

CABINET



MONDAY, 26 JANUARY 2026 - 4.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor C Boden (Chairman), Councillor Mrs J French (Vice-Chairman), Councillor G Christy, Councillor S Count, Councillor S Imafidon, Councillor Mrs D Laws, Councillor C Seaton and Councillor S Wallwork

APOLOGIES: Councillor Miss S Hoy and Councillor S Tierney

CAB43/25 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The public minutes of the meeting held 15 December were agreed and signed.

CAB44/25 REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES 2026/27

Members reviewed the Fees and Charges 2026/27 report presented by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Mrs French queried why there were no fees or charges relating to the Fenland Four Seasons events and said that in respect of stray dog fees she understands the dog warden contract is coming up in May so assumes it will come to Cabinet before then. Councillor Boden responded that the Four Seasons events are not included in the fees and charges as they are budgeted and the dog warden contract is small enough to be dealt with by the relevant Portfolio Holder in the form of a decision notice.

Councillor Christy commented that unfortunately costs do go up but the proposed fees and charges for 2026/27 seem more than reasonable.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Mrs French and AGREED to the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and approved the Fees and Charges for 2026/27.

CAB45/25 CREATION OF A LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION RESERVE

Members considered the Creation of a Local Government Reorganisation Reserve report presented by Councillor Boden.

Councillor Seaton asked if the May elections and current disarray within Government could possibly influence the timing and inevitability of LGR happening. Councillor Boden responded that he does not know, but the longer the process goes on the less likely it is that Government will back down. However, a budget has been prepared for presentation to Council next month based primarily on the assumption that LGR will not go ahead as the council must allow for the worst scenario in financial terms. A budget that assumes FDC will cease to exist in two or three years would cause great difficulty if LGR is cancelled. Only when he sees the structural change order will he believe that it is going ahead but he is sorry not to be able to give a more definite answer in the meantime.

Councillor Mrs Laws asked if there is any word from the first tranche of councils that will become unitary authorities in April 2027. For example, is there a process and does anyone know how much

they have spent on LGR, or whether they have received any updates from Government? Councillor Boden said it can be seen what is happening in Surrey who have advanced over and above any area, but they were going ahead with LGR anyway before Government made its announcement in December 2024. There are processes to go through in preparation that may be reflected in the structural change order FDC receives but Government has announced that at least as a first instalment Surrey will receive half a billion pounds towards their new structure for various reasons, but he would warn against expectation that anything like that will be seen in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. There is no guarantee of consistency from one tranche to the next.

Councillor Christy said the idea of a reserve sounds prudent, but he would like to know if a record is being kept of what FDC is spending on LGR. Councillor Boden responded that time keeping records will be changed from 1st April to provide a more formal record for FDC's auditors, meanwhile there will be an estimate of what has been spent up to 31st March 2026.

Proposed by Councillor Boden, seconded by Councillor Mrs French and 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.**

CAB46/25 IMMEDIATE ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION - MUD WALLS IN WHITTLESEY

Members considered the Article 4 – Mud Walls report presented by Cllr Laws.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs Laws, seconded by Councillor Boden and AGREED that Cabinet:

- **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.**

CAB47/25 WISBECH HIGH STREET UPDATE

Members considered the Wisbech High Street Update report presented by Councillor Seaton.

Councillor Seaton advised the official completion ceremony will take place in February.

Councillor Mrs French thanked Councillor Seaton, saying this is good news and something everyone has been waiting many years for. Councillor Mrs Laws agreed that everyone involved needs to be congratulated.

Councillor Imafidon said he walked past the site yesterday; it looks stunning and he would also like to commend all involved.

Proposed by Councillor Seaton, seconded by Councillor Mrs French and AGREED to note the report.

CAB48/25 DRAFT 6 MONTH CABINET FORWARD PLAN

Councillor Mrs French said civil parking enforcement will not come before Cabinet in February. Despite promises, County Council have still not provided information so she hopes it will be on the agenda for March.

The draft Cabinet Forward Plan was noted for information.

CAB49/25 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT 1 NOVEMBER 2026 TO 31 OCTOBER 2027

Members considered the Grounds Maintenance Contract 1 November 2026 to 31 October 2027 report presented by Councillor Mrs French.

Councillor Boden said that although the whole report is not exempt, he suggested a move to exempt session immediately given the nature of the discussion members will need to have in order to come to a conclusion. This was agreed.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs French, seconded by Councillor Boden and 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

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

(Members resolved to exclude the public from the meeting for this item of business on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).

CAB50/25 PREVIOUS MINUTES (CONFIDENTIAL)

The confidential minutes of the meeting held 15 December 2025 were agreed and signed.

4.34 pm

Chairman