

## SUMMARY OF DECISIONS TAKEN (PART 1 – FOR PUBLICATION)

**MEETING:** Council – Wednesday 27 February 2013 – 7 p.m.  
Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Stevenage, SG1 1HN

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** All Councillors with the exception of those listed at item 1 below.

**ALSO PRESENT:** A Danaher (Youth Mayor) and J MacCarthy (Youth Council)

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Hurst, M Hearn, J Pickersgill and B Underwood.

There were no declarations of interest.

### 2. MINUTES – 5 DECEMBER 2012

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 5 December 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

### 3. MINUTES – 10 DECEMBER 2012

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Special Council held on Monday 10 December 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

### 4. MINUTES – 23 JANUARY 2013

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 23 January 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor subject to deleting A Pritchard as an attendee and to be replaced with A Wilson. .

**5. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATION**

The Mayor provided Council with a brief update of events he had attended since the last meeting.

**6. MAIN DEBATE – 2013/2014 COUNCIL TAX AND GENERAL FUND AND CAPITAL BUDGETS**

The Main Debate related to item 6A and item 6B on the agenda. The Chief Executive informed the meeting that recommendation 2 from the Executive on the General Fund Budget report had been amended to reflect the level of balances to take account of the final Government Settlement for the Rate Support Grant and retained Business rates; and concerning the Capital Report at 6B – the Appendix A circulated for Council was revised from that considered by the Executive in order to align with the final HRA Budget and Business Plan.

The Chief Executive indicated that since these matters were considered by the Executive the Council had been notified of the precepts to be levied by the County Council and the Police Authority and these decisions were reflected in the proposed motion.

Finally the Chief Executive informed the meeting that an additional recommendation had been included in the Motion in order to address a loophole in the council tax discount policy for empty dwellings.

The Mayor indicated that the response to the question from Mark Pickersgill shown at item 9 would be included in the Leader's speech.

The Leader presented the 2013/2014 Budget. The Motion, as circulated around the Chamber was moved and seconded

Two amendments were moved and seconded. A vote was taken and they were declared lost.

Mark Pickersgill was given the opportunity to ask a supplementary question to which the Leader replied.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the Budget summarised at Appendix A to report, be the Council's General Fund Budget for 2012/13 and 2013/14.

2. That the following be approved:

- a. the revised working revenue estimates for the year 2012/13 amounting to £10,684,960 and the revenue estimates for 2013/14 amounting to £10,147,320;
- b. the contribution from balances totalling £204,788 in 2012/13;
- c. the contribution to balances totalling £8,230 in 2013/14.

3. That it be noted that at its meeting on 15 January 2013 the Executive calculated the amount of 24,573.36 Band D equivalent properties as its council tax base for the year 2013/14 in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 made under Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by Section 74 of the Localism Act 2011.

4. That the following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2012/13 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by Section 74 of the Localism Act 2011:

- a. £79,834,115 Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2)(a) to (f) of the Act, less the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3)(a) to (d)
- b. £75,201,545 Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3)(a) to (d) of the Act.

- c. £4,632,570 Being the amount by which the aggregate at 3a above exceeds the aggregate at 3b above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year.
- d. £188.52 Being the amount at 3c divided by the amount at 2 above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B (1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year

e. Valuation Bands

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| A | £ 125.68 |
| B | £ 146.63 |
| C | £ 167.57 |
| D | £ 188.52 |
| E | £ 230.41 |
| F | £ 272.31 |
| G | £ 314.20 |
| H | £ 377.04 |

Being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at 3d. above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

5. a. That it be noted that for the year 2013/14 Hertfordshire County Council have stated the following amounts in

precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of the dwellings shown below:

Valuation Bands

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| A | £ 745.89   |
| B | £ 870.20   |
| C | £ 994.52   |
| D | £ 1,118.83 |
| E | £ 1,367.46 |
| F | £ 1,616.09 |
| G | £ 1,864.72 |
| H | £ 2,237.66 |

- b. That it be noted that for the year 2013/14 Hertfordshire Police Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and amended by Section 27 of the Police and Magistrates' Court Act 1994, for each of the categories of the dwellings shown below:

Valuation Bands

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| A | £ 98.55 |
|---|---------|

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| B | £ 114.97 |
| C | £ 131.40 |
| D | £ 147.82 |
| E | £ 180.67 |
| F | £ 213.52 |
| G | £ 246.37 |
| H | £ 295.64 |

6. That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 3e. and 4a. and b. above, the Council in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts for council tax for the year 2013/14 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Valuation Bands

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| A | £ 970.12   |
| B | £ 1,131.80 |
| C | £ 1,293.49 |
| D | £ 1,455.17 |

E           £ 1,778.54

F           £ 2,101.92

G           £ 2,425.29

H           £ 2,910.34

7. That approval be given to a General Fund Revenue Account Contingency Sum in the Budget and Policy Framework for 2013/14 of £400,000.
8. That the advice of the Strategic Director (Resources) on the robustness of the draft budget and the adequacy of reserves (Appendix C) be noted.
9. That the Fees and Charges increases (Appendix F) be noted.
10. That the contribution from the Collection Fund for 2013/14 of £27,393 be noted.
11. That it be noted that the General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy remains largely unchanged from that reported to the meeting of the Executive held on 15 January 2013 and continues to meet the financial objectives set by the Chief Finance Officer.
12. That following on from the decision taken by the Special Council meeting on 23 January 2013 to reduce the council tax discount for current class 'A' and class 'C' dwellings (from 1 April 2013) (item3. resolution 6), in the cases where the maximum period of council tax discounts have been awarded for properties falling into either, or both, class 'A' - requiring major repair works or structural alterations to bring it back into a habitable condition, and class 'C' - unoccupied and substantially unfurnished, no further period of discount will be awarded until after the property has been continuously reoccupied for at least six weeks. The descriptions and qualifying conditions for Stevenage Borough Council's class 'A' and 'C' council tax discounts effective from 1 April 2013, remain the same as those set out in current legislation for statutory

class 'A' and 'C' council tax exemptions.

**CAPITAL FORWARD PLAN AND 5 YEAR CAPITAL STRATEGY  
(Report 6b)**

1. That the revised 2012/13 and the final 2013/14 General Fund capital programme, as detailed in the revised Appendix A to the report be approved.
2. That revised 2012/13 and the final 2013/14 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programme as detailed in the revised Appendix A to the report be approved.
3. That the updated forecast of resources as summarised in the revised Appendix A to the report be approved.
4. That the ongoing work of the Corporate Capital Review Group (CCRG) and Leader's Services Priority Group, to bring the 5 year Capital Strategy into balance, be noted.

**7. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS**

None

**8. QUESTIONS FROM THE YOUTH COUNCIL**

None

**9. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

This item was discussed under item 6 above.

**10. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S UPDATE**

The Leader of the Opposition raised an issue regarding the options for elderly tenants scheduled to have work carried out on their homes under the Decent Homes Programme.

The Leader requested details of the residents concerned and she and the Executive Portfolio Holder for Housing would look into it and get back to Councillor Clark.

**11. NOTICE OF MOTIONS**

None

**12. QUESTIONS TO COMMITTEE CHAIRS/EXECUTIVE MEMBERS**

None

**13. MATTER REFERRED FROM EXECUTIVE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – PRUDENTIAL CODE INDICATORS AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2013/2014**

The Council had before it a copy of the officer report which had been considered by the Executive on 12 February 2013 and Audit Committee on 4 February 2013 which recommended that Council adopt the 2013/2014 Treasury Management Strategy and the Prudential Code Indicators.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED:**

1. That Council be recommended to adopt the 2013/14 Treasury Management Strategy as detailed in Appendix A to this report.
2. That Council be recommended to adopt the Prudential Code Indicators as detailed in Appendix A, attachment six.
3. That Executive and Council receive and comments/recommendations from the Audit Committee.
4. That Council be recommended to adopt the modification to the use of money market funds, as detailed in paragraph 4.2.3 and Appendix A, attachment three for specified investments.

5. That Council be recommended to adopt the modification to the limit on investments of greater than 364 days, as detailed in paragraph 4.2.3, and Appendix A attachment six, and attachment three.
6. That Council be recommended to adopt the modification to the variable investment limit, as detailed in paragraph 4.2.3 and Appendix A, attachment six.

#### **14. OFFICER REPORT – MEMBERS’ ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2013-2014**

The Council had before it an Officer report which recommended a Members’ Allowances Scheme for 2013/2014.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED:**

1. That a Members' Allowances Scheme be agreed for 2013-2014 as set out in Appendix A, attached.
2. That it be noted that a review of the Council’s Scrutiny arrangements is to be undertaken early in the 2013/2014 Municipal Year, following which the Independent Panel be recalled to review the level of Special Responsibility Allowances paid to the Chairs of Development & Scrutiny Committees.

#### **15. PAY POLICY STATEMENT**

The Council had before it an Officer report which recommended that Council approve the pay policy statement for the financial year 2013/14.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED:**

1. That the Pay Policy Statement set out in accordance with the Localism Act, 2011 as Appendix One to this report be approved.
2. That the pay policy is placed on the Council’s web site and that a notice of the policy is published in the next edition of

Chronicle.

**16. MINUTES – AUDIT COMMITTEE – 4 DECEMBER 2012 AND 4 FEBRUARY 2013**

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Audit Committee held on 4 December 2012 and 4 February 2013 be noted