

THE EXECUTIVE

10 February 2025
9.06 - 9.16 pm

Present: Councillors Davey (Chair), Gilderdale (Vice-Chair), Bird, Holloway, Smart and S. Smith

Other Councillors present: Councillor Bennett

Officers Present:

Chief Operating Officer, Corporate Group: Jane Wilson

Chief Financial Officer, Corporate Group: Jody Etherington

Committee Manager: Claire Tunnicliffe

Meeting Producer: Boris Herzog

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

25/1/Exec Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Moore, Thornburrow and Wade.

25/2/Exec Declarations of Interest

Name	Item	Interest
Councillor Bird		Personal: Sits on the Board of the Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP).
Councillor S Smith		Personal: Sits on the Board of the Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP).

25/3/Exec Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

25/4/Exec Public Questions

There were no public questions.

25/5/Exec HRA Budget-Setting Report (BSR) 2025/26

Recommendations of the Executive, which met on 10 February 2025, are set out in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Setting Report (BSR) 2025/26 which went to meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Committee held on 4 February 2025.

Unless otherwise specified, all references in the recommendations to appendices, pages and sections relating to the Budget-Setting Report can be found via the Council agenda page:

[Agenda for Council on Monday, 24th February, 2025, 6.00 pm - Cambridge Council](#)

The Chief Finance Officer reminded Members that the recommendations were now to full Council.

Councillor Bennett said the following:

- i. As the Executive Councillor for Housing had noted 60% of tenants received some sort of state benefit help but some were still struggling financially.
- ii. It was important to highlight the work of Council's Financial Inclusion Officers who could support tenants to maximise their social security benefits and assist with accessing other funds. Encouraged Councillors to make a referral if they knew of any individuals who required support.
- iii. The Council's Financial Inclusion Officers were extremely knowledgeable and did an outstanding job.

The Executive **resolved unanimously** to:

Review of Rents and Charges

- a) Recommend that full Council approve that council dwellings rents for all social rented and social shared ownership properties be increased in line with government guidelines, with an increase of 2.7%, being inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) at September 2024 of 1.7%, plus 1%. Rent increases will take effect from 1 April 2025. This equates to an average rent increase of £3.37 per week.
- b) Recommend that full Council approve that affordable housing rents, inclusive of service charge, are also increased by 2.7% in line with the increase for social rents. This equates to an average rent increase of £5.06 per week.

- c) Recommend that full Council approve that rents for affordable shared ownership properties are increased by RPI as at September 2024, 2.7% plus 0.5%, as allowed for in the lease requirements for these properties.
- d) Recommend that full Council approve that garage and parking space charges for 2025/26 are increased by inflation at 2.7%, in line with dwelling rents, and approve changes in charges for parking permits, as set out at table 10 on page 28 of the attached Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Update and Budget Setting Report 2025/26.
- e) Recommend that full Council approve the proposed service charges for Housing Revenue Account services and facilities, as shown in Appendix D of the attached Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Update and Budget Setting Report 2025/26.
- f) Recommend that full Council approve the proposed leasehold administration charges for 2025/26, as detailed in Appendix D of the attached Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Update and Budget Setting Report 2025/26.
- g) Recommend that full Council approve that service charges continue to be recovered at full estimated cost, as detailed in Appendix D of the attached Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Update and Budget Setting Report 2025/26, recognising that local authorities should endeavour to limit increases to inflation as measured by CPI at September 2024 (1.7%) plus 1%, wherever possible.

HRA Revenue

- h) Recommend that full Council approve (with any amendments) the revenue savings, pressures and bids set out at Appendix F of the attached Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Update and Budget Setting Report 2025/26.
- i) Recommend that full Council approve the resulting Housing Revenue Account revenue budget as summarised at table 5 on page 20 of the attached Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Update and Budget Setting Report 2025/26.

Housing Capital

- j) Recommend that full Council approve the capital bid set out at Appendix F of the attached Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Update and Budget Setting Report 2025/26.
- k) Recommend that full Council approve the updated Housing Capital Investment Plan as shown at Appendix E of the attached Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Update and Budget Setting Report 2025/26.
- l) Recommend that full Council approve the proposed approach to financing the Housing Capital Investment Plan as set out at table 11 on page 31 of the attached Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Update and Budget Setting Report 2025/26.

Treasury Management

- m) Recommend that full Council approve the revised need to borrow over the life of the Business Plan, to sustain the proposed level of capital investment, which includes delivery of the 10 Year New Homes Programme.
- n) Recommend that full Council recognise that the constitution delegates Treasury Management to the Chief Finance Officer (Part 3, para 5.11), with Part 4F, C16 stating; 'All executive decisions on borrowing, investment or financing shall be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer, who is required to act in accordance with CIPFA's Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Local Authorities'.
- o) Recommend that full Council recognise that the decision to borrow significantly to build new homes impacts the council's ability to set-aside resource to redeem the HRA Self-Financing debt at the point at which the loan portfolio matures, resulting in a need to re-finance debt at the point of maturity.

General

- p) Recommend that full Council approve inclusion of a capital budget for Disabled Facilities Grant expenditure and associated grant income from 2025/26 onwards, based upon 2024/25 net grant awarded, with delegation to the Chief Finance Officer to approve an in year increase or decrease in this budget in any year, in direct relation to any increase or decrease in the capital grant funding available for this purpose, as received from Cambridgeshire County Council through the Better Care Fund.
- q) Recommend that full Council approval of delegation to the Chief Finance Officer, as Section 151 Officer, to determine the most appropriate use of any additional Disabled Facilities Grant funding, for the wider benefit of the Shared Home Improvement Agency.
- r) Recommend that full Council approve delegation to the Director of Communities to review and amend the level of fees charged by the Shared Home Improvement Agency for Disabled Facilities Grants and repair assistance grants, in line with any recommendations made by the Shared Home Improvement Agency Board.
- s) Recommend that full Council approve delegation to the relevant Director, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, to draw down resource from the ear-marked revenue reserve or capital reserve for potential debt redemption or re-investment, for the purpose of open market land or property acquisition or new build housing development, should the need arise, in order to meet deadlines for the use of retained right to buy receipts or to facilitate future site redevelopment.

t) Recommend that full Council approve delegation to the Chief Finance Officer to make any necessary technical amendments to detailed budgets in respect of recharges between the General Fund and the HRA.

25/6/Exec General Fund Budget Setting Report 2025/26 to 2029/30

Recommendations of the Executive, which met on 10 February 2025, are set out in the Budget Setting Report which went to Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Committee also held on 10 February before the meeting of the Executive.

The Executive noted the summary of changes on the General Fund revenue positions which had been highlighted at the Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Committee.

Unless otherwise specified, all references in the recommendations to appendices, pages and sections relating to the Budget-Setting Report which can be found via the Council agenda page:

[Agenda for Council on Monday, 24th February, 2025, 6.00 pm - Cambridge Council](#)

As the meeting immediately followed the meeting of the Strategy and Resources where the Budget-Setting Report had been scrutinised there was no further debate, and the Chair went straight to the vote.

The Executive **resolved unanimously** to:

General Fund Revenue Budgets:

a) Recommend to Council for approval the revenue pressures and bids shown in Appendix D(a) and the revenue savings and increased income shown in Appendix D(b).

b) Recommend that Council confirms delegation to the Chief Finance Officer of the calculation and determination of the council tax taxbase which is set out at Appendix A(a).

c) Recommend that Council approves the increase to the city council share of council tax for 2025/26 at 2.99%, and the updated council tax levels as set out on page 17 of the attached Budget Setting Report 2025/26.

Note that the council's preceptors (Cambridgeshire Police & Crime Commissioner, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Fire Authority,

Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority) will meet to confirm their precepts on or before 13 February 2025, following which the formal council tax calculation will be carried out for approval by Council.

d) Recommend that Council delegates authority to the Chief Finance Officer to reallocate budgets between services in relation to corporate and/or departmental restructuring, and any reallocation of support service and central costs in accordance with the CIPFA Service Reporting Code of Practice for Local Authorities (SeRCOP).

General Fund Capital Plan:

e) Recommend that Council approves the capital proposals set out at Appendix E(a), the revised capital plan set out at Appendix E(c), and the revised capital funding approach set out on page 28 of the attached Budget Setting Report 2025/26.

f) Recommend that Council approves the Capital Strategy 2025/26 attached at Appendix H.

General Fund Reserves:

g) Recommend that Council note the impact of budget proposals upon General Fund unallocated reserves, as set out on page 34 of the attached Budget Setting Report 2025/26.

h) Recommend that Council note the key risks to the council's financial sustainability highlighted in the table on pages 30-31 of the attached Budget Setting Report 2025/26.

i) Recommend that Council approve in principle a contribution to the Civic Quarter Development Reserve equivalent to the net underspend against budget for the 2024/25 financial year (currently forecast at £4.0 million).

j) Recommend that Council approve the transfers to earmarked reserves totalling £6.602 million in 2025/26 as set out on pages 32-33 of the attached Budget Setting Report 2025/26.

Section 25 Report:

k) Recommend that Council note the Chief Finance Officer's Section 25 Report, covering the robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves, included at section 7 of the attached Budget Setting Report 2025/26.

Treasury Management Strategy:

l) Recommend that Council approves the Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26 attached at Appendix G, including the prudential and treasury management indicators set out at Annexe C.

m) Recommends that Council approves a change to the maturity structure prudential indicator, such that all new borrowing will have a maturity of at least 5 years (rather than the previous 10 years), as explained at paragraph 3.8 of Appendix G.

Other:

n) Recommend that Full Council reconfirm that the incomes below will be disregarded (if above the £10 statutory disregard) when calculating entitlement to housing benefit and/or council tax reduction. These schemes are often called local or modified schemes:

- War disablement pension
- War widow, widower or surviving civil partner pension
- Armed Forces Independence Payment

Note that the estimated cost to the council for payments of housing benefit made under the local scheme is £1,777.50 and for council tax reduction less than £50.

o) Recommend that Council note the Equality Impact Assessment in Appendix F covering all General Fund budget proposals.

p) Recommend that Council note the schedule of proposed fees and charges for 2025/26 in Appendix I(i) and Confidential Appendix I(ii)

The meeting ended at 9.16 pm

CHAIR