

CABINET



WEDNESDAY, 8 DECEMBER 2021 - 2.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor C Boden (Chairman), Councillor Mrs J French (Vice-Chairman), Councillor I Benney, Councillor S Clark, Councillor Miss S Hoy, Councillor A Lynn, Councillor P Murphy, Councillor C Seaton and Councillor S Tierney

APOLOGIES: Councillor Mrs D Laws

CAB28/21 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held 21 October 2021 were agreed and signed.

CAB29/21 DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN 2022/23

Members considered the Draft Business Plan 2022/23 report presented by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Boden said he had a few items of concern and referred to page 3 of the report where the average house price is stated as £182.549k. He requested that this be amended to read £182,549. He also referred to the narrative on that page stating that Fenland is the 80th (out of 326) most deprived area in the country, with some wards within the top 10% most deprived. This data was from 2019 and some of these wards no longer exist therefore it is not always easy to translate the information. He doubted that we have more than one ward in the top 10% of the most deprived and requested that officers check the information based on the 2019 data.

Cabinet AGREED to approve the Draft Business Plan 2022-23 for public consultation.

CAB30/21 DRAFT BUDGET 2022/23 AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Members considered the Draft Budget 2022/23 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy report presented by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Boden said it is increasingly the case every year that when we produce these reports it is less certain that the numbers will be the same in 3-4 months' time due to changes in government regulation and revenue support, however the report had been excellently written and speaks for itself.

Councillor Lynn asked if this meant that the figures would change for the better or worse. Councillor Boden responded that some would change for the worse but overall, we will ensure they will change for the better. There are some downside risks within the report which will materialise although he cannot state which.

Councillor Hoy said referring to risks she had previously been asked what the risks in terms of homelessness are and how it affects the budget. We need to acknowledge that for all that we have been doing and for every strategy in place, we do not know the effects that the courts reopening will have. During lockdown many people were not served Section 21 notices; courts will have a massive backlog and we do not know how many people will come forward for housing advice. We have a statutory duty to prevent homelessness, and we must house those with priority need so we could potentially be in a perilous situation. We are putting plans in place, but we must recognise

that this is nothing to do with what Fenland has or has not done but remember this is a national risk being faced by all councils.

Councillor Boden agreed but said that what is important is that we are seeking to mitigate the potential risk by ensuring the unit net cost of support to us is reduced next year compared with this year through various changes in structure of the way in which we provide support and through whom we provide the support.

Councillor Boden suggested that the third recommendation regarding the report be amended to provisionally approve the Capital Programme for 2022-2025 because the FDC element is something we will need to look at when we are considering what changes may need to be made between now and the budget.

Cabinet AGREED that:-

- (i) the draft budget proposals for 2022/23 outlined in this report be approved for consultation;
- (ii) the revised General Fund Budget and revised Capital Programme for 2021/22 be approved;
- (iii) the proposed Capital Programme for 2022-2025 be provisionally approved.

CAB31/21 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT & ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY MID-YEAR REVIEW 2021/22

Members considered the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy Mid-Year Review 2021/22 report presented by Councillor Boden.

Cabinet AGREED to note the report.

CAB32/21 MARCH AREA TRANSPORT STUDY (OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE AND NEXT STEPS)

Members considered the March Area Transport Study (Outline Business Case and Next Steps) report presented by Councillor Seaton.

Councillor Mrs French said at the risk of sounding pedantic although it is important to be correct, she was pleased to hear Councillor Seaton quote the figure of £1.51m as the estimated cost of the small business case and detailed design, as paragraph 1.7 of the report incorrectly states £1.5m. Councillor Boden stated that the figure of £1.5m had been a mistake by the CPCA but had since been addressed.

Councillor Mrs French stated that although work on Upwell Road/Cavalry Drive and Norwood Road were due in February 2022, residents' comments were such that we went back out to consultation and most residents are now happy. She added that we will be in Purdah in April 2023 when construction of the MATs Broad Street Scheme commences, so this will need to be changed.

Councillor Mrs French then referred to Appendix D of the report where it references Twenty Foot Road/High Road and said this should read High Street as there is no High Road in March and it is important to get it correct.

Cabinet AGREED to:

- **Note and comment on the conclusions of the March Area Transport Study Outline Business Case.**
- **Note progress on delivery of the March Minor Schemes approved at the**

September 2020 Cabinet.

- **Note the programme and costs for Full Business Case and detailed design of the March package of schemes, providing funding is made available by CPCA Board and a suitable funding agreement between CCC and CPCA is agreed.**

CAB33/21 DRAFT 6 MONTH CABINET FORWARD PLAN

Councillor Boden presented the Cabinet Forward Plan for information.

2.29 pm

Chairman