

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on
Monday, 6 February 2023 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor Bridget Smith (Leader of Council)
Councillor Brian Milnes (Deputy Leader of the Council & Lead Cabinet Member for Environment)

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| Councillors: | Henry Batchelor | Lead Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Licensing |
| | John Batchelor | Lead Cabinet member for Housing |
| | Bill Handley | Lead Cabinet Member for Communities |
| | Dr. Tumi Hawkins | Lead Cabinet member for Planning |
| | 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:

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| Laurence Damary-Homan | Democratic Services Officer |
| Jonathan Dixon | Planning Policy Manager |
| Andrew Francis | Elections and Democratic Services Manager |
| Peter Maddock | Head of Finance |
| Jonathan Malton | Cabinet Support Officer |
| Rory McKenna | Monitoring Officer |
| Jeff Membery | Head of Transformation, HR and Corporate Services |
| Stuart Morris | Principal Planning Policy Officer |
| Liz Watts | Chief Executive |

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

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| Peter Campbell | Head of Housing |
| Kirstin Donaldson | Service Manager - Acquisitions and Development |
| Bode Esan | Head of Climate, Environment & Waste |
| Nancy Kimberley | Principal Planning Policy Officer |

Councillors Sue Ellington, Heather Williams and Dr. Richard Williams were in attendance in the Council Chamber.

1. **Announcements**

There were no announcements.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

There were no Apologies for Absence.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

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

5. Public Questions

One request to speak from a member of the public was received ahead of the meeting. This was subsequently refused as it didn't accord with the Public Speaking Scheme.

6. Issues arising from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee

Cabinet received and noted the Scrutiny & Overview Committee report, summarising the most recent meetings held on Thursday, 15 December 2022, Thursday, 12 January 2023 and Thursday, 19 January 2023, relating to the following agenda items:

- Greater Cambridge Local Plan: Development Strategy Update (Regulation 18 Preferred Options)
- Business Plan Action Plan (2023-24 Revision)
- Draft Budget 2023/24
- General Fund Revenue Bids and Savings

There were also updates regarding the following items:

- General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)
- Conservative Group Budget Proposal for 2023/2024

7. Greater Cambridge Joint Local Plan

Cabinet received the Greater Cambridge Joint Local Plan Development Strategy Update report. Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Lead Cabinet Member for Planning, introduced the report, and commented on the increased growth needs within the district.

Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Council, invited Councillor Richard Stobart to introduce the comments from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee on Thursday, 12 January, and noted the concerns of water resources and the sustainability for the projected growth within the district. Councillor Bridget Smith responded that sustainability was one of the focuses with the local plan.

Councillor Heather Williams asked about the protection of the green belt and the viability of the affordable housing. Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins responded that the plan would continue to protect the green belt, and the current percentage of affordable homes for new build developments was proposed to continue.

After a short discussion, Councillor Bridget Smith, closed the discussion, and 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

8. **Response to Water Resources East Draft Regional Water Resources Plan**

Cabinet received the response to the Water Resources East Draft Regional Water Resources Plan. Councillor Peter McDonald, Lead Cabinet Member for the Economy, introduced the report and highlighted the focus on the district's chalk streams.

Councillor Henry Batchelor, Lead Cabinet Member for the Environment, commented on the growth within the district and the required new homes for residents.

Councillor Sue Ellington raised a concern with sewage. Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Council, responded that a written response would be provided.

After a short discussion, 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.

9. **Update to New Build Council Housing Strategy**

Cabinet received an update to the New Build Council Housing Strategy. Councillor John Batchelor, Lead Cabinet Member for Housing, introduced the report and proposed an amendment to the recommendations, with the final decision being made by Council on 21 February 2023. Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Council, seconded the amendment and was approved by affirmation.

Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Resources, noted the Council's continued commitment to new houses.

Councillor Brian Milnes, Deputy Leader and Lead Cabinet Member for the Environment, commented on delivering houses for local residents within the district.

Councillor Heather Williams was supportive of the current strategy, and noted the cross-party support for the current proposals.

After a short discussion, 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

10. **2020-2025 Business Plan**

Cabinet received the Council's revised Business Plan for 2020-2025. Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Council, introduced the report, and noted the Council's continued priorities to the district.

Councillor Brian Milnes, Deputy Leader, and Lead Cabinet Member for the Environment thanked Officers for their work, and noted the continued support for EV charging points within the towns and villages.

Councillor Bridget Smith invited Councillor Richard Stobart to introduce the comments from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee on Thursday, 19 January, and noted the current proposals of supporting residents across the district but raised concerns with supporting parish and town councils for upgrading their street lighting, mobile wardens and installing EV charging points. Councillor Bridget Smith responded that the Council had made significant progress since the previous revision was submitted to Cabinet in February 2022 but noted the ongoing work with parish and town councils across the district.

Councillor Henry Batchelor, Lead Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Licensing, commented on the greening of the Council's refuse fleet and to encourage more recycling.

Councillor Peter McDonald, Lead Cabinet Member for Economic Development, noted the continued support for businesses and on the district's highstreets.

Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Resources, highlighted the Council's Four Day Week trial, and the ensuring regular staff surveys to ensure performance the mental well-being is supported during the trial.

Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Lead Cabinet Member for Planning, confirmed the Council's commitment to new build houses within the Local Plan, adhering to the Five Year Housing Land Supply.

Councillor Bill Handley, Lead Cabinet Member for Communities, issued support for the Mobile Wardens scheme, and the continuing to house Ukrainian refugees within the district.

Councillor John Batchelor, Lead Cabinet Member for Housing, noted the continued retrofitting of Council properties to net-zero.

Councillor Bridget Smith closed the discussion, thanked Officers for their work, and 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.

11. Capital Strategy

Cabinet received the Capital Strategy. Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Resources, introduced the report, and the commented on the updates since the previous submission.

After no further comments, 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.

12. Treasury Management Strategy

Cabinet received the Treasury Management Strategy. Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Resources, introduced the report, and commented on the Council's proposal for not engaging with any short-term borrowing.

After no further comments, 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

13. Review of Revenue Reserves and Provisions

Cabinet received the Review of Revenue Reserves and Provisions. Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Resources, introduced the report, and commented on the Council's current reserves.

After no further comments, 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.

14. General Fund Budget 2023/2024

Cabinet received the General Fund Budget for 2023/2024. Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Resources, introduced the report and the commented on the supplement published ahead of the meeting with the updated figures for the next financial year and the continued progress with the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Council, invited Councillor Richard Stobart to introduce the comments from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee on Thursday, 19 January, and thanked Officers for their work, but commented on the Section 106 funding for arts and culture. Councillor John Williams responded that funding for was through the Community Chest.

After a short discussion, Councillor Bridget Smith closed the discussion, and 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.

15. **Capital Investments Programme 2023/2024 - 2027/2028**

Cabinet received the Capital Investments Programme for 2023/2024 to 2027/2028. Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Resources introduced the report, and noted the ongoing programme for the next five years.

After no further comments, Cabinet:

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

16. **Housing Revenue Account Budget 2023/2024**

Cabinet received the Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2023/2024. Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Resources, introduced the report, noting the continued Council house rents have maintained the Council's House Building programme.

Councillor John Batchelor, Lead Cabinet Member for Housing, noted the rental incomes continues the value of service and turnover of housing stock.

After a short discussion, 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.

17. Local Council Tax Support

Cabinet received the Localised Council Tax Support scheme for 2023-2024. Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Resources introduced the report, and commented on the increased support for residents. Councillor Brian Milnes, Deputy Leader, and Lead Cabinet Member for the Environment noted the proposal to Council was suitable during the cost of living crisis.

After a short discussion, Cabinet:

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

**The Meeting ended at
12.31 p.m.**
