



Council 10 October 2024

Meeting recording: [Council - Thursday, 10th October, 2024 6.00 pm \(youtube.com\)](#)

Decisions

Agenda item 6. Recommendations of the Executive

Agenda item 6a. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2024/25 (Executive Councillor for Housing)

- i. Approved proposals for changes in existing housing capital budgets, as introduced in Section 9 and detailed in Appendix F of the document, with the resulting position summarised in Appendix H.
- ii. Approved proposals for new housing capital budgets, as introduced in Sections 6 and 7 and detailed in Appendix E of the document, with the resulting position summarised in Appendix H.
- iii. 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, as summarised in Appendix H.

Agenda item 6b. General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 - 2034/35 (Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources)

- i. Approved the Council's General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2025/26-2034/35, as attached at Appendix A.
- ii. Approved the 2024/25 capital bid of an additional £487,000 for essential repairs of the riverbank at Jesus Green, as set out at page 19 of the MTFS.

- iii. Noted the other changes to the capital plan approved under delegated powers since approval of the Budget Setting Report, as set out in section 5 of the MTFS.
- iv. Agreed the General Fund reserve Prudent Minimum Balance at £6.541 million, and the target level at £7.849 million, as recommended by the Chief Finance Officer.

Agenda item 8a. Motion – Cambridge Cancer Research Hospital
Council notes:

- the dire state of public finances left by the last Government.
- the last Government's unfulfilled, unfunded promise to build forty new hospitals across the country.
- The Labour Government's welcome announcement to reset the building programme for new hospitals within a clearly defined financial package, based on regional and national priorities
- The importance of the planned Cambridge Cancer Research Hospital to Greater Cambridge's position as a regional centre of healthcare and the continued development of the vitally important life sciences sector in the region.

Council welcomes the progress made to date on the development of the hospital and notes that the project falls under the recently announced review of the New Hospital Programme to be undertaken by the Department of Health and Social Care since it does not yet have full business case approval for the main build phase.

Council expresses its full confidence in the project and notes that the full business case is expected to be submitted in 2025, that the project has been given full planning permission by this council, and that pre-construction works are planned to begin on site in the coming months, putting the project on track to deliver the hospital by 2029.

Council therefore resolves to:

Ask the Director of Planning to write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care reiterating the council's full support for the Cambridge Cancer Research Hospital and offering to work with Director for Delivery, Performance and Assurance in the DHSC New Hospital Programme sponsor team, who is leading the NHP review, to provide any assistance needed during the review to secure the delivery of this vital facility.

Agenda item 8b. Motion – Cutback of Winter Fuel Payment

The Council is deeply concerned by the financial failures of the last Conservative government which has resulted in a £22bn black hole in our nation's finances.

Council notes the recent announcement by the Labour Government to end universal winter fuel payments and restrict eligibility to only those in receipt of Pension Credit and other benefits. In addition, the council acknowledges that the decision to award the winter fuel payment to pensioners receiving pension credit was a difficult decision that nobody wanted to make.

Though many agree that universal Winter Fuel Payments are not necessary for them, Council is deeply concerned that many pensioners on lower and middle incomes who need the payments will now not receive them. Across England and Wales the number of people eligible for winter fuel payments will fall by 10 million (from 11.4 million to only 1.5 million).

In Cambridge the number of pensioners affected by the change in eligibility criteria is 13,468. That means 89.7% of pensioners currently eligible for winter fuel payments will no longer be able to claim the payment from this winter onwards.

The council welcomes the government's commitment to protect the most vulnerable in our society by delivering the £150 Warm Home Discount for low-income households from October, extending the Household Support Fund with £421 million, to ensure local authorities can support vulnerable people and families, ensuring around 1.3 million households in England and Wales will continue to receive up to £300 in Winter Fuel Payments.

Council resolves to:

- Continue the Council's partnership work with Citizen's Advice Bureau to send out personal letters to local pensioner households, those claiming housing benefit and/or Council Tax reductions to maximise uptake of pension credits.
- Highlight the national DWP campaign to promote Pension Credit over the next few months, targeting 120,000 of the estimated 850,000 pensioners not claiming, and call on the government to increase the number of people targeted to the full 850,000.

- Offer all tenants in sheltered accommodation the opportunity to meet with the Independent Living Service to conduct an income maximisation check, particularly for tenants who don't currently access Council support services.
- Share all the relevant information with other stakeholders in the city including landlords and GP surgeries.
- Continue developing support for residents over the winter period, including through the provision of warm spaces in the winter and emergency food support.

Agenda item 8c. Motion – Lithium-ion battery safety motion

Lithium-ion batteries are increasingly common in many household products, including e-bikes and e-scooters, but they can pose a significant fire risk. The recent increase in fires caused by lithium-ion batteries demands that proactive steps are taken to address these risks and ensure the safety of our community.

This Council notes:

1. Lithium-ion batteries are increasingly prevalent in a range of household products, including e-bikes, e-scooters, smartphones and laptops.
2. The number of fires in the UK caused by lithium-ion batteries in e-scooters and e-bikes has increased by four times since 2020.
3. In July 2023, three people tragically lost their lives in a fire at Sackville Close, which was likely caused by a faulty e-bike battery.
4. Battery fires in waste disposal are at record levels, with over 1,200 fires at UK waste sites and bin lorries in 2023, an increase of 71% from 2022.
5. As of the beginning of August 2024, there had been seven bin lorry fires in Greater Cambridge in 2024, likely caused by batteries or electrical products.
6. In September 2023, Cambridge City Council [wrote to the government](#) requesting an increased focus on the dangers of

lithium-ion batteries in e-bikes and e-scooters, advocating for improved legislation, safety guidelines, and a public awareness campaign.

7. Cambridge City Council continues to work with the Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service to raise awareness of the risk of, and prevent, battery fires.

This Council issues the following advice to residents in relation to battery safety:

- Always use manufacturer approved chargers and follow the manufacturer's instructions for charging, storage and maintenance
- Charge batteries while awake and at home
- Do not overcharge batteries
- Store e-bikes and e-scooters in a safe, cool place with a closed door and a smoke alarm if possible
- Buy e-bikes and e-scooters from reputable dealers, and check they meet British or European standards. Remember that private e-scooters are currently illegal to ride on public roads and footpaths.
- Check batteries for signs of damage and replace if damaged
- Do not dispose of batteries in household waste or normal recycling
- Do not attempt to extinguish a fire caused by a lithium-ion battery but get out, stay out, and phone 999.

This Council resolves:

1. To write to Electrical Safety First and Lord Don Foster to express its support for [The Safety of Electric-Powered Micromobility Vehicles and Lithium Batteries Bill](#), introduced to the House of Lords by Lord Don Foster. This Bill is promoted by Electrical Safety First, and supported by, among others, the National Fire Chiefs Council, the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, and the Royal Society for Public Health.
2. To work through the Community Safety Partnership to gain a deeper understanding of data relating to fire risks from lithium-ion batteries in Cambridge, and to use this understanding to work together to mitigate risks.

3. To develop comprehensive safety guidance for Cambridge City Council staff on battery safety, including guidance on the safe use, storage, and disposal of lithium-ion batteries.
4. To work with the Greater Cambridge Shared Waste Service to run an awareness campaign focused on the safe disposal of batteries, particularly lithium-ion batteries.
5. To continue to disseminate to residents information on safe practice relating to lithium-ion batteries through *Cambridge Matters*, *Open Door*, and the Council's website and social media channels.
6. To work with Council tenants to, wherever possible, provide them with safe spaces for charging e-bikes and e-scooters.

Notes

Electrical Safety First's Battery Safety Campaign:

<https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/battery-breakdown/battery-safety-campaign>

Full list of supporters of Electrical Safety First's campaign as of May 2024:

<https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/media/pjxh54wy/supporters-may-2024.pdf>

House of Lords Debate 5 September 2024 on Lithium-Ion Battery Safety: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2024-09-06/debates/738EAE4C-F67B-4AF5-AA7A-94759672C9D0/details>

Cambridge City Council's Work on Battery Safety:

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/news/2023/09/14/council-appeals-to-government-to-raise-awareness-around-risks-of-e-bike-battery-fires>

Research on Battery Fires in Waste Sites:

<https://www.materialfocus.org.uk/press-releases/over-1200-battery-fires-in-bin-lorries-and-waste-sites-across-the-uk-in-last-year/>

Agenda item 9. Written Questions

Written Questions and Answers were published on the meeting webpage. [Agenda for Council on Thursday, 10th October, 2024, 6.00 pm - Cambridge Council](#)

For more information please contact Democratic Services:

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