

NOTICE OF DECISIONS

Meeting:	Executive	
Date:	Wednesday, 18 January 2023	
Place:	Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage	
Members Present:	Councillors:	Richard Henry (Chair), Jeannette Thomas (Vice-Chair), Sandra Barr, Lloyd Briscoe, Mrs Joan Lloyd and Simon Speller.

THE DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN OF ANY OF THE DECISIONS BELOW IS FRIDAY, 27 JANUARY 2023. SUBJECT TO THERE BEING NO CALL-IN THE ATTACHED DECISIONS MAY BE IMPLEMENTED WITH EFFECT FROM MONDAY, 30 JANUARY 2023.

1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
	<p>There were no apologies for absence.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
2	MINUTES - 7 DECEMBER 2022	
	<p>It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 7 December 2022 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.</p>	
3	MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND SELECT COMMITTEES	
	<p>It was RESOLVED that the following Minutes of meetings of the Select Committees be noted –</p> <p>Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 23 November 2022 Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 13 December 2022 Environment & Economy Select Committee – 15 December 2022</p>	

4	TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION PLACEMENT AND PROCUREMENT POLICY	K. Bates
<p>The Executive considered a report seeking approval of a revised Temporary Accommodation Placement and Procurement Policy, which had been updated to reflect changes in homelessness legislation and case law.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the revised Temporary Accommodation Procurement and Placement Policy, as attached at Appendix A to the report, that has been updated to reflect changes and case law, be approved. 2. That a review of service charges be undertaken to maximise income recovery and reduce operational burden. <p><i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i> <i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i></p>		
5	JOINT HOUSING FOR OLDER PEOPLE STRATEGY UPDATE	K. Long L. Charles
<p>The Executive considered a report which provided an update on the Joint Housing for Older People Strategy (HOPS).</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the progress of the Housing for Older People Strategy following its adoption in 2020 be noted. 2. That the future plans, as identified in the Action Plan, including their financial implications, be approved. <p><i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i> <i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i></p>		

6	STEVENAGE DESIGN GUIDANCE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT - ADOPTION	L. Claridge S. Talbot
<p>The Executive considered a report seeking the adoption of the Stevenage Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the content of the final Stevenage Design Guidance SPD, and public consultation held between 19 September to 31 October 2022, be noted. 2. That the Stevenage Design Guidance SPD be adopted, with effect from 30 January 2023. 3. That delegated powers be granted to the Assistant Director: Planning and Regulation, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change, to make minor amendments as necessary in the final preparation of the SPD document prior to adoption. 4. That the comments of the Planning & Development Committee, held on the 10 January 2023, regarding the content of the report, be noted. <p><i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i> <i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i></p>		
7	HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) - FINAL BUDGET AND RENT SETTING 2023/24	C. Fletcher B. Moldon
<p>The Executive considered a report in respect of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – Final Budget and Rent Setting 2023/24, for onward recommendation to Council.</p> <p>The Assistant Director (Finance) advised of a change to Paragraph 4.8.5 of the report in respect of Service Charge Income. The increase in charges for the last 12 weeks of 2022/23 of £84,210 would not be realised, as this required appropriate notice</p>		

to be given to tenants. Accordingly, the charges would only be payable for the last 6 weeks of 2022/23. The revised figure of £42,110 would be reflected in the version of the report that would be submitted to Council on 25 February 2023 for final approval.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That HRA rent on dwellings be increased, week commencing 3 April 2023 by 7% which is an average increase of £7.24 for social rents, £11.82 for affordable rents and £8.42 for Low Start Shared Ownership homes per week (based on a 52-week year). This has been calculated in line with the Government's change to rent policy announced in the Autumn Statement as set out in Paragraph 3.3 of the report.
2. That Council be recommended to approve the 2023/24 HRA budget set out in Appendix A to the report.
3. That Council be recommended to approve the 2023/24 growth options, as set out in Section 4.7 of the report.
4. That Council be recommended to approve the 2023/24 Fees and Charges, as set out in Appendix B to the report.
5. That Council be recommended to approve the 2023/24 service charges.
6. That Council be recommended to approve the minimum level of reserves for 2023/24, as shown in Appendix C to the report.
7. That the Rent Increase Equalities Impact Assessments, appended to the report in Appendix D, be noted.
8. That Council be recommended to approve the increase to the 2022/23 Working Budget of £1,394,400, to fund the pressures detailed at Paragraph 4.3 of the report.
9. That the increase in tenant service charges to recover increased utility costs for the last 12 weeks of 2022/23, as set out in Paragraph 4.3.5 of the report, be approved.

	<p>10. That it be noted that, due to the current volatility of the market, utilities charges will be kept under close review throughout 2023/24.</p> <p>11. That the contingency sum of £400,000, within which the Executive can approve supplementary estimates, be approved for 2023/24 (increased from £250,000 for 2022/23), as detailed in Paragraph 4.16.5 of the report.</p> <p><i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i></p> <p><i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i></p>	
8	DRAFT GENERAL FUND AND COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2023/24	C. Fletcher B. Moldon
	<p>The Executive considered a report in respect of the Council’s draft General Fund, Council tax Support Scheme and draft proposals for the 2023/24 Council Tax.</p> <p>In reply to a Member’s question, the Strategic Director (CF) confirmed that the Covid-19 pandemic had contributed to a net loss to the Council of approximately £4Million, primarily though reduced income along with some increased costs.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the 2022/23 revised net expenditure on the General Fund of £11,938,420 be approved, as set out in Paragraph 4.10.1 of the report. 2. That the inclusion of the 2023/24 Fees and Charges of £325,840, including the 5% increase in market rents approved for inclusion at the December 2022 Executive meeting (Appendix B to the report), in the draft 2023/24 budget, be noted. 3. That the draft General Fund Budget for 2023/24 of £10,723,320 be proposed for consultation purposes, with a contribution from balances of £664,462 and a Band D Council Tax of £232.31 (assuming a 2.99% increase). 	

4. That the updated position on the General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), as summarised in Section 4.12 of the report, be noted.
5. That the minimum level of General Fund reserves of £3,419,753, in line with the 2023/24 risk assessment of balances, as shown at Appendix C to the report, be approved.
6. That the contingency sum of £400,000 within which the Executive can approve supplementary estimates, be approved for 2023/24 (reflecting the level of balances available above the minimum amount).
7. That the 2023/24 Making Your Money Count (MYMC) options, as set out in Section 4.2 and Appendix A to the report, totalling £1,373,999 and £32,502 (cost) for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) respectively, be included into the Council's budget setting processes for consideration by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, subject to resolution 8. below.
8. That, for 2023/24, £32,000 be transferred from the Business Rates Gains allocated reserve to fund next year's firework display and town twinning event, together with the reviews set out in Paragraphs 4.7.12 and 4.7.13 of the report.
9. That the Growth options included in Section 4.8 of the report be approved for inclusion in the 2023/24 General Fund (£73,150) and HRA (£56,892) budgets.
10. That the pressures identified in Sections 4.2 and 4.9 of the report be noted.
11. That, for 2023/24, £300,000 budget to pump prime Transformation and included in the General Fund budget setting processes, be noted, to enable to significantly contribute to the savings targets, as set out in Section 4.12 of the report.
12. That the use of the business rate gains only once realised, and ring fenced for use for the financial resilience of the Council, be approved.
13. That the decisions taken on Resolutions 3 – 12 above be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration, in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Rules in the Council's Constitution.

	<p>14. That the Equalities Impact Assessments appended to the report in Appendices D and E be noted.</p> <p>15. That key partners and other stakeholders be consulted and their views considered as part of the 2023/24 budget setting process.</p> <p><i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i></p> <p><i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i></p>	
9	DRAFT CAPITAL STRATEGY 2022/23 - 2026/27	C. Fletcher B. Moldon
	<p>The Executive considered a report in respect of the draft Capital Strategy for 2022/23 – 2026/27.</p> <p>The Strategic Director (CF) confirmed that the Assistant Director (Finance) and his Team would be aiming to submit a balanced Capital Budget to the February 2023 meeting of the Executive.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Draft General Fund Capital Budget for 2023/24 of £34Million, as set out in Appendix C to the report, be proposed for consultation purposes subject to funding (Paragraph 4.2.3). 2. That the Draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Budget for 2023/24 of £62.4Million, as set out in Appendix D to the report, be proposed for consultation purposes. 3. That the updated forecast of resources 2023/24, as detailed in Appendix C (General Fund) and Appendix D (HRA) to the report, be approved, subject to the consultation process. 4. That the General Fund and HRA capital budget re-profiling of £15.2Million from 2022/23 to future years be approved. 5. That the General Fund capital budget adjustments (Paragraph 4.1.3 of the report) be approved. 	

	<p>6. That the approach to resourcing the General Fund capital programme, as outlined in the report (Paragraph 4.5), be approved.</p> <p>7. That the General Fund growth bids identified for inclusion in the Capital Strategy (Paragraph 4.2.1, table five and Appendix A to the report) be approved in principle, subject to further review work on Capital Priorities being undertaken.</p> <p>8. That £28,000 for the installation of solar panels to 8 existing fleet vehicles to be funded from the business rates reserve (Paragraph 4.2.5 of the report).</p> <p>9. That the HRA budget increases identified for inclusion in the Capital Strategy (Paragraph 4.8.4, table ten and Appendix B to the report) be approved.</p> <p>10. That the 2023/24 de-minimis expenditure limit (Section 4.10 of the report) be increased from £5,000 to £7,500.</p> <p><i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i></p> <p><i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i></p>	
10	URGENT PART I BUSINESS	
	None.	
11	EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC	
	<p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <p>1. That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in Paragraphs 1 – 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to Information)</p>	

	(Variation) Order 2006.	
	2. That the reasons for the following reports being in Part II were accepted, and that the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.	
12	PART II MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 7 DECEMBER 2022	
	It was RESOLVED that the Part II Minutes of the Executive held on 7 December 2022 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.	
13	SUNDRY DEBT AND HOUSING BENEFIT OVERPAYMENTS WRITE OFFS GREATER THAN £10,000	C. Fletcher D. Brown
	The Executive considered a Part II report seeking approval to sundry debt and Housing Benefit overpayments write offs greater than £10,000. It was RESOLVED that the recommendations set out in the report be approved. <i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i> <i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i>	
14	URGENT PART II BUSINESS	
	None.	