

NOTICE OF DECISIONS

Meeting:	Executive	
Date:	Wednesday, 8 December 2021	
Place:	Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage	
Members Present:	Councillors:	Sharon Taylor OBE CC (Chair), Mrs Joan Lloyd (Vice-Chair), Lloyd Briscoe, John Gardner, Richard Henry and Jeannette Thomas.

THE DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN OF ANY OF THE DECISIONS BELOW IS FRIDAY, 17 DECEMBER 2021. SUBJECT TO THERE BEING NO CALL-IN THE ATTACHED DECISIONS MAY BE IMPLEMENTED WITH EFFECT FROM MONDAY, 20 DECEMBER 2021.

1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
	<p>Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Rob Broom, Jackie Hollywell, Phil Bibby CC (observer) and Robin Parker CC (observer).</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
2	MINUTES - 17 NOVEMBER 2021	
	<p>It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 17 November 2021 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 the meetings of Select Committees be noted:</p> <p>Community Select Committee – 3 November 2021 Environment & Economy Select Committee – 18 November 2021</p>	

4	COVID-19 UPDATE	R. Protheroe x2938
<p>The Executive considered an overarching verbal update report from the Strategic Director (RP), assisted by the Senior Environmental Health & Licensing Manager, together with a short presentation from the Corporate Policy & Research Officer, providing information concerning the Omicron variant and the latest epidemiology statistics relating to the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>The following issues were raised by Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Corporate Policy & Research Officer undertook to chase up progress on the Mobile Vaccination Unit that was promised for the Bedwell Ward, and that, when dates were agreed, signage advising of the dates/locations be displayed in both the Bedwell and Rockingham Way Neighbourhood Centres; • The Corporate Policy & Research Officer was asked to incorporate into the next Covid-19 update presentation to the Executive local figures as to who had received booster jabs compared with those who should have had a booster vaccination; and • Officers were requested to publish a Briefing Note regarding the Omicron variant on the Council's website. <p>It was RESOLVED that the Covid-19 update be noted.</p>		
5	TOWNS FUND BUSINESS CASE - STATION GATEWAY	C. Barnes x2292
<p>The Executive considered a report seeking approval of the Towns Fund Business Case in respect of the Station Gateway Project.</p> <p>In response to a Member's question, the Assistant Director (Regeneration) advised that Legal & General (who owned Stevenage Leisure Park to the west of the railway line) were continuing their engagement with SBC regarding plans for redevelopment of the Leisure Park, although these plans were for the long term.</p>		

	<p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the endorsement of the project from the Stevenage Development Board be noted. 2. That the business case for the Station Gateway project be approved, and that authority be delegated to the Strategic Director (TP) to submit the project summary to the Department for Levelling Up, Communities and Housing Towns Fund team on behalf of the Council (acting as Accountable Body). <p><i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i> <i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i></p>	
6	<p>CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW STATION NORTH MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK AND CYCLE HUB AS PART OF A SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE</p>	<p>C. Barnes x2292</p>
	<p>The Executive considered a report with regard to the proposed construction of a new Station North Multi-Storey Car Park (MSCP) and Cycle Hub as part of a Sustainable Transport Interchange.</p> <p>The following comments were made by Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers were asked to give consideration to the re-instatement of the Fairlands Valley Showground “Park and Ride” bus service for the duration of the construction works on the new MSCP; • In view of the ever-changing car parking landscape in the town, Officers were requested to add a new section to the SBC website showing visitors where to park in the Town Centre, which could be regularly updated as changes were brought about through the various stages of the Town Centre Regeneration Programme; • Officers undertook to investigate and report back to Members on the provision of disabled parking spaces on the Station South Car Park whilst construction of the new MSCP was taking place on the Station North Car Park; 	

- Following conclusion of the planning process, officers were asked to report back to Members to update them on Hertfordshire County Council's comments with regard to any highway impacts of the proposed development; and
- The Assistant Director (Regeneration) was asked to provide an overview of the project to the next meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the impact of new and existing redevelopments in the town centre and the impact it will have on car capacity and locations be noted.
2. That it be noted that an application for planning approval is being presented for submission for the MSCP and cycle hub facility.
3. That the emerging design for the MSCP, which can be refined during and after the planning process, be noted.
4. That it be noted that the total estimated budget for the scheme is £9.7M, with a target construction price of £8.9M.
5. That the decision-making gateway for the project be noted.
6. That it be noted that the revenue impact of any borrowing to fund the capital cost and any forecasted one-off income loss during construction are key financial considerations for the General Fund, and that authority will be sought from Council to delegate to Executive approval of the additional borrowing and change to the Treasury Management Strategy, subject to the revenue impacts falling within current Executive delegated limits.
7. That the proposed funding mechanism for the project be approved, subject to the Towns Fund approval process and funding being confirmed by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) comprising:
 - £6M from the "Towns Fund";
 - £200,000 from the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP);

- £1.45M from the Marshgate land sale receipt, as set out in Resolution 8. below; and
 - £1.85M to £2.05M from prudential borrowing, subject to the net impact on the General Fund, as stated in Resolution 6. above.
8. That the use of £1.45M of capital funding from the Marshgate land sale receipt, which was ring-fenced for regeneration purposes in August 2021, be approved. This receipt was being generated from the sale of car park and as such part of the receipt is being requested to be used to replace parking in the town.
9. That the preparation of a report detailing the available options for mitigating any loss to parking capacity and income during the construction phase be approved, including (but not limited to):
- “park & stride” at alternative sites;
 - utilisation of existing capacity in other car parks, with flexibility on tariff types;
 - enhanced maintenance in St. George’s Way Multi-Storey Car Park;
 - review of parking concession deals and where their parking is located; and
 - promotional campaign relating to the other parking facilities, improvements made, and the range of options available.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

7	CORPORATE PERFORMANCE - QUARTER 2 2021/22	R. Protheroe x2938
	The Executive received a presentation from the Chief Executive concerning the Quarter Two (July to September 2021) Corporate Performance report 2021/22.	

Comments on the report made by Executive Members included the following:

- Paragraph 3.28 – Dunn Close garage conversion scheme: Officers were asked to ensure that, for enhanced security, the temporary lighting around the hoardings bounding this site was adjusted to be at a higher level than the existing;
- Paragraph 3.35 – Garage Improvement Programme: Officers were requested to publish details of the Programme on the Council’s website;
- Paragraphs 3.44 & 3.45 – Healthy Stevenage: the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health & Older People agreed to ensure that officers included updates from the Equalities Commission to the Healthy Stevenage Partnership on the health inequalities in minority communities;
- Paragraph 3.50 – Arts Projects: Officers were reminded to ensure that engagement with Ward Councillors took place regarding local arts projects in their areas;
- Paragraph 3.52 – Cycleways: it was confirmed that the wording should state “installation on a major cycleway” not “installation of a major cycleway”; and
- Paragraph 3.55 – Climate Change: it was confirmed that a new, refreshed Climate Change Citizens’ Panel would be established in the near future post consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Regeneration and the Leader.

The Executive debated the Quarter 2 position with regard to the key themes which were outlined in the report concerning Emergency & Temporary Accommodation, Voids/Repairs, Garage Voids and Customer Services. Members agreed an additional recommendation that a further detailed update concerning the proposed improvement activities for these service areas be included as part of the Quarter 3 Corporate Performance report to be submitted to the Executive in March 2022.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the delivery of priorities which form the Future Town, Future Council Programme and performance of the Council across the key themes for Quarter Two 2021/22, together with the latest achievements, be noted.

2. That the continued impacts of Covid-19 on the Housing Options service and actions to recover performance be noted (Paragraphs 3.72 to 3.77 of the report).
3. That performance challenges relating to housing voids be noted and actions to improve performance be endorsed (Paragraphs 3.78 to 3.84 of the report).
4. That the challenges related to garages with asbestos and the letting of council garages, and the planned measures to improve performance, be monitored and endorsed (Paragraphs 3.85 to 3.92 of the report).
5. That challenges within the Customer Service Centre (including Complaints and Website) be noted and improvement plans endorsed (Paragraphs 3.93 to 3.114 of the report).
6. That the Executive Action Tracker, as set out in Appendix 3 to the report, be noted.
7. That a further detailed update concerning the proposed improvement activities for the Emergency & Temporary Accommodation, Voids/Repairs, Garage Voids and Customer Services service areas be included as part of the Quarter 3 Corporate Performance report to be submitted to the Executive in March 2022.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report; and 7. To more closely monitor the performance measures attributable to these service areas.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

8	COUNCIL TAX BASE 2022/23	C. Fletcher x2933
<p>The Executive considered a report in respect of the proposed Council Tax Base for 2022/23.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Stevenage Borough Council for the year 2022/23 will be 28,502.5 equivalent “Band D” properties, reduced to 28,003.7 		

	<p>equivalent “Band D” properties after making allowances for a 98.52% collection rate.</p> <p>2. That the 2022/23 Council Tax Base be approved, subject to any changes made to the Council Tax Support Scheme (CTS) for 2022/23. The Executive approved the CTS Scheme at its meeting on 20 October 2021 for recommendation to Council.</p> <p><i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i></p> <p><i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i></p>	
<p>9</p>	<p>HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA): DRAFT HRA BUDGET 2022/23; HRA MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2021/22 - 2025/26; AND HRA BUSINESS PLAN REVIEW 2021</p>	<p>C. Fletcher x2933</p>
	<p>The Executive considered a report on the Draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2022/23; the HRA Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 – 2025/26; and HRA Business Plan Review 2021.</p> <p>Members noted that a review of the HRA 30 year Business Plan would take place in Summer 2022.</p> <p>In response to a question, the Strategic Director (CF) confirmed that the situation with regard to the numbers of Right to Buy applications was kept under regular review.</p> <p>The Executive supported an additional recommendation proposed by the Leader that the Executive Portfolio Holders for Resources and Housing, Health & Older People be requested to write a joint letter to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Communities and Housing setting out the Council’s concerns and uncertainties over the funding of its HRA Budget, including Climate Change/decarbonisation implications, new fire/building safety regulations, increased cost of Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) borrowing, the steep rise in the cost of construction materials, and the continuing pressures caused by the Covid pandemic, and that this letter be copied to the Local Government Association and District Councils Network.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p>	

1. That the HRA rent on dwellings be increased, week commencing 4 April 2022, by 4.1% which is an average increase of £4.06 for social rents, £6.60 for affordable rents and £4.74 for Low Start Shared Ownership homes per week (based on a 52-week year), calculated using the rent formula, CPI + 1% in line with the Government's rent policy, as set out in Paragraph 4.1.1 of the report.
2. That draft 2022/23 HRA budget, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be approved, noting that this may be subject to change as a result of any consultation and the finalisation of recharges from the General Fund.
3. That it be noted that the final HRA rent setting budget for 2022/23 be presented to the Executive on 21 January 2022 and Council on 26 January 2022.
4. That key partners and other stakeholders be consulted, and their views fed back into the 2022/23 budget setting process.
5. That for modelling purposes, unless specified, fees and charges increases are in line with inflation.
6. That for modelling purposes, the updated inflation assumptions used in the Medium Term Financial Strategy be approved.
7. That the Capital Programme assumptions contained within the report be approved for the existing programme and new build properties and incorporated into the 2022/23 budget.
8. That borrowing to fund capital projects in 2022/23 of £15.7M be approved, and that future years be considered annually in line with anticipated expenditure.
9. That the minimum level of balances for the HRA Business Plan, set as a minimum of £3Million, be noted.
10. That the reserve of £3.4Million, to mitigate against future interest rate volatility and a reserve to accommodate future debt repayment, be noted.
11. That, if material changes to forecasts are required following further Government announcements, the Assistant Director (Finance and Estates) be requested to revise the Medium Term Financial Strategy and re-present it to the Executive for approval.

	<p>12. That Trade Unions and staff be consulted on the key messages contained within the Medium Term Financial Strategies and more specifically when drawing up any proposals where there is a risk of redundancy.</p> <p>13. That the Executive Portfolio Holders for Resources and Housing, Health & Older People be requested to write a joint letter to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Communities and Housing setting out the Council's concerns and uncertainties over the funding of its HRA Budget, including Climate Change/decarbonisation implications, new fire/building safety regulations, increased cost of Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) borrowing, the steep rise in the cost of construction materials, and the continuing pressures caused by the Covid pandemic, and that this letter be copied to the Local Government Association and District Councils Network</p> <p><i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report; and 13. To bring to the Government's attention the continuing challenges faced by the Council as the owner of its Housing Stock.</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) (Variation) Order 2006.</p> <p>2. That the reasons for the following reports being in Part II were accepted, and that the exemption from disclosure of the</p>	

	information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.	
12	PART II MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 17 NOVEMBER 2021	
	It was RESOLVED that the Part II Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 17 November 2021 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.	
13	MAKING YOUR MONEY COUNT OPTIONS 2022/23	C. Fletcher x2933
	<p>The Executive considered a Part II report in respect of the proposed Making Your Money Count options for 2022/23.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED that the recommendations contained in the report, together with an amendment to Recommendation 2.12 and one additional Recommendation, be approved.</p> <p><i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i></p> <p><i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i></p>	
14	URGENT PART II BUSINESS	
	<p><u>Omicron Covid-19 variant</u></p> <p>The Chair accepted as an urgent item of Part II business an update from the Senior Environmental Health and Licensing Manager on the Covid-19 Omicron variant.</p>	