

NOTICE OF DECISIONS TAKEN (PART I - FOR PUBLICATION)

MEETING: Executive – Wednesday 11 November 2015 – 14.00 hrs.
Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Stevenage, SG1 1HN

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors S Taylor OBE CC (Chair), J Gardner (Vice-Chair), S Batson MBE DL CC, Mrs J Lloyd, R Raynor, S Speller and J Thomas.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Michelle Gardner

**The deadline for Call-in of any of the decisions below is Friday 20 November 2015.
Subject to there being no call-in the attached decisions may be implemented with effect from Monday 23 November 2015.**

1. APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	J Cansick x 2216
<p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Henry CC and A Webb.</p> <p>Councillor S Speller declared a personal interest in Item 13 - Priority Based Budgeting, as a Trustee of Crossroads Care and District Commissioner of the Scouts.</p> <p>Councillor J Thomas declared a personal interest in Item 13 – Priority Based Budgeting, as Trustee of Crossroads Care.</p>	
2. MINUTES – 13 OCTOBER 2015	J Cansick x 2216
<p>It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 13 October 2015 are approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.</p>	
3. MINUTES – OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND SELECT COMMITTEES	J Cansick x 2216
<p>The Executive welcomed the discussion at the Community Select Committee on the use of Social Media.</p> <p>The Leader referred to the study being undertaken by the Environment & Economy Select Committee on the Business Technology Centre. She stated that she had been invited to attend a future meeting of that Committee to brief Members on the discussions she had been having with WENTA re future development opportunities.</p>	

It was noted that in relation to the decisions taken by the Executive on Future Town Future Council, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee had raised the challenges faced regarding Health and Wellbeing. The Strategic Director (Community) had undertaken to circulate a briefing paper to Members on Health and Wellbeing initiatives that the Council was promoting. This paper would be updated on a quarterly basis.

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

- 3A Community Select Committee – 6 October 2015
- 3B Environment & Economy Select Committee – 14 October 2015
- 3C Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 19 October 2015

4. 2015/2016 MID YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW

C Fletcher Ext 2933

It was noted that since the report had been drafted, the Sovereign Rating of Saudi Arabia had fallen to A+ and therefore no longer met the Council's minimum Sovereign Rating criteria of AA-.

Members were of the view that the Council should consider all possible options to avoid having to return Right to Buy receipts to the Government. The Chief Executive stated that this would be explored further at the forthcoming Housing Revenue Account Business Plan Member/officer work stream sessions. The Leader indicated that a proposal could then be put to the District Councils' Network and the Local Government Association.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the 2015/16 Treasury Management Mid-Year review and the prudential and treasury indicators contained within the report be recommended to Council for approval.
2. That the review of treasury limits is noted.
3. That the latest approved Countries for investments, as detailed in paragraph 4.7.12 of Appendix D to the report, be recommended to Council for approval.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report.

Other Options Considered: As contained in the report.

5. 2ND QUARTER MONITORING REPORT GENERAL FUND AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA)

C Fletcher Ext 2933

The Executive Portfolio Holder for Resources indicated that she remained concerned with the level of carry forwards and she would be undertaking a further review.

Regarding the level of revenue reserves for the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme default, as quoted in table 6 of the report, the Assistant Director (Resources) indicated that whilst there had been no defaults it was prudent to retain this level of reserves.

With reference to the report's paragraph 3.9.2 Chart 1 regarding outstanding debt it was noted that the vast majority of the Housing Benefit Overpayment was due to claimant error, delay in notification of change of circumstances and fraud etc., not local authority error. It was considered appropriate that in future reporting this breakdown should be shown.

Concerning New Homes Bonus Projects the Leader stated that it was important that delivery mechanisms/structures were in place in order that schemes could be implemented as soon as possible in the financial year for which they are funded.

The Head of Environmental Services referred to paragraph 3.8.2 of the report. He explained that due to the nature of the work the shrub bed and hedge rejuvenation project was due to 'start' in November, not be 'completed' in November as quoted.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the 2015/16 2nd quarter General Fund projected net increase in expenditure of £16,780 is approved.
2. That it is noted the cumulative changes made to the original General Fund net budget remains within the £400,000 (increase) variation limit delegated to the Executive.
3. That the transfer of £99,570 from the capital reserve (subject to the approval of the Capital Strategy update) is approved.
4. That the 2015/16 2nd quarter net decrease in HRA surplus of £339,830 is approved.
5. That it is noted that the cumulative changes made to the original HRA net budget remains within the £250,000 (increase) variation limit delegated to the Executive.
6. That it is noted that the HRA balances are projected to be £15,699,149 as at 31 March 2016, which is £528,550 below the risk assessed level of balances.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report.

Other Options Considered: As contained in the report.

6. 2ND QUARTER CAPITAL STRATEGY UPDATE

C Fletcher Ext 2933

It was noted that in relation to Disabled Facilities Grants, the Council had no control over this expenditure as it was Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) that determined what works an applicant required. The Leader indicated that she would be meeting with the HCC Director of Adult Care to discuss this matter.

Members asked why the quarter 2 projected capital expenditure outturn for the Housing Revenue Account was only 22%. The report highlighted that spend was based on invoiced works only and did not include works that have been completed but not yet invoiced. Actual spend to September compared to the profiled budget to September is 98%. Officers expected spend to increase during quarters 3 and 4 as the related contracts have now been mobilised. It was necessary for officers to ensure that the outturn was significantly higher by the end of quarter 3.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the 2015/16 General Fund capital programme net decrease of £183,790, as summarised in paragraph 4.1.3 and detailed in Appendix A to the report, is approved.
2. That the 2016/17 General Fund capital programme net increase of £319,500, as summarised in paragraph 4.1.4 of the report, is approved.
3. That the 2015/16 HRA capital programme virements as summarised in paragraph 4.2.1 and detailed in Appendix B to the report are approved.
4. That it is noted that there are no changes to the overall HRA capital programme for 2015/16.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report

Other Options Considered: As contained in the report

7. HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2015 - 2020

M Partridge Ext 2456

The Executive was concerned that given a number of households subject to the 'bedroom tax' were reliant on discretionary housing payments, if this funding was discontinued homelessness issues could be exacerbated. Members requested details of the number of households affected and the funding provided.

The view was expressed that the Policy was an exemplar in Co-operative Council working and the work undertaken by the team was highly praised. The Chief Executive cautioned however that given the increasing demands put upon the service

consideration will need to be given to making more effective use of existing resources as well as identifying further potential resource requirements.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the content of the draft Homelessness Strategy is approved for consultation.
2. That the consultation proposals for the draft Homelessness Strategy are approved.
3. That delegated authority is approved for the Strategic Director (Communities) to finalise the Homelessness Strategy for implementation on the 21st December following consultation with the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Housing.
4. That delegated authority is approved for the Strategic Director (Communities) to make further changes, revisions or additions to the Strategy post the annual reviews or any other interim reviews following consultation with the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Housing.
5. That the Executive's appreciation for the work undertaken by the officers in this area be recorded.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report

Other Options Considered: As contained in the report

8. GAMBLING ACT 2005 – STATEMENT OF POLICY

A Sanderson Ext 2311

The Head of Leisure, Community and Children's Services apologised for the typographical errors in the numbering of the paragraphs in section 4 of the report.

It was reported that the General Purposes Committee at its meeting on 9 November 2015 agreed the Statement of Policy for recommendation.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the proposed Stevenage Borough Council Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Policy 2016-2019 is agreed.
2. That the Stevenage Borough Council Statement of Policy be recommended to Council for approval.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report

Other Options Considered: As contained in the report

9. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL UPDATE ON THE RESPONSE TO THE REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMME

This report had not been circulated to Members with five clear days' notice, nor had it been available for public inspection during this period. The Chair determined however that given the reason for urgency outlined in the report it be considered on this occasion. Additionally it was reported that details of this matter had not appeared on the forward plan of key decisions providing the required 28 days' notice. Accordingly the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been consulted and subsequently had agreed that the report could be considered on this occasion.

The Leader introduced the report. She stated that she had been contacted personally by Richard Harrington MP, the Home Office Minister with responsibility for Syrian refugees, on this matter. He had expressed his appreciation to both the Council and the people of Stevenage for the assistance offered.

The Interim Assistant Director (Housing) stated that Stevenage was further forward with its plans than many authorities and had been working with relevant partner agencies who would have to provide the necessary infrastructure and support for those arriving as the Council did not have direct control over all the matters that needed to be addressed. He expressed the view however, that identification of appropriate private sector housing was key and remained work in progress at the current time.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That officers produce a comprehensive communications plan to ensure messages are accurately relayed, particularly at the upcoming Public Meeting on the 28 November 2015 and with regards to actions agreed to be taken thereafter.
2. That the Council continue close working with its partners in order to ensure a robust infrastructure is in place to support the arrival and continued integration of the Syrian refugee families within the local community.
3. That a working group be formed made up of relevant officers to meet regularly with partner agencies to help support the integration process.
4. That support to phase 1 of the Syrian Refugee programme be approved subject to the identification of suitable private rented sector accommodation and having adequate infrastructure in place to sustain the arrangement in the medium to longer terms.

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

CHAIRMAN OF EAST AND NORTH-EAST HERTS NHS TRUST

The Leader reported that Ian Morfett was to stand down as Chairman of the East and North-East Herts NHS Trust on 31 March 2016. The Executive praised his work with the Trust and the strong partnership he had with the Chief Executive, Nick Carver and wished Ian all the best for the future.

10. 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 item of business on the grounds that it involves 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

11. PART II MINUTES – EXECUTIVE – 13 OCTOBER 2015

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 13 October 2015 are approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

12. PART II MINUTES – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 19 October 2015 are noted.

13. GENERAL FUND BUDGET & HRA PROPOSALS 2014/15, 2015/16 SAVINGS OPTIONS, FORWARD PLAN AND UPDATE FINANCIAL STRATEGY

It was **RESOLVED** that the recommendations in the report are approved subject to amendment and two further resolutions.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report

Other Options Considered: As contained in the report

14. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.