

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on
Monday, 7 February 2022 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor Bridget Smith (Leader of Council)
Councillor Neil Gough (Deputy Leader - Strategic Planning & Transport
and Transformation & Projects)

Councillors:	John Batchelor	Lead Cabinet Member for Housing
	Dr. Tumi Hawkins	Lead Cabinet Member for Planning Policy and Delivery
	Brian Milnes	Lead Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Licensing
	John Williams	Lead Cabinet Member for Finance

Officers in attendance in the Council Chamber for all or part of the meeting:

Aaron Clarke	Democratic Services Officer
Peter Maddock	Head of Finance
Rory McKenna	Monitoring Officer
Liz Watts	Chief Executive

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

Farzana Ahmed	Chief Accountant
Anne Ainsworth	Chief Operating Officer
Gareth Bell	Communications and Communities Manager
Gen Broad	Ecologist
Peter Campbell	Head of Housing
John Cornell	Natural Environment Team Leader
Mark Deas	Senior Policy Planner
Rebecca Dobson	Democratic Services Manager
Kirstin Donaldson	Service Manager - Acquisitions and Development
Jane Green	Built and Natural Environment Manager
Stephen Kelly	Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development
Jonathan Malton	Cabinet Support Officer
Jenny Nuttycombe	Senior Planning Policy Officer
Jeff Membery	Head of Transformation, HR and Corporate Services

Councillors Sue Ellington, Mark Howell, Deborah Roberts, and Heather Williams were in attendance in the Council Chamber.

Councillors Anna Bradnam, Nigel Cathcart, Dr. Claire Daunton, Bill Handley (Lead Cabinet Member for Community Resilience, Health and Wellbeing), Judith Rippeth and Dr. Richard Williams were in attendance remotely.

1. Announcements

There were no announcements.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Peter McDonald and Grenville Chamberlain.

3. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Anna Bradnam, Dr. Claire Daunton, Neil Gough, Mark Howell, and Brian Milnes declared pecuniary interests in item 8 (Civil Parking Enforcement in South Cambridgeshire), being Members of Cambridgeshire County Council.

Bridget Smith, Leader of the Council, declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 21 (Acquisition of 34 Affordable Homes, Gamlingay), as the ward Member.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Cabinet **authorised** the Leader to sign, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 10 January 2022.

5. Public Questions

Cabinet received one public question ahead of the meeting:

a) From Mr. Daniel Fulton

The Leader invited Mr. Fulton to ask the question he had submitted. Mr. Fulton said he intended to ask a substitute question which he believed would be acceptable. The Leader asked Mr. Fulton to restrict himself to the question he had submitted, which Mr. Fulton declined to do. Upon the Leader reiterating her request, Mr. Fulton said he had no further comments.

6. Issues arising from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee

At the Leader's invitation, Cabinet received the Scrutiny and Overview report summarising the meeting held on Thursday, 18 January 2022 relating to the following agenda item:

- 2020-2025 Business Plan
- Civil Parking Enforcement in South Cambridgeshire
- Summary General Fund Reserve Budget 2022/2023
- Housing Revenue Account Budget 2022/2023
- Treasury Management Strategy
- Capital Strategy

7. 2020-2025 Business Plan

Cabinet received the Council's 2020-2025 Business Plan. Councillor Neil Gough, the Deputy Leader introduced the report, and noted the plan was continuing the

Council's progress over the previous three years.

Councillor Anna Bradnam was supportive of the business plan, and the continued support for local business throughout the pandemic.

Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Council, closed the discussion, and 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.

8. **Civil Parking Enforcement in South Cambridgeshire**

Cabinet received a report supporting an application by Cambridgeshire County Council to the Department for Transport to introduce Civil Parking Enforcement in South Cambridgeshire. Councillor Neil Gough, the Deputy Leader, introduced the report, noting the ongoing work with Cambridgeshire County Council since 2018 for resolving the anti-social parking within the district, and thanking the Greater Cambridge Partnership for funding the scheme for the first five years.

Councillor Brian Milnes, Lead Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Licencing, welcomed the additional funding from the Greater Cambridge Partnership, and hoped this would solve the issue of inconsiderate parking within Shelford.

Councillor Sue Ellington welcomed the proposal but raised concerns that there would be no additional funding after the initial five-year period. The Deputy Leader responded that he hoped that parking violations would have reduced after five years.

Councillor Dr. Richard Williams thanked Officers for progress and hoped it would improve the situation within Whittlesford.

Councillor Bill Handley, Lead Cabinet Member for Community Resilience, Health and Wellbeing, supported the proposal, and commented that anti-social parking had been raised during recent Parish Council meetings in the ward of Over and Willingham.

Councillor Dr. Claire Daunton mentioned the introduction of civil parking enforcement would alleviate issues arising from parking around schools within the district, and that this was an ongoing concern in Fulbourn.

Councillor Heather Williams said this was an opportunity for action to be taken across the district.

Councillor Anna Bradnam questioned how the Council would manage disputes. The Deputy Leader responded that a collaborative approach would be taken and

would work closely with other neighbour councils.

Councillor John Batchelor said that this initiative was a potential solution for the problem of inconsiderate parking and noted that the County Council's expected timeline would see a scheme implemented toward the end of 2023.

Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Council, concluded the discussion, and 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.

9. Authority Monitoring Report for Greater Cambridge 2020-2021

Cabinet received the Authority Monitoring Report for Greater Cambridge 2020-2021. Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Lead Cabinet Member for Planning Policy and Delivery, introduced the report, and highlighted the targets set by the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service.

Councillor John Batchelor, Lead Cabinet Member for Housing, noted the strength of the Council's five-year housing land supply.

Councillor Sue Ellington questioned the term Greater Cambridge, and whether residents would understand this term. The Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development said this description would be amended before publication.

Councillor Dr. Richard Williams asked why fewer brownfield sites were being developed. The Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development said that the report reflected the nature of sites currently being developed. When development activity increased on sites such as Waterbeach the proportion of housing on brownfield sites would increase.

Councillor Bill Handley, Lead Cabinet Member for Community Resilience, Health and Wellbeing asked when the report would be published. Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins responded that this would be published as soon as the Cabinet had approved the report.

Councillor Dr. Claire Daunton asked whether there would be any minor updates to the individual cases that had since been completed. The Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development responded that apart from minor editing amendments, no further changes would be made.

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

10. Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document

Cabinet received the Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document. Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins, Lead Cabinet Member for Planning Policy and Delivery, introduced the report and highlighted the ongoing protection of wildlife and biodiversity across the district.

Councillor Heather Williams commented that biodiversity was becoming more prevalent within housing developments and expected this would be implemented through all new housing developments across the district.

Councillor Sue Ellington said she was pleased with the report but expressed disappointment that the majority of newly planted saplings alongside the A14 were dead. The Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development responded that while the Council did not have the authority to replace and maintain the trees, he would engage with Highways England.

Councillor Deborah Roberts was critical of the report, and the ongoing environmental impacts of recent and potential building projects in South Cambridgeshire. Councillor Dr. Tumi Hawkins responded that the identified housing projects were part of the Local Plan.

Councillor Brian Milnes, Lead Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Licensing said he was pleased with the working practices noted within the report and hoped it would improve the diversity of wildlife.

Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Council, closed the discussion, and 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 1 of this report);
- b) **Approved** the amended Greater Cambridge Biodiversity SPD (appendix 2 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.

11. Summary General Fund Revenue Budget 2022/2023

Cabinet received the Summary General Fund Revenue Budget 2022/2023. Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Finance, introduced the report, focussing on the Council's commitment for the environment and tackling climate change in South Cambridgeshire.

Councillor Neil Gough, the Deputy Leader, believed the proposed budget reflected the decisions made by the Council, such as the investment programme and the Council Tax proposals.

Councillor Deborah Roberts expressed concern with the budget outlined in the report due to current economic situation across the country. Councillor John Williams said that the current situation was being monitored.

Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Council, 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 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.

12. **Opposition Group Budget Proposals for 2022-2023**

Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Council, invited Councillor Heather Williams to introduce the Conservative Group's alternative budget proposal. Councillor Heather Williams introduced her Group's alternative budget proposal. She said it would not increase council tax and would provide additional resources for reducing fly tipping and enhancing fraud prevention.

Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Finance, thanked the Conservative Group for their Opposition budget, and noted this would be debated at the Council meeting on Tuesday, 22 February.

The Leader invited Councillor Nigel Cathcart to introduce the Labour Group's alternative budget proposal. Councillor Nigel Cathcart did so and said that his Group's proposed budget would include the development of a Cultural Strategy and investment in green infrastructure.

Councillor John Williams thanked the Labour Group for their Opposition budget.

Councillor Bridget Smith thanked the Opposition Members and Cabinet noted the proposals.

13. **Housing Revenue Account Budget 2022/2023**

Cabinet received the Housing Revenue Account Budget 2022-2023. Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Finance, introduced the report, and commented on the Council's commitment to affordable housing, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic and rising cost of living.

Councillor John Batchelor, Lead Cabinet Member for Housing, said this was a sensible plan fulfilling the Council's ambitions.

Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Council, closed the discussion, and

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.

14. Capital Investments Programme 2022/2023-2026/2027

Cabinet received the Capital Investment Programme 2022/2023-2026/2027. Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Finance, introduced the report, noting the updates from when the Cabinet initially commented on the report in December 2021.

Councillor Brian Milnes, Lead Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Licencing noted the programme included the installation of solar panels at the Waste depot, and the facilities at Northstowe.

Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Council, closed the discussion, and Cabinet:

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

15. Treasury Management Strategy

Cabinet received the Treasury Management Strategy. Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Finance, introduced the report, noting the updated strategy and the returns of the Council's investments.

Councillor Heather Williams wanted to confirm if the yield of each investment would be reviewed individually or combined with all of the Council's investments. Councillor John Williams responded that all investments would be judged on their individual returns.

Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Council, closed the discussion, and 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.

16. Capital Strategy

Cabinet received the Capital Strategy. Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Finance, introduced the report, and noted the continued plan for the Council's strategy.

Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Council, thanked Officers across the Finance team for their work on Council's 2022/2023 budget, and 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.

17. Local Council Tax Support

Cabinet received the Local Council Tax Support report. Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Finance, introduced the report, and confirmed the Council's commitment to continue with option 1.

Councillor Heather Williams was supportive of the continued scheme, but

commented that changes would be required if inflation continued to increase.

Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Council, closed the discussion, thanked the Benefits Manager for the work, and 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.

18. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Asset Management Strategy 2021 - 2026

Cabinet received the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Asset Management Strategy 2021-2026. Councillor John Batchelor, Lead Cabinet Member for Housing, introduced the report and highlighted the carbon neutrality of the Council's housing stock, and the increase in affordable housing.

The Head of Housing commented on the consultation that had improved the strategy.

Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Finance, noted the Council's influence on the quality of housing stock that was owned by the Council.

Councillor Brian Milnes, Lead Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Licencing said that the newly acquired apartment blocks in Sawston were of the same quality as those within the commercial market.

Councillor Heather Williams asked whether any updates would be provided after the 2021 census data had been published. The Head of Housing responded that this document would be continually updated.

Councillor Dr. Claire Daunton said she was pleased with the increased focus on communal rooms and alternative options for garages.

Councillor Bridget Smith, Leader of the Council, closed the discussion, thanked officers for their work, and 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.

19. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Cabinet **agreed** by affirmation that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of items number 20 and 21 in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) (exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act). Paragraph 3 refers to information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

20. Acquisition 60 Affordable Homes and Commercial Unit at Northstowe 2B

Cabinet received the restricted report detailing the potential acquisition of 60 affordable homes and a commercial unit at Northstowe 2B. Councillor John Batchelor, Lead Cabinet Member for Housing, introduced the report and the importance of providing affordable homes for residents within the district.

After a short discussion, the Leader thanked Officers and Cabinet:

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

21. Acquisition 34 Affordable Homes, Gamlingay

Cabinet received the restricted report detailing the potential acquisition of 34 affordable homes in Gamlingay. Councillor John Batchelor, Lead Cabinet Member for Housing, introduced the report and noted the acquisition was integral to provide affordable homes for residents within the district.

After a short discussion, the Leader thanked Officers and Cabinet:

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

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