

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

**MEETING:** Council – Wednesday 26 February 2014 – 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:** ABK Mboho (Youth Mayor) and J Barnes (Youth Council)

|  |
|--|
| <b>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>   |
| Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Clark, C Hurst, B Underwood and S Walker.<br><br>There were no declarations of interest.                          |
| <b>2. MINUTES – 4 DECEMBER 2013</b>  |
| It was <b>RESOLVED</b> that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 4 December 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.         |
| <b>3. MINUTES – 23 JANUARY 2013</b>  |
| It was <b>RESOLVED</b> that the Minutes of the Special meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 23 January 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor. |
| <b>4. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATION</b>  |
| The Mayor provided Council with a brief update of events he had attended since the last meeting.   |

## **5. MAIN DEBATE – 2014/2015 COUNCIL TAX AND GENERAL FUND AND CAPITAL BUDGETS**

The Main Debate related to item 5A and item 5B on the agenda.

The Chief Executive informed the meeting 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.

The Leader then presented the 2014/2015 Budget and moved the Motion that was circulated around the Chamber. It was seconded and after a full debate, which included contributions from members of the public, it was **RESOLVED:**

### **2014/2015 COUNCIL TAX AND BUDGET (Report 5A)**

1. That the Budget summarised at Appendix A to report, be the Council's General Fund Budget for 2013/14 and 2014/15 with the following amendments:
  - a. No increase in the Council Tax for 2014/2015 funded by a reduction in General Fund net expenditure of £56,000 for the freeze grant and a reduction in the contribution to balances in 2014/15 of £32,866.
  - b. That funding for Community Centres and Douglas Drive Day Centre be set at £93,970 (an increase in the General Fund budget as shown at Appendix A of £24,830 for one year and a corresponding reduction in the contribution to balances). An in-year Review of Community Centres to take place during 2014 and Douglas Drive Day Centre to produce a business plan showing a move to self-sustaining funding.
  - c. Local Community Budgets be set at £2,500 per Member and the Youth Mayor's Community Budget at £3,300 for 2014/2015, an increase in the General Fund Budget as shown in Appendix A of £20,800 for one year with a corresponding reduction in the contribution to balances. The system for administering and awarding LCB's will be revised for the coming year.

2 That the following be approved:

- a. the revised working revenue estimates for the year 2013/14 amounting to £10,547,490 and the revenue estimates for 2014/15 amounting to £9,705,670;
- b. the contribution from balances totalling £278,863 in 2013/14;
- c. the contribution to balances totalling £71,100 in 2014/15.

3 That it be noted that at its meeting on 21 January 2014 the Executive calculated the amount of 24,822.9 Band D equivalent properties as its council tax base for the year 2014/15 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 2014/15 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. £83,787,120 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. £79,107,507 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. £4,679,613 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 2014/15 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 2014/15 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 2014/15 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. To determine in accordance with Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992 that the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2013/14 is not excessive in accordance with principles approved by the Secretary of State under Section 52ZC having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 3e.
8. That approval be given to a General Fund Revenue Account Contingency Sum in the Budget and Policy Framework for 2014/15 of £400,000.
9. That the advice of the Assistant Director (Finance) on the robustness of the draft budget and the adequacy of reserves (Appendix C) be noted.
10. That the Fees and Charges increases (Appendix F) be noted.
11. That the contribution from the Collection Fund (Council Tax) for 2014/15 of £124,616 be noted.
12. That the cost falling on the General Fund below the safety net calculation (Non Domestic Rates) for 2013/14 of £152,039 and the levy payment for 2014/15 of £184,339 falling due in 2014/15 be noted.
13. That the transfer of £172,000 to an earmarked reserve to cover the General Fund against loss of Business Rate income be approved.
14. 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 21 January 2014 and continues to meet the financial objectives set by the Chief

Finance Officer.

**CAPITAL FORWARD PLAN AND 5 YEAR CAPITAL STRATEGY  
(Report 5B)**

1. That the revised 2013/14 and the final 2014/15 General Fund Capital programme, as detailed in Appendix A and Appendix B of the report be approved,
- 2 That the revised 2013/14 and the final 2014/15 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix A and Appendix B of the report be approved,.
- 3 That only General Fund essential works will be undertaken in 2014/15 until such time that the programme is fully funded.
- 4 That the updated forecast of resources as summarised in Appendix A of the report be approved.
- 5 That it be noted that the Leader's Services Priority Group (LSPG) is to be reconvened to review and challenge the General Fund Capital Strategy and 15 Year Investment Plan.

**6. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS**

None.

**7. QUESTIONS FROM THE YOUTH COUNCIL**

None.

**8. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Council considered the question from Mr Mark Pickersgill as set out in the order of business.



In reply Mr Pickersgill was advised that his proposal would result in the Council exceeding its spending limit and would therefore be ultra vires, i.e. illegal.

In reply to Mr Pickersgill's supplementary question the Leader advised that as the majority of homes in the town were built to Peter Morris Standards it would be almost impossible to redesignate the number of bedrooms in each dwelling.

#### **9. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S UPDATE**

The Leader of the Opposition raised an issue regarding customer satisfaction surveys following housing repairs and asked what process was to be followed if problems with repair arose once the survey had been completed and the tenant wished to reappraise the work.

In reply the Portfolio Holder for Housing informed Council that provision was made for a follow up meeting with the tenant if required and that the original survey form could be withdrawn and a new one issued. She undertook to provide a more detailed answer to the question in writing after the meeting.

Council was informed that a planning application had been received from Debenhams and the Roaring Meg for a development of a two storey department store on the site.

#### **10. NOTICE OF MOTIONS**

None.

#### **11. QUESTIONS TO COMMITTEE CHAIRS/EXECUTIVE MEMBERS**

None.

#### **12. MATTER REFERRED FROM EXECUTIVE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – PRUDENTIAL CODE INDICATORS AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2014/2015**

The Council had before it a copy of the officer report which had been considered by the Executive on 11 February 2014 and Audit Committee on 3 February 2014 which recommended that Council adopt the 2014/2015 Treasury Management Strategy and the Prudential Code Indicators.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Treasury Management Strategy, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, and the Prudential Code Indicators, as detailed in Appendix A, attachment 6, to the report, be adopted.

**13. REPORT REFERED FROM THE AUDIT COMMITTEE – REVISION TO CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS 2013-2014**

The Council had before it an officer report that had been considered by the Audit Committee on 4 February 2014.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the revised Contract Standing Orders be approved.

**14. OFFICER REPORT – MEMBERS’ ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2014-2015**

The Council had before it an Officer report which recommended a Members’ Allowances Scheme for 2014/2015.

In reply to a question concerning the payment rate for child care the Leader undertook to raise the issue with the Independent Remuneration Panel the next time it was convened.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that a Members' Allowances Scheme be agreed for 2014-2015 as set out in Appendix A, attached.

**15. OFFICER REPORT - PAY POLICY STATEMENT**

The Council had before it an Officer report which recommended that Council approve the pay policy statement for the financial year 2014/15.

Council was informed that the Pay Policy Statement would be published in the Chronicle to ensure its delivery to every

household in the Borough.

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

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