



CABINET - MONDAY, 26 JANUARY 2026
NOTICE OF DECISIONS PUBLISHED ON 27 JANUARY 2026

Item 5

Review of Fees and Charges 2026/27

Purpose

To receive the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel's consideration of the Fees and Charges for 2026/27.

Decision

AGREED to the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and approved the Fees and Charges for 2026/27.

Reason for Decision

Not applicable.

Alternative Options Considered

Not applicable.

Interests

None

Background Documents

Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy and General Fund Budget 2026/27.

Item 6

Creation of a Local Government Reorganisation Reserve

Purpose

To seek Council approval to create a Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) reserve.

Decision

AGREED to:

- Recommend that Full Council approves the creation of LGR reserve
- Delegate to the S151 Officer in consultation with the Leader a full review of all reserves to present to Full Council as part of the budget setting process for 2026/27.

Reason for Decision
The LGR reserve is deemed necessary due to the process of Local Government Reorganisation and the amount of time and resource needed to support the effort needed in Cambridgeshire to develop the options submitted to government at the end of November 2025. This reserve would assist in helping the Council balance its revenue budget whilst delivering the outcomes needed.
Alternative Options Considered
Not applicable.
Interests
None
Background Documents
Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2026/27 and 2027/28.

Item 7
Immediate Article 4 Direction - Mud Walls in Whittlesey
Purpose
To seek Cabinet approval to make an Immediate Article 4 Direction under Article 4(1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) covering the wards of Whittlesey East and Villages, Whittlesey Lattersey, Whittlesey Northwest and Whittlesey South. The Direction would remove permitted development rights that currently allow for the demolition, removal or alteration of traditional mud walls without planning permission.
Decision
AGREED to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve the making of an Immediate Article 4 Direction under Article 4(1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), having immediate effect within the Wards of Whittlesey East and Villages, Whittlesey Lattersey, Whittlesey North-West and Whittlesey South, to remove permitted development rights that currently allow for the demolition, removal or alteration of traditional mud walls without planning permission. Delegate the implementation of the consultation process and final confirmation of the Immediate Article 4 Direction to the Corporate Director & Monitoring Officer in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder.
Reason for Decision
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Council has a statutory duty to protect and enhance the historic environment. Whittlesey's traditional mud walls are a distinctive and irreplaceable element of the town's heritage, and their continued loss would result in permanent harm to local character and sense of place. The updated assessment confirms that many surviving walls remain vulnerable and that existing planning controls do not provide consistent or adequate protection. 2. The use of an Article 4 Direction is supported by national and local planning policy. Policy LP18 of the Fenland Local Plan encourages the use of Article 4 Directions where appropriate to prevent unsympathetic alterations affecting heritage assets. The Whittlesey Conservation

Area Management Plan and Policy 8 of the Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan both identify mud walls as important features and support the use of planning controls to prevent their demolition and encourage appropriate repair.

3. An Article 4 Direction represents a proportionate and targeted response. It does not prevent development but removes specific permitted development rights so that proposals affecting mud walls are subject to planning control. This allows the Council to properly assess the impact of proposed works, balance heritage considerations with other material planning matters, and grant permission where works are justified and appropriately designed.
4. An Immediate Article 4 Direction is considered necessary to prevent further loss while consultation is undertaken. Given the evidence of ongoing deterioration and incremental loss, a non-immediate Direction would leave mud walls exposed to continued harm during the notice period and would undermine the effectiveness of the intervention.

Alternative Options Considered

(Reliance on existing planning controls (including taking no further action))

1. Under existing legislation, the demolition of walls within a conservation area already requires planning permission where the wall is over 1 metre in height adjacent to a highway (including a public footpath or bridleway) or over 2 metres in height elsewhere. In addition, a small number of mud walls are statutorily listed and are therefore protected from demolition or alteration.
2. However, some of Whittlesey's mud walls fall outside these thresholds or are located outside conservation areas, meaning that permitted development rights continue to allow their demolition or removal without planning permission. Updated assessment confirms that reliance on existing controls has not prevented incremental loss over time. This option was therefore discounted as it would not provide consistent or comprehensive protection for the remaining mud walls.

Non-immediate Article 4 Direction

3. A non-immediate Article 4 Direction would require a minimum 12-month notice period before permitted development rights could be withdrawn. During this period, permitted development rights would remain in force, allowing the demolition or removal of mud walls without planning permission in certain circumstances. Given the evidence of ongoing vulnerability, this option was discounted as it would expose mud walls to continued risk and undermine the effectiveness of the proposed intervention.

Interests

None

Background Documents

Cabinet report – Proposed Mud Walls Article 4 Direction for Whittlesey – 05.09.22

[Report.pdf](#)

Item 8**Wisbech High Street Update****Purpose**

To provide Cabinet with a monthly update regarding the ongoing construction work at 24 High Street, Wisbech and the pre-construction design and planning work for 11-12 High Street, Wisbech.

Decision

AGREED to note the report.

Reason for Decision

Not applicable.

Alternative Options Considered

Not applicable.

Interests

None

Background Documents

Previous monthly Cabinet reports regarding Wisbech High Street

July 2022 Cabinet and Council reports regarding 24 High Street, Wisbech

June 2025 Cabinet papers regarding the Fenland Inspire! project and 11-12 High Street, Wisbech

Item 11**Grounds Maintenance Contract 1 November 2026 to 31 October 2027****Purpose**

The current 10-year Grounds Maintenance contract with Tivoli expired on 31 October 2025. Following legal advice and Cabinet's decision of January 2025, a 1-year extension was added to the contract as this provided best value to the Council. The contracted cost is approximately 3681,148 p.a. It is now time to revisit the contract and plan for the end of the current extended contract on 31 October 2026.

Decision

AGREED to authorise officers to enter negotiations to extend the existing contract for a period of two years and to delegate authority to the Portfolio Holders for Finance and Grounds Maintenance to approve the final proposals arrived at during negotiations as set out in Exempt Appendix 1 of the report; and

Request that if an appropriate best value outcome cannot be achieved via the negotiations, that officers should report back to Cabinet with a full and updated assessment of all the remaining options available for determination; and

authorises the Monitoring Officer to execute and complete all requisite legal documentation in relation to the matters outlined above.

Reason for Decision	
Not applicable	
Alternative Options Considered	
Due to the current situation regarding LGR, and the previous review of the Grounds Maintenance contract, the option of a 1- or 2 year extension provides a short-term solution which will then give the Council freedom to work with LGR partners on the approach to Grounds Maintenance once partners have been determined by Central Government. It also seems to represent the best value option subject to final negotiations confirming the suggested terms. If this approach is not preferred, the options previously assessed will be revisited and a further report presented to Cabinet however, all options will result in an increase in cost and/or potential decrease in service.	
Interests	
None	
Background Documents	
Previous Cabinet report regarding Grounds Maintenance contract <u>Cabinet report January 2025</u>	

Additional information regarding these decisions is available from
Amy Brown – Tel: 01354 622452

The 3 February 2026 at 1700 hours is the expiry date for call-in by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel of any of the above decisions. These decisions will come into force and may then be implemented on 4 February 2026, with the exception of any that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel calls in.