicator-bacteria-counts-in-a-sample-taken-from-the-effluent-at-Haslingfield-STW-during-a-storm-overflow-3rd-March-2022-CSSI.pdf>

through ‘storm overflows’<sup>3</sup>. The study points to the disturbing fact that when river levels are lower during the dry summer months, more of the chalk streams would be composed of effluent from the sewage plant and could, potentially, cause a risk to bathers’ health.

In June 2022, despite further information received from the water company, Ofwat decided to continue its enforcement case<sup>4</sup> against Anglian Water due to serious concerns about its compliance with the requirements of their environmental permits<sup>5</sup>, particularly because of a lack of effective water quality monitoring and no immediate action plan in place.

This Council recognises that, to overcome river pollution, partnership work between local authorities with key stakeholders is critical because pollution takes place from multiple sources.

This Council agrees:

- to support the chair of the Environment Agency’s call for increased criminal liability for the Chief Executives and Boards of water companies because they remain undeterred by the penalties currently being issued by the courts.
- to ask the CEO to write to the Secretary of State for DEFRA and the CEO of Ofwat asking them to introduce legally-binding targets for intermediate and ultimately zero discharges and a sewage tax on discharges.
- To ask Cabinet to consider the possibility of a formal application to Defra for an inland bathing water stretch along the River Cam in South Cambridgeshire, together with Anglian Water and local partners such as Cam Valley Forum; this would require the water company to undertake water quality sampling and monitoring for at least a year.
- That, given the seriously water-stressed status in our region, the CEO and Leader will call on Cambridgeshire MPs to urgently seek the support necessary for public-private investment in the regional scale water supply infrastructure called for in the Integrated Water Study evidence base for the draft Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

### **Standing in the name of Cllr Bill Handley**

Council **agreed** the following motion:

Our country is in the grips of a cost of living emergency - like nothing that has been seen in generations with soaring inflation and the Bank of England predicting a recession this autumn.

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<sup>3</sup> Anglian Water acknowledges that “*storm overflows are no longer fit for purpose, especially as our climate is changing and extreme weather is more commonplace*”. <https://www.cambridgeindependent.co.uk/news/river-cam-study-finds-massively-raised-counts-of-faecal-ba-9254432/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ofwat.gov.uk/investigation-into-sewage-treatment-works/#responses>

<sup>5</sup> The number and length of sewage dumps from storm overflows is measured by Event Duration Monitors (EDMs). However, analysis of Environment Agency data reveals water companies have either installed monitors which do not work 90% of the time, or have simply not installed the monitors at all. The worst offender is Anglian Water, which saw half (49%) of sewage discharges not measured due to faulty monitors or no monitors installed.

Millions of families and pensioners are being forced to choose between heating and eating. And millions more are worried about how to pay their bills this winter, with another staggering energy price rise just around the corner.

We already have a high cost of living in South Cambridgeshire and those of our residents on low incomes will face unprecedented hardship this winter.

Businesses are also impacted by the energy price rise and local traders are warning that many of them will not be able to survive the increase in costs without support.

**In these circumstances this Council declares a 'Cost of Living Emergency'.**

**On behalf of South Cambridgeshire residents it instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Government to ask that it:**

- i. Reduce the standard rate of VAT from 20 per cent to 17.5 per cent for one year, saving the average household in South Cambridgeshire a further £600 this year;
- ii. Re-introduce the pensions triple lock to support South Cambridgeshire pensioners;
- iii. Restore the Universal Credit supplement of £20, which was cancelled by the Government in September 2021;
- iv. Reverse cuts to Working Tax Credit;
- v. Supplement the October energy price freeze with i) increase in the financial support to households that rely on oil for heating and help families spread the cost over the year: ii) increase targeted support for vulnerable and low income households by doubling the Warm Homes Discount to £300 and extending it to all those on Universal Credit and Pensioner Credit, whilst iii) investing in insulating leaky homes to bring down costs in the long term.

**While for its part, South Cambridgeshire District Council has already:**

- i. Given advice in its quarterly publication, South Cambs Magazine, with particular regard to support provided by Cambridgeshire County Council and the Cambridgeshire Home improvement Agency;
- ii. Provided a Cost of Living Support page on its website to help local people find immediate support with food poverty, housing, debt, energy bills, transport, unemployment and health and wellbeing, whilst also signposting to grants and loans to help improve the energy efficiency of their homes;
- iii. Partnered Cambridgeshire ACRE in the provision of warm hubs in the District.

**And will:**

- i. Confirm its commitment to continue funding Citizen's Advice for this financial year (£85,000) to provide advice services to South Cambridgeshire residents;
- ii. Be mindful of the Cost of Living Crisis in the setting of next year's Council Tax;
- iii. Promote its Welfare and Money Maximisation Officer and Housing Tenant Advice Officers;
- iv. Ask the Lead Cabinet Member for Resources to consider bringing forward a proposal to amend the Local Council Tax Support Scheme in the district to 100% for working people, thereby reducing the council tax burden for working low income households;
- v. Ask the Grants Advisory Committee to review the Community Chest grant scheme to consider having applications that demonstrate not only wellbeing benefits to their community but also support for those on low incomes and make recommendations to the Lead Cabinet Member for Resources or Cabinet as appropriate;
- vi. Confirm its commitment to improve the energy efficiency of council homes as outlined in the HRA Asset Management Strategy;
- vii. Request that the Cabinet set up an advisory group reporting to it to monitor and propose support for those in the District struggling with the cost of living crisis including local businesses;
- viii. And work with partners to give access to affordable food across the District.