

**NOTICE OF DECISIONS TAKEN (PART I - FOR PUBLICATION)**

Agenda Item:

**5**

**MEETING:** Executive – Tuesday 21 January 2014 – 14.00 hrs.  
Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Stevenage, SG1 1HN

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Councillors S Taylor OBE CC (Chair), J Gardner (Vice-Chair), H Burrell, R Henry CC, Mrs J Lloyd, R Raynor and A Webb.

**The deadline for Call-in of any of the decisions below is 29 January 2014.  
Subject to there being no call-in the attached decisions may be implemented with effect from 30 January 2014**

| <b>ITEM / TITLE</b>  | <b>ACTION/LEAD</b>    |
|--|-----------------------|
| <b>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>   | J Cansick<br>Ext 2216 |
| An apology for absence was submitted by Councillor S Batson MBE DL CC<br><br>There were no apologies for absence or declarations of interest.  |                       |
| <b>2. MINUTES – EXECUTIVE – 10 DECEMBER 2013</b>   | J Cansick Ext 2216    |
| It was <b>RESOLVED</b> that the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to the heading of the Minutes reading ‘Tuesday, 10 December’ and not ‘Monday’. |                       |
| <b>3. MINUTES – OVERVIEW &amp; SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND SELECT COMMITTEES</b>  | J Cansick Ext 2216    |
| The Executive agreed with the view of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee that the Balanced Scorecard Indicator concerning Local Community Budgets needed review.  |                       |

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the following meetings be noted:

- A. Housing Select Committee – 27 November 2013
- B. Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 11 December 2013

#### **4. CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE FEEDBACK**

R Protheroe Ext 2938

The Executive formally recorded its thanks to the Peer Challenge Team and all the staff involved in supporting the initiative.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the outcome of Stevenage Borough Council's Corporate Peer Challenge as highlighted in Appendix A be acknowledged.
2. That the LGA's Peer Challenge response letter be published on the Council's website.
3. That a series of strategic discussions be held between the Executive and the Strategic Management Board to permit further consideration of the peer team's recommendations ahead of developing a more focussed corporate improvement programme.

*Reason for Decision: As contained in the report*

*Options Considered: As contained in the report.*

#### **5. COMMITMENT TO CARERS**

A Sanderson Ext 2311

It was **RESOLVED** that the 'Commitment to Carers' attached at appendix A be agreed and adopted as this Council's commitment to being a carer friendly council.

*Reason for Decision: As contained in the report*

*Options Considered: As contained in the report.*

|   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| <b>6. COUNCIL TAX BASE 2014/2015</b>  | S Tarran Ext EHC 2075  |
| <p>It was <b>RESOLVED</b> that in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Stevenage Borough Council for the year 2014/15 shall be 25,402.04 equivalent Band D properties reduced to 24,822.9 equivalent Band D properties after making allowances for 97.72% collection.</p> <p><i>Reason for Decision: As contained in the report</i><br/> <i>Options Considered: As contained in the report.</i></p> |                        |
| <b>7. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME – 2014/2015</b>  | S Crudgington Ext 2185 |
| <p>It was <b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That Council be recommended to adopt the 2014/15 CTS Scheme proposed within this report (2014/15 Scheme attached at Appendix A).</li> <li>2. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee submit any comments on the scheme direct to Council.</li> </ol> <p><i>Reason for Decision: As contained in the report</i><br/> <i>Options Considered: As contained in the report.</i></p>                  |                        |
| <b>8. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT FINAL BUDGET PROPOSALS 2014/15 AND RENT SETTING</b>   | C Fletcher Ext 2933    |
| <p>The Strategic Director (Resources) gave a presentation that outlined the implications of alternative strategies to the rent setting proposals.</p> <p>It was requested that for 2015/2016, work on rent setting proposals be started earlier to allow for more consultation and a greater opportunity to explore options.</p>  |                        |

*NOTE: The presentation may be viewed on line <http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/have-your-say/council-meetings/88468/105359/>  
Item 8 – Appendix H – a hard copy will be sent to all Members of the Council with their supplementary agendas for Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Special Council.*

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That Council be recommended to approve that the HRA dwelling rents be increased, week commencing 7 April 2014 by an average 5.61% or £5.23 per week which has been calculated using the Rent Restructuring Formula, subject to the Government's caps and limits applicable to each property.
2. That Council be recommended to approve the revised 2013/14 and the 2014/15 HRA budget, as set out in Appendix A.
3. That Council be recommended to approve the proposed fees and charges as shown in Appendix B.
4. That Council be recommended to approve the Savings Options totalling £622,850 as shown in Appendix C.
5. That Council be recommended to approve the Growth Options totalling £468,120 as shown in Appendix D.
6. That Council be recommended to approve the minimum level of reserves for 2014/15 as shown in Appendix E.
7. That it be noted that Members were to undertake a thorough review of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan, including rent strategy, future house building, and investment standards.

*Reason for Decision: As contained in the report and given the conclusions of outlines in the presentation on alternative strategies and  
7. To inform Members of the review to be undertaken.  
Options Considered: As contained in the report and the presentation.*

**9. 2014/2015 DRAFT CAPITAL FORWARD PLAN AND 5 YEAR CAPITAL STRATEGY UPDATE**

C Fletcher Ext 2933

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That Members approve the revised 2013/14 and the draft 2014/15 General Fund Capital programme, as detailed in Appendix A and Appendix B, for consideration by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
2. That Members approve the revised 2013/14 and the draft 2014/15 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix A and Appendix B, for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
3. That it be agreed 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 be approved.
5. That the Leaders Services Priority Group (LSPG) be reconvened to review and challenge the General Fund Capital Strategy and 15 Year Investment Plan.

*Reason for Decision: As contained in the report*

*Options Considered: As contained in the report.*

**10. DRAFT 2014/2015 COUNCIL TAX SETTING AND GENERAL FUND BUDGET**

C Fletcher Ext 2933

This report was not published 5 clear days before the meeting, nor had it been available for public inspection for this time. The Chair determined however that given the reason for urgency contained in the report it be considered on this occasion.

The Executive expressed its concern that despite the strongest possible representations, there had been significant delays in the Government providing relevant information making it extremely difficult for local authorities to move forward with developing the budget proposals. The Local Authority Financial Settlement had not been announce until 19 December; an announcement on the percentage increase in Council Tax that would trigger a referendum was not to be announce until 15 February; the guidance on the pooling of

Business Rates had not been issued before the closing date to submit an application, potential partners had withdrawn; and there was a delay in issuing technical guidance needed to complete the report on the NNDR Tax Base (see item 11 below).

It was noted that given this unsatisfactory situation, dependent upon the referendum level to be announced it might be necessary to revise proposals between the final recommendations be taken at Executive on 11 February, and the Council Tax and Budget setting being considered by Council on 26 February.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the 2013/14 revised net expenditure on the General Fund of £10,719,350 be approved.
2. That a draft General Fund Budget Requirement for 2014/15 of £9,627,320 be proposed for consultation purposes, with a contribution to balances of £176,634 and a Band D Council Tax of £192.10 (assuming a 1.90% increase) be approved for consideration by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
3. That the updated position on the General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), as shown at Appendix A and the Risk Assessments of General Fund Balances, as shown at Appendix B to this report, be approved for consideration by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
4. That a minimum level of General Fund reserves of £2,579,243, in line with the 2014/15 risk assessment of balances, as shown at Appendix B to this report, be approved for consideration by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
5. That the contingency sum of £400,000 within which the Executive can approve supplementary estimates, be approved for 2014/15, (unchanged from 2013/14) approved for consideration by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
6. That the 2014/15 proposed Fees and Charges increase of £353,480 (Appendix C) be approved for consideration by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
7. That it be noted that given the late announcement by Government of the Referendum Limit to a Council Tax increase, it may be necessary to revise proposals following the Executive on 11 February and the Council meeting on 26 February.

*Reason for Decision: As contained in the report*  
*Options Considered: As contained in the report*

**11. NNDR TAX BASE 2014/2015**

**Report withdrawn**

It was noted that due to the delay by the Government in issuing technical guidance needed to complete this report it was withdrawn on this occasion.

It was **RESOLVED** that delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director (Resources), in consultation with the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Resources, to approve the NNDR Tax Base 2014/2015 and that the Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee be requested to consider a waiver of the call-in period in order for this decision to meet the 31 January deadline.

*Reason for Decision: In order to comply with the statutory deadline.*  
*Options Considered: none*

**12. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

None

**13. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That under Section 100(A) 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 SI 2006 No. 88.
2. That having considered the reasons for the following item being in Part II it be determined that maintaining the exemption from

disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

**PART II**

**14. PART II MINUTES – 10 DECEMBER 2013**

J Cansick Ext 2216

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II Minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**15 . URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None