

Cabinet

Monday, 6 February 2023

Decisions

Set out below is a summary of the decisions taken at the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 6 February 2023. 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. Greater Cambridge Joint Local Plan

Cabinet:

- a) **Agreed** the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Development Strategy Update (Regulation 18 Preferred Options) (Appendix A), and in particular the proposed policy directions in section 5 for the following proposed policies:
 - i. Policy S/JH: Jobs and homes
 - ii. Policy S/DS: Development strategy (to confirm three key sites and development strategy principles to inform identification of any further sites)
 - iii. Policy S/NEC: North East Cambridge
 - iv. Policy S/CE: Cambridge East
 - v. Policy S/CBC: Cambridge Biomedical Campus
- b) **Noted** the findings of Appendix E: Sustainability Appraisal Update as a supporting document that has informed the decisions regarding the Greater Cambridge Local Plan development strategy update
- c) **Agreed** the following supporting documents that have informed the decisions regarding the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Development Strategy Update:
 - i. Appendix B: Strategy Topic Paper: Development Strategy Update (Regulation 18 Preferred Options),
 - ii. Appendix C: Greater Cambridge Local Plan Consultation Statement: Development Strategy Update (Regulation 18 Preferred Options) which includes responses to representations relating to the content of this report,
 - iii. Appendix D: Greater Cambridge Local Plan Consultation Statement: Equalities Impact Assessment: Development Strategy Update
- d) **Noted** the findings of the following new evidence documents that have informed the draft policy approaches set out in Appendix A: Greater Cambridge Local Plan Development Strategy Update (Regulation 18 Preferred Options) (see Background papers):
 - i. Greater Cambridge Economic Development, Employment Land and Housing Relationships Evidence Update (Iceni Projects), December 2022
 - ii. Greater Cambridge Housing Delivery Study Addendum

(AECOM), December 2022

- e) **Agreed** that any subsequent material amendments be made by the Lead Member for Planning
- f) **Agreed** that any subsequent minor amendments and editing changes that do not materially affect the content be delegated to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning

Options Considered: Cabinet could have:

Not approved the Greater Cambridge Joint Local Plan Development Strategy Update and supporting documents

Reason for Decision: Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council are preparing a joint Greater Cambridge Local Plan. The proposed policy directions set out in the Development Strategy Update has been informed by representations to the Local Plan First Proposals consultation held in 2021 and updates to the Local Plan evidence base. Confirming a position so far as is possible at this point on the above topics will enable the Councils to progress towards a confirmed full development strategy at the draft plan stage, and will give confidence to promoters of priority sites for development, and to providers of infrastructure on which those sites rely for effective delivery.

2. **Response to Water Resources East Draft Regional Water Resources Plan** Cabinet:

- a) **Agreed** the consultation response to be sent jointly with Cambridge City Council set out in Appendix A and that this should be sent to Water Resources East.
- b) **Agreed** that any subsequent material amendments be delegated to the Lead Cabinet Member for Economic Development in consultation with the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development.
- c) **Agreed** that any subsequent minor amendments and editing changes that do not materially affect the content be delegated to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member for Economic Development.

Options Considered: Cabinet could have:

Not approved the consultation response to Water Resources East.

Reason for Decision: Water resources will be critical to the development of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan and this is an opportunity to put forward the views of South Cambridgeshire District Council jointly with Cambridge City Council on the draft Regional Water Resources Plan for Eastern England.

3. **Update to New Build Council Housing Strategy** Cabinet:

Recommended to Council to:

- a) Approve the updates to the New Build Council Housing Strategy 2020-25,
 - i) Including Setting the target annual completions for 2023-24 and 2024-25 at 75 homes per year; and
 - ii) Increasing the modelling period for payback from 35 to 45 years

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

Options Considered: Cabinet could have:

Not recommended to Council the Council's Housing Strategy 2020-25 (2023 Amended) including:

- i) Setting the target for delivery in 2023-24 and 2024-25 at 75 per year; and;
 - ii) Increasing the payback modelling period from 35 to 45 years; or
- Cabinet could have recommended to Council to approve some of the changes, and reject others, providing details; and/or
Cabinet could have recommended a different delivery target; or
Cabinet could have rejected all suggested amendments.

Reason for Decision: South Cambridgeshire District Council successfully met their published target of doubling the number of new homes they deliver from 35 to 70 in 2021-22, a year ahead of target. They have also exceeded the published target (74) for 2022-23. In recognition of this, it is appropriate to reset targets for the remaining 2 years of the current strategy.

It is recommended that the target is set at 75 new homes per year in recognition of the increased costs of delivery associated with macro-economic factors and increased building performance.

It is recommended that the modelling period for payback is increased from 35 to 45 years. This is to provide greater flexibility in viability modelling in light of increased costs associated with macro-economic factors and increased building performance.

4. **2020-2025 Business Plan**

Cabinet:

- a) Considered the proposed Business Plan Action Plan for 2023-24 at Appendix A and **recommended** 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 Leader.

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

Options Considered: Cabinet could have:

Not recommended to Council the 2023-2024 revision of the Council's Business Plan.

Reason for Decision: The business plan outlines clear and measurable actions

that the Council will carry out with a focus on activities in 2023-24. It is used to ensure officers and financial resources are allocated appropriately to achieve the actions and objectives detailed within it.

5. Capital Strategy

Cabinet:

Recommended to 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 recommended to Council to adopt the revised Capital Strategy, but this is 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.

6. 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,
- iii. Treasury Indicators

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

Options Considered: Cabinet could have:

Not recommended to Council to adopt the revised Treasury Management Strategy, but this 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.

7. Review of Revenue Reserves and Provisions

Cabinet:

Recommended to Council:

- a) That the Reserves as summarised at paragraph 11 of the report be released to the General Fund or transferred to other Earmarked Reserves as shown, on 31 March 2023.
- b) That the IT software and hardware reserves be amalgamated at 31 March 2023 to provide the necessary flexibility.
- c) That the movement in Reserves in 2022/2023 as set out in Appendix A, and the estimated balance of Reserves of £29.830 million (+), be noted.

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

Options Considered: Cabinet could have:

Not recommended to Council the review of earmarked reserves, but the option of not reviewing Earmarked Reserves is not considered to be appropriate as otherwise valuable resource which may be needed elsewhere could be inappropriately allocated.

Reason for Decision: To ensure that the Council regularly reviews the balances held in established reserves to confirm that the allocations remain valid and thus still needed for the purposes outlined and that they are at the correct level to meet this requirement.

8. General Fund Budget 2023/2024

Cabinet:

- a) **Noted** the detailed budgets presented at Appendix B, and summarised at Appendix A, with an estimated General Fund Gross Operating Expenditure for 2023/2024 of £84.597 million, estimated Gross Operating Income of £52.285 million and estimated General Fund Net Operating

- Expenditure of £32.312 million.
- b) **Acknowledged** the key factors which have led to the proposed 2023/2024 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 2023/2024 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 Council Tax Requirement for 2023/2024 at £11,130,440.
 - e) **Approved** an increase in the District element of the Council Tax of £5 per annum, giving an average Band D Council Tax of £165.31, plus the relevant amounts required by the precepts of the Parish Councils, Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire Police & Crime Commissioner, and the Cambridgeshire Fire Authority.
 - f) **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.
 - g) **Approved** the use of the additional income from the Business Rate Pool, estimated at £1,100,000 in 2023/2024, for transfer to the established Renewables Reserve for priority projects.
 - h) **Recommended** to Council:
 - a. The 2023/2024 General Fund Revenue Budget based on known commitments at this time and planned levels of Service/functions resulting in a Budget Requirement of £25.720 million.
 - b. The District Council Precept on the Collection Fund (Council Tax Requirement) of £11.130 million in 2023/2024 (based on the Provisional Government Settlement) and a Band D Council Tax of £165.31.

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

Options Considered: Cabinet could have:

Requested Officers to remove or add items to the budget but, based on previous Cabinet decisions and the detailed discussions held with spending officers, the General Fund Revenue Budget as presented includes 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 2023/2024 General Fund Revenue Budget.

9. **Capital Investments Programme 2023/2024 - 2027/2028** Cabinet:

Recommended to 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 Officers to vary the capital programme, but the allocations included within the report reflect Business Plan priorities and decisions previously made by the Council, including the last update to the capital programme on 12 December 2022 and any further slippage identified since then.

Reason for Decision: To enable the Cabinet to consider variations to the Capital Programme 2022/2023 to 2026/2027 that was approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 12 December 2022.

10. Housing Revenue Account Budget 2023/2024

Cabinet:

Recommended to Council to:

- a) Approve the HRA revenue budget for 2023/2024 as shown in the HRA Budget Summary as presented at Appendix A.
- b) Approve that council dwelling rents for all social rented properties be increased by 7%, recognising that inflation measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) at September 2022, plus 1% would result in an increase of 11.1%, but that the government has introduced a cap on rent increases at 7% from April 2023.
- c) Approve that affordable rents (inclusive of service charge) are also increased by 7% in line with the increase for social rents.
- d) Approve that rents for affordable shared ownership properties are increased by 7% or RPI at January 2023 plus 0.5% whichever is the lower, from April 2023, recognising that although the government rent cap does not apply to this tenure, an increase of in excess of 7% may put undue financial pressure on these households.
- e) Approve that garage rents be increased by 7% in line with the increase for social rents.
- f) Approve the proposed service charges for HRA services and facilities provided to both tenants and leaseholders, as shown in Appendix D.
- g) Approve the required level of funding for new build investment between 2023/2024 and 2027/2028 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:

Not recommended to Council the Housing Revenue Account Revenue and Capital Budget for 2023/2024

Reason for Decision: To enable the Cabinet to recommend to Full Council the 2023/2024 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Revenue Budget and Capital Programme.

11. Local Council Tax Support

Cabinet:

Recommended to Council, the adoption of option one of the Localised Council Tax Support scheme.

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

Options Considered: Cabinet could have:

Not recommended to Council the adoption of Option One of the Localised Council Tax Support scheme.

Recommended to Council the alternative options:

Option 1 – Current Banded Scheme with minor amendments:

- 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
- Adjust earnings disregards within calculation to enable extra support to be provided to residents who are working as well as improving levels of automated processing.

The amendment to current banded Scheme enables smaller changes not to affect CTS awards. The modelling undertaken based on uprating for CPI will only affect several claimants increasing total LCTS awarded in total by estimate of £160,000 annually; the increased cost would be shared between the major preceptors based on their share of total council tax. proposed scheme will increase marginally the cost of LCTS. including Precepting Authorities and Parish Council

This option was approved by member at the Cabinet meeting of 14 November 2022 for consultation with residents, at relevant stakeholders.

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.

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 claimants receive may not cover all increases in living cost and they may be financially worse off.

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 the identified changes to LCTS for 2023/24 which will increase the support to the most vulnerable residents.

The proposed 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.

The Cabinet approved at its meeting on the 14 November 2022 Scheme (Option1) for consultation with residents, stakeholders Precepting authorities and Parish Council's

A consultation has been undertaken which has now ended. The consultation despite active promotion on social media, direct contacting stakeholders and including it within Parish e-newsletter had a very small number of responses.

Details of the responses to questions asked are shown below:

- 88% Agreed with increasing the working age scheme to 100% for all working age residents
- 82% Agreed that income bands used to calculate entitlement should be increased with CPI
- 82% Agreed that disregards for earnings should be increase
- 12% Agreed that Council Tax Support scheme should remain unchanged

The responses identified that those residents who responded broadly agreed with changes to the Localised Council Tax Support Scheme