

NOTICE OF DECISIONS TAKEN (PART I - FOR PUBLICATION)

MEETING: Executive – Tuesday 10 March 2015 – 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, S Speller and A Webb.

The deadline for Call-in of any of the decisions below is 19 March 2015.

Subject to there being no call-in the attached decisions may be implemented with effect from 20 March 2015.

1. APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	G.Moody Ext 2203
<p>An apology for absence was received from Councillor J Thomas.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest</p>	
2. MINUTES – 10 FEBRUARY 2015	G .Moody Ext 2203
<p>It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 10 February 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.</p>	
3. MINUTES – OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND SELECT COMMITTEES	G. Moody Ext2203
<p>With reference to the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Economy Select Committee held on 3 February concerns were expressed that the level of business conducted by the Council with local businesses had appeared to remain static at 14% for the past five years. The Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Transport was requested to investigate methods by which this percentage could be increased.</p> <p>The Executive also considered the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee concerning the Council's banking contract with HSBC and it was suggested that The Leader, The Portfolio Holder for Resources and the Executive Director (Resources) meet to discuss the issue but that any final decision on the contract be delayed for a period of twelve months. There was consensus for this approach.</p> <p>It was commented that a local newspaper had implied that the Council had investments in Saudi Arabia. The Executive was</p>	

advised that although a Saudi Arabian bank had been listed as a possible counterparty in the appendices to the Prudential Code Indicator report no investments had been made by the Council with that institution. The Leader requested that should inaccuracies in local newspapers be observed the Council should ensure that a rebuttal be issued to ensure that any such errors were corrected in the following week's edition.

The review of the maintenance of trees, hedges and shrub beds was cited as an excellent piece of scrutiny work that had had a direct influence on the decision to triple the New Homes Bonus bid to rejuvenate shrub beds and hedge areas within the town. The Leader requested that the Environment and Economy Select Committee be thanked for their work in this area.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the following meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees are noted –

- 3A Environment & Economy Select Committee – 3 February 2015
- 3B Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 16 February 2015
- 3C Environment & Economy Select Committee – 24 February 2015

4. RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY 2015/2018

M.Partridge Ext 2456

It was requested that the Equality Impact Assessment be revised proactively as feedback from residents begins to shape the strategy further.

Officers were asked to include reference within the strategy to SBC being a 'Co-operative Council'. It was requested that the strategy be redrafted to highlight this point and to include further appropriate contact details for the Housing Management Board and Customer Scrutiny Panel noting their roles in the development of housing services. The Strategic Director (Community) undertook to liaise with the Head of Housing Management and Corporate Strategy Partnerships and Consultation Manager to amend the strategy accordingly.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the content of the draft Resident Involvement Strategy 2015/18, as appended to the report, be approved; and any matters for further consideration be highlighted.
2. That delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director (Community), following consultation with the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing, to finalise the Resident Involvement Strategy 2015/18 to take account of any changes agreed by the Executive.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report.
Other Options Considered: As contained in the report.

5. 2014/2015 CAPITAL STRATEGY UPDATE

C.Fletcher x 2933

Concerns were expressed in the level of slippage in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

The Executive was advised that, as previously reported, the slippage was largely as a result of issues related to the award of two very large contracts. Options to avoid such issues occurring in the future such as the potential to award a greater number of smaller contracts were under consideration. Further to this, Member's preference to engage local businesses where possible and financially viable to do so was noted. The Executive requested that a report be presented, if possible, to its meeting on 30 March detailing the background to the current position and further action that could be taken to reduce the likelihood of deferred capital spend occurring in the future.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the changes to the 2014/2015 capital programme as reported and summarised in paragraph 4.1.1 and 4.6.1 of the report be approved.
2. That the changes to the 2015/2016 capital programme as reported and summarised in paragraph 4.3.1 of this report be approved.
3. That the sum of £167,000 for the Solar Photovoltaic pilot scheme identified in paragraph 4.3.3 be approved and funded from the capital reserve.
4. That the changes to the 2015/2016 capital programme as reported and summarised in paragraph 4.7.1 of the report be the subject of a future report to the Executive.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report. Recommendation 4 – to enable the Executive to consider methods of addressing slippage in the HRA capital programme.
Other Options Considered: As contained in the report.

6. 3RD QUARTER MONITORING REPORT GENERAL FUND AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

C. Fletcher x 2933

The Executive discussed bad debts and the Council's debt management policies. It was noted that the pie chart at paragraph 3.9.4 of the report reflected the level of monies owed to the Council as both due and overdue payments. The Accountancy Service Manager undertook to recast the chart to show only outstanding debts in future reports.

The level of commercial debt was also discussed and the Portfolio Holder Resources and the Strategic Director (Resources) were requested to review contracts and amend to a monthly payment regime where possible.

It was RESOLVED:

General Fund

1. That the 2014/2015 3rd quarter General Fund projected net decrease in expenditure of £225,630 be approved.
2. That changes to the General Fund net budget remains with the £400,000 (increase) variation limit delegated to the Executive be noted.
3. That the transfer of £188,380 to the capital reserve as reported as part of the new integrated finance plan (paragraph 3.7.1 of the report refers) be approved.
4. That the transfer of £40,120 to the capital reserve to fund capital projects in 2015/2016 as reported to the Executive in the Capital Strategy Update be approved.
5. That the General Fund net carry forwards of £37,250 as detailed in paragraph 3.5.1 of the report be approved.
6. That it be noted that the net saving arising from the re-negotiated contract (£111,420 as detailed in paragraph 3.3.2 of the report) contributes to the 2016/2017 unidentified savings target of £238,175 in the General Fund medium term financial strategy.
7. That the net budget reductions of £88,560 for the General Fund in 2015/2016 be approved.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

8. That the 2014/2015 3rd quarter net increase in HRA surplus of £327,560 be approved.
9. That changes to the HRA net budget remains within the £250,000 (increase) variation limit delegated to the Executive be noted.

10. That carry forward requests of £182,620 for the HRA as listed in paragraph 4.4.1 of the report be approved.
11. That it be noted that the saving arising from the BMO fleet (£92,830 as detailed in paragraph 4.3.1 of the report) contributes to the 2016/2017 unidentified savings target of £200,000 in the HRA business plan.
12. That net budget reductions of £146,900 for the HRA in 2015/2016 be approved.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report.

Other Options Considered: As contained in the report.

7. STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL BALANCED SCORECARD FOR QUARTER THREE 2014/2015

The Chief Executive presented the quarter three balanced scorecard results.

The Executive interviewed the Head of Business & Technology Services regarding the measures being undertaken to address the negative indicators in the Customer Service Centre (CSC) and for ICT Services. The Executive was advised that actions to reduce the numbers of telephone contacts to the CSC were on track to be introduced to timescale.

The Executive was further advised that the roll out of the hosted desktop IT system should eliminate any remaining issues that Members were experiencing with their computers.

In response to a question concerning actions being taken to address the problem of littering in the town the Strategic Director (Environment) undertook to provide an update of the number of Fixed Penalty Notices issued by Enforcement Officers and other actions being taken.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the overall performance results for Stevenage Borough Council Balanced Scorecard for quarter three 2014/2015 be noted.
2. That for areas of performance considered outside an acceptable variance of the target set, the planned performance management activity outlined in paragraphs 3.8.2 to 3.8.13 (and summarised in Appendix A of the report) be approved as appropriate.

3. That performance improvement outlined in paragraphs 3.10.2 to 3.10.3 of the report as a result of the implementation of performance management activity previously approved be noted.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report.

Other Options Considered: As contained in the report.

8. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS

None

9. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

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

10. PROPERTY ACQUISITIONS AT FRESSON ROAD

It was **RESOLVED** that the recommendations in the report be approved.

11. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.