



## Council 20 October 2022

### Decisions

Agenda item 1. Minutes 21 July 2022

- Agreed subject to amendments.

Agenda item 4. Recommendations of the Executive

Agenda item 4a. Housing Revenue Account Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 (Executive Councillor for Housing)

Resolved to:

- Approve proposals for changes in existing housing capital budgets, as introduced in the officer's report at sections 6 and 7 and detailed in Appendix E of the document, with the resulting position summarised in Appendix H, for decision at Council on 20 October 2022.
- Approve proposals for new housing capital budgets, as introduced in the officer's report at sections 6 and 7 and detailed in Appendix E of the document, with the resulting position summarised in Appendix H, for decision at Council on 20 October 2022.
- Approve the revised funding mix for the delivery of the Housing Capital Programme, recognising the latest assumptions for the use of Grant, Right to Buy Receipts, HRA Resources, Major Repairs Allowance and HRA borrowing.

Agenda item 4b. Appointment to Conservators of the River Cam (Executive Councillor Open Spaces, Food Justice and Community Development)

Resolved to:

- i. Appoint Councillor Levien to the Conservators of the River Cam (term ending December 2024 for all city council appointees).

Agenda item 4c. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority -city council appointments (Leader of the Council)

Resolved to:

- i. Appoint Councillor Anna Smith as the substitute member on the Combined Authority Board and Councillor Simon Smith as a substantive member and Councillor Gawthrop Wood as the substitute member on the CA Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Agenda item 4d. Council Tax Reduction Local Scheme April 2023-March 2026 (Executive Councillor for Finance, Resources and Transformation)

Resolved to:

- i. Continue with the current Council Tax Reduction scheme (to include annual uprating in line with housing benefit rates) for working age claimants who are not in receipt of Universal Credit.
- ii. Reset the non-dependant deduction rates for both working-age schemes for 1 year from 1 April 2023 and to uprate by September CPI figures thereafter.
- iii. Continue with an earnings based banded local Council Tax Reduction scheme for Universal Credit claimants and to have fixed non-dependant deductions for these claims.
- iv. Reset the earned income bands and contribution amounts set out in 4.03 Table 1 for 1 year from 1 April 2023 and to uprate by September CPI figures thereafter.
- v. Align non-dependant deductions so the rules for application are the same for all schemes (prescribed Pensioner scheme and the two Local Schemes, one for Universal Credit households and one for non-Universal Credit households)
- vi. Not introduce a minimum contribution towards Council Tax for households on Local Council Tax Reduction.

Agenda item 4e. Treasury Management half yearly report 2022/23 (Executive Councillor for Finance Resources and Transformation)

Resolved to:

- i. Agree the Council's estimated Prudential and Treasury Indicators for 2022/23 to 2025/26 (Appendix A of the officer's report).
- ii. Approve the revised counterparty list (Appendix B of the officer's report).
- iii. Approve the addition of a loan to the Cambridge Investment Partnership in the counterparty list, to bring these into line with the approved expenditure per the approved capital plan (Appendix B of the officer's).

Agenda item 4f. General Fund Medium Term Strategy (Executive Councillor for Finance Resources and Transformation)

Resolved to:

- i. Agree the budget process and timetable as outlined in Section 8 [page 25] of the MTFS document.
- ii. Agree the incorporation of changed assumptions as presented in Section 3 [pages 10 and 11], which provide an indication of the net savings requirement, by year for the next five years [page 13], and revised projections for General Fund (GF) revenue and funding as shown in Appendix A [page 26] and reserves, Section 6 [page 18].
- iii. Agree the 2022/23 revenue budget proposal as set out in Section 4 [page 12], for a £1,122k increase in pay budgets to reflect the current pay offer
- iv. Note the changes to the capital plan and funding as set out in Section 5 [pages 15 to 17] and Appendix B [pages 27 to 30] of the MTFS document.
- v. Agree capital spending proposals as set out below.

Ref	Description £'000s	2022/ 23	2023/ 24	2024/ 25	2025/ 26	2026/ 27	2027/ 28	Tot al
	Proposals							
SC8 26	WREN solar project	-	1,170	130	-	-	-	1,3 00
SC6 54	Redevelop ment of Silver Street Toilets	141	-	-	-	-	-	141

	Total Proposals	141	1,170	130	0	0	0	1,441
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- vi. Agree changes to GF reserve levels, the prudent minimum balance being set at £6.854m and the target level at £8.225m as detailed in Section 6 [page 18].
- vii. Agree that the remaining balance of £213k on the Cambridge Live Development Fund is transferred to the GF reserve and the fund is closed [page 20]

#### Agenda item 5. Recommendations of Committees

##### Agenda item 5a. Civic Affairs Committee – Amendment to Contract Procedure Rules

Resolved to:

- i. Amend the Contract Procedure Rules to enable Grant Agreements to be approved by deed; or signed under hand where appropriate by delegated authority to the Director. The new wording would be as follows: “ALL Grant Agreements paid to third parties must be executed as a deed; or signed under hand where appropriate by delegated authority to the Director”.

##### Agenda item 5a. Civic Affairs Committee – Amendment to Contract Procedure Rules

Resolved to:

- i. Amend the Contract Procedure Rules to enable Grant Agreements to be approved by deed; or signed under hand where appropriate by delegated authority to the Director. The new wording would be as follows: “ALL Grant Agreements paid to third parties must be executed as a deed; or signed under hand where appropriate by delegated authority to the Director”.

##### Agenda item 5b. Civic Affairs Committee – Review of the Budget Setting Process and Wider Financial Governance Issues

Resolved to:

- i. Agree the changes to Council Procedure Rules and Budget Framework rules as set out in the Appendix A of the Officer’s report and that the arrangements are reviewed in good time to inform an agreed approach for the following budget cycle.

- ii. Note the additions and changes to meetings December 2022-February 2023 as a consequence of these changes.
- iii. Agree that Council meets on 23 February 2023 to consider the Budget Setting Report and associated financial recommendations only (ie a budget meeting), with the remainder of the Council Agenda adjourned until the following Thursday 2 March 2023 (ie the same arrangement as 2022).
- iv. Note that this arrangement may not be the best way on-going and Members will be consulted on different options for when Council meetings are scheduled at this time of the municipal year following a review of the above changes to the budget process.
- v. Agree the changes to Virements and carry forwards as described in 3.4 and Appendix B of the Officer's report.

Agenda item 5c. Civic Affairs Committee - Proposal to Increase the current Cambridge Weighting for Employees and Agency Workers

Resolved to:

- i. Approve the proposal to increase the Cambridge Weighting to be paid to employees and agency workers to a minimum of £11.00 per hour, with effect from April 2023.
- ii. Delegate authority to the Head of Human Resources to update the weightings on each relevant pay point, subject to the limit of £11.00 per hour, depending upon the current hourly rate and the Real Living Wage supplement payable at that time.

Agenda item 5d. Civic Affairs Committee – Review of the Pensions Discretion Statement

Resolved to:

- i. Approve the proposed policy statement on employer discretions shown as per Appendix A of the Officer's report.
- ii. Delegate approval to join a shared cost AVC scheme to the Head of Human Resources, following consultation with the Head of Finance, Executive Councillor for Finance, Resources and Transformation and Opposition Spokes for Strategy and Resources, if considered appropriate, following further exploration of a suitable procurement process.
- iii. Note that Council Officers will continue to review the Discretions Statement every 3 years and/or in line with changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) as advised by the Local Government Pensions Committee (LGPC) and the Administering

Authority (Cambridgeshire County Council), and any recommended changes will go before Civic Affairs for approval.

Agenda item 7. Notices of Motion

Agenda item 7a. The Future of Local Bus Services

Agreed:

This Council:

**Deplores** Stagecoach's plan to withdraw 18 bus services across the county, noting the potential loss of independence and financial cost incurred by those who have relied on them, such as those students left without means of getting to sixth form college and CRC;

**Believes** that this further underlines the failure of the deregulated and purely commercial bus service in our area;

**Supports** measures by the CPCA Mayor Nik Johnson to protect these services beyond the end of October, should Stagecoach not be persuaded to rethink;

**Calls on** the Mayor to accelerate consideration of franchising bus services in our area, in particular noting the way this would complement the draft proposals 'Making Connections' from the Greater Cambridge Partnership, which could enable a longer term transformation of services;

**Encourages** Cambridge people to participate in the public consultation on the GCP's 'Making Connections' proposals, giving feedback on them to shape progress on the agenda of cutting congestion, improving mobility for all, enhancing our public realm and reducing carbon emissions from transport.

Agenda item 7b: The cost of living crisis and the impact of Brexit

Agreed motion as amended:

Council notes

The significant efforts of this Labour council, to address the cost-of-living crisis and support residents during these increasingly difficult times within a wider context which includes:

- The devastating impact of recent decisions by the Conservative Government and the former Chancellor, Kwasi Kwarteng has had on costs facing the majority of UK households through prompting a falling pound and increased interest rates;
- This compounds not only the energy shortage caused by Putin's invasion of Ukraine over which we have limited influence, but also inflation and constraints on trade and migration arising from Brexit
- The risks of a second period of sustained austerity, even worse than previous austerity measures imposed by Coalition and Conservative governments since 2010 which caused so much hardship to so many-particularly those most vulnerable in society.

This Council recognises the efforts of Daniel Zeichner MP and Leader of the Labour party, Keir Starmer in relation to European unity, and notes their consistent support of the European project. We call on MPs of all parties to:

- be clear of that Brexit remains a key and persistent cause underpinning the cost-of-living crisis unique to the UK and
- recognise that a closer relationship with the EU, under the leadership of a national Labour Government is critical to tackling the cost of living crisis which will impact negatively on so many of our residents.

Agenda item 7c. Tackling the Energy and Cost of Living Crisis Fairly

Agreed:

Inadequate action by national government on the energy crisis, and its failure to levy a sizeable energy company windfall tax, places the burden of spiralling energy costs on residents and businesses. The impacts of these failures and inadequacies will be far-reaching, meaning an extremely difficult winter for many and leaving a sizeable debt to pay off in the future. It will exacerbate the damage to jobs and real incomes caused by Government failure to reduce excessive inflation.

As research by the University of York Social Policy Unit projects, 91% of

pensioner couples and 90% of couples with 3 children will find themselves soon spending 10% of their income on energy bills, and researchers' projections indicate that three quarters of UK households are likely to fall into food poverty by January 2023.

Cambridge City Council has set out a clear plan at the local level to address fuel poverty across the autumn and winter, including;

- Securing funding from the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) for a Heating and Health Project, working with South and East Cambridgeshire District Councils to co-produce local solutions supporting residents who will be at risk of health harms due to the cold and cost of living crisis this winter.
- establishing a network of cost-of-living advice hubs, where residents will be able to get advice on how to reduce their fuel bills.
- working with partners across the city to provide warm spaces, for residents who are struggling to heat their homes.
- issuing cost of living micro grants that groups of residents can apply to for support.
- Delivering £6.5m of Sustainable Warmth funding across Cambridgeshire to increase the energy efficiency of homes for the most vulnerable.
- continuing to insulate our council homes, with a further 100 identified for works.
- Making a £10,000 contribution to the Food Poverty Alliance's (FPA) Cambridge Cost of Food and Living Crisis crowd-funding campaign

However, council notes that the burden of intervention is falling disproportionately onto local authorities, which are already hit by those same rising energy costs and inflationary pressures. Following on from our March 2022 motion on fuel poverty and July motion on the cost of living, the Council calls for a far stronger plan of action from national government and demands that ministers;

1. Undertake a mid-year review and uprate benefits for 2022/23 to account for additional in-year non-energy inflation affecting household costs since the annual review, and not renege on their commitment to pensioners and those on benefits in order to help pay for tax cuts to high earners.
2. Withdraw the selective tax cuts proposed from November apart from the 1p income tax cut, and ensure the tax changes are fair to all.

3. Apply a further windfall tax on energy producing companies, in addition to the modest tax levied in the summer, in line with the tax asked for by council in its March motion.
4. Require OFGEM to review and reduce the electricity price formula to give all energy users a fairer deal, by ending their approach of basing it on the most expensive route to generate electricity, which is currently gas.

A copy of the motion will be sent to the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer, and forwarded to our local MPs, asking that they support its proposals and comment in response.

Agenda item 7d. Private Rental Sector in Cambridge

Agreed:

### **The Council Notes**

1. That according to research by Savills in 2021, 42% of households in Cambridge live in private rented accommodation.
2. That the strong rental market in Cambridge has led to high rental prices in the city, as displayed by Savills research from Aug 2020-21 where average rental prices increased by 4.1% in a year.
3. The City Council's 2019 review of homelessness and rough sleeping found that one of the most common causes of people becoming homeless in Cambridge were because of the loss of a private rented home.
4. The 2021 Census showed that Cambridge's population has been growing at almost three times the national average during the past decade (17.6% since 2011).
5. According to Government research, '*many low income households may have little choice over which property to rent because of the budget they have available*'. While 1/3 of privately rented homes in the UK don't meet the government's Decent Homes Standard.
6. Requests to Citizens Advice Bureau regarding help for private tenants are most typically about 'repairs and maintenance', 'rents and other charges' and 'tenancy deposit protection'.

### **The Council Believes**

1. Having a safe, secure and affordable home is vital.

2. That with such a growing population, house prices rising even faster, and without adequate funding for the council and housing associations to build affordable housing, the private rental sector in Cambridge is going to continue growing.
3. Tenants who may have little choice over rental properties may feel reluctant to complain about housing problems because they fear being evicted or are restricted by their budgets.
4. That as a city we should aspire for all residents to be living in safe, legal and adequate homes.
5. That working closely with private renters in Cambridge will allow us to better identify issues which can be addressed collaboratively.

### **The Council Resolves**

1. To convene a Private Renters' Forum to consult with private tenants in the city, including stakeholder groups such as ACORN, Students' Unions and Citizens Advice Bureau.
2. To notify Councillors at an All Member Briefing on plans for the Forum, and ensure information about the forum is shared widely.
3. Through the Forum, work with private renters to discuss how the Council can best support and advocate for private renters in the city.
4. To re-consider the need for a Selective Landlord Licensing Scheme in the light of the 2021 census data when it becomes available.
5. To continue to put high priority on work to ensure that all HMOs in the city are inspected, improved if needed, and licensed.
6. To ensure the relevant information on the Council's website (currently listed here: [www.cambridge.gov.uk/private-rented-accommodation](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/private-rented-accommodation)) is reviewed and promoted.
7. To look into providing resources in other languages which are spoken in the city.
8. To continue working via the Council's Landlord Steering Group to reach out to landlords in the city and ensure there is always private tenant representation on the Landlord Steering Group, either through ACORN or other local organisations.

For more information please contact Democratic Services:

- [democratic.services@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@cambridge.gov.uk)
- Full meeting recording available on the Council's You Tube channel [Cambridge City Council - YouTube](#)