

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

**MEETING:** Executive – Tuesday 15 December 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, R Henry CC, Mrs J Lloyd, R Raynor, S Speller, J Thomas and A Webb.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Two members of the public.

The deadline for Call-in of any of the decisions below is Wednesday 23 December 2015.  
Subject to there being no call-in the attached decisions may be implemented with effect from Thursday 24 December 2015.

<b>1. APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>	G Moody x 2203
<p>There were no apologies for absence.</p> <p>Councillor S Taylor OBE CC declared a personal interest at item 5 as her daughter is employed by the Council in the Housing Team.</p> <p>With the agreement of the Chair items 6 and 7 were dealt with after item 4.</p>	
<b>2. MINUTES – 11 NOVEMBER 2015</b>	G Moody x 2203
<p>It was <b>RESOLVED</b> that the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 11 November 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.</p>	
<b>3. MINUTES – OVERVIEW &amp; SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND SELECT COMMITTEES</b>	G Moody x 2203
<p>The Executive was advised that Domestic Abuse would be the focus of the January 2016 meeting of the Responsible Authorities Group (RAG). The Leader stated that there were still issues around the provision of victim support for those affected by Domestic Abuse. The Leader requested that she and Cllr Batson be provided with an update on the Council's Domestic Abuse project.</p>	

The Community Select Committee's review of Local Community Budgets (LCB) was discussed and the Executive was reminded that whilst Portfolio Holders could attend meetings at the invitation of the Chair; it was hoped that Members would come forward to give evidence to the review as appropriate. The shortening of timescales for bids to be submitted was noted and it was remarked that a flexibility to the timescale during the summer holiday period could be useful as Members may not always be available to take the necessary actions to support a bid at that that time. The Leader clarified the point concerning the possible carry forwards of LCB funding into another year in that this proposal, if recommended for agreement, would apply only to projects that were committed to in the previous funding year but could not be delivered before the cut-off date for valid reasons.

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

- 3A Community Select Committee – 2 November 2015
- 3B Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 16 November 2015
- 3C Community Select Committee – 18 November 2015
- 3D Environment and Economy Select Committee – 24 November 2015

#### **4. DRAFT COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2016/2017**

C Fletcher Ext 2933

The Leader requested that consideration be given to the imposition of a Council Tax premium on empty properties that met certain criteria and the need for a full review of the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2017/18 was discussed. The Executive agreed that a full review was due as the current scheme had been in place for four years without major change.

The issue was raised that many people were unaware that the Council acted as council tax collection agents for both the County Council and the Constabulary. Concerns were expressed that should the County introduce a 2% 'Social Care Levy' some residents would interpret this as an increase in tax payable to the Borough. It was agreed that there would be a need to review communications once budgets had been agreed to ensure that council tax payers were aware of the proportion of their total tax bill that was payable to Stevenage Borough Council.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the 2016/2017 CTS Scheme be approved.
2. That the Scheme be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
3. That the final CTS Scheme be presented to the Executive at its meeting on 19 January 2016 and then Council on 27 January

2016.

4. That a full review be undertaken of the CTS Scheme for 2017/2018.

*Reason for Decision: As contained in the report and (4) it is four years since the current scheme was introduced.*

*Other Options Considered: As contained in the report.*

#### **5. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT DRAFT BUDGET PROPSALS 2016/17 AND RENT SETTING**

C Fletcher Ext 2933

This item was dealt with after items 6 and 7.

The Executive discussed the potential risk to the HRA of the Governments recent announcements concerning initiatives such as 'pay to stay' and the sale of high value properties to meet the cost of Housing Association Right to Buys. It was noted that it was currently not possible for the Council to fully take account of these and other Government Housing policy initiatives within our business model pending the Government finalising its proposals and moving them into statute.

In relation to the need to increase service charges the Leader stated that there was a need a review and develop clear Service Level Agreements to help tenants and leaseholders understand what they are being charged for and to aid their assessment as to whether or not the Council is providing value for money.

It was requested that the first recommendation be amended to clarify exactly which properties were not subject to the 1% rent reduction.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That HRA dwelling rents not subject to the 1% rent reduction (Low Start Shared Ownership) be increased, week commencing 4 April 2016 by an average 0.9% or £0.95 per week which has been calculated using the existing rent formula, CPI +1% in line with the 2014 Rent Policy.
2. That Members note that HRA dwelling rents (other than those outlined in recommendation 1) be subject to the 1% rent reduction from week commencing 4 April 2016 or £0.95 per week as outlined in the Government's Welfare Reform Bill (subject to the Bill being passed into statute).
3. That the draft 2016/17 HRA budget, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be approved. It was noted that this may be subject to change as a result of consultation, changes to the Government's Welfare Reform Bill and the finalisation of recharges from the General Fund.

4. That the proposed fees and charges, as set out in Appendix B to the report, be approved.
5. That the final HRA rent setting budget for 2016/17 be presented to the Executive at its meeting on 19 January 2016 and then to Council on 27 January 2016.
6. That key partners and other stakeholders be consulted and their views fed back into the 2016/17 budget setting process.
7. That Service Charges be increased by a maximum of £3.00 in 2016/17.
8. That the current rent policy be reviewed and an approach recommended to service charges.

*Reason for Decision: As contained in the report and (1) to offer clarification as to which properties are not subject to the 1% rent reduction.*

*Other Options Considered: As contained in the report.*

#### **6. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) AND REVISED STEVENAGE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (LDS)**

Z Al-Jawad x 2257

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the background to the report, including changes to the collection of contributions from new development and the findings of the Council's viability evidence, be noted.
2. That a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for Stevenage be prepared with a Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule to be reported to the Executive in June 2016.
3. That a revised Local Development Scheme for Stevenage ("the revised LDS" as attached at appendix 1 to the report) be agreed and approved as the statutory timetable for the continued preparation of the local plan and the work programme for the preparation of CIL.
4. That the revised LDS have effect from 4 January 2016.

*Reason for Decision: As contained in the report*

*Other Options Considered: As contained in the report*

## 7. STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN : PUBLICATION CONSULTATION

Z Al-Jawad x 2257

The Executive was advised of the intention to deliver a 12 page consultation document to every household in the Borough and neighbouring properties in Great Ashby that fell within North Herts District Council (NHDC). The Executive was further advised that the Chief Executive and Customer Contact Centre in NHDC would be briefed on the matter.

In reply to a question concerning properties in Aston that fell within East Herts DC the Executive was advised that a briefing between SBC planners and Aston Councillors had taken place.

The Leader extended her thanks to Councillor Gardner and the planners for their work on the plan, especially with regard to Duty to Co-operate and the liaison with neighbouring authorities and Viability of Sites and the efforts made to approach local land owners.

In respect of the 'Cultural Offer' included within the plan the potential for linking to the Town's seventieth anniversary in November 2017 was raised.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the key findings of the local plan evidence base be noted.
2. That the results of the Revised Housing Targets Consultation, as set out in the Statement of Consultation (attached at Appendix 1 to the report) be noted.
3. That the draft Stevenage Borough Local Plan (attached at Appendix 2 to the report); the associated Proposals Map (attached at Appendix 3 to the report) and Sustainability Appraisal (attached at Appendix 4 to the report) be approved and the Council's response to the main issues raised through consultation be noted.
4. That a public consultation on the proposed submission documents for six weeks commencing on Wednesday 6 January 2016 be approved.
5. That delegated powers be granted to the Strategic Director (Environment), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration, to make such amendments as are necessary in the final preparation of the proposed documents and to make necessary preparations for the public consultation.

6. That the draft Stevenage Borough Local Plan be used as a material consideration in the determination of all planning applications registered on or after Wednesday 6 January 2016.

7. That the draft Site Specific Policies DPD, draft Gunnels Wood Area Action Plan (AAP), draft Old Town AAP, Pond Close Development SPG, Stevenage West Master Planning Principles SPG, Gunnels Wood SPD and the Interim Planning Policy Statement for Stevenage all cease to be used as a material consideration in the determination of all planning applications registered on or after Wednesday 6 January 2016.

*Reason for Decision: As contained in the report*

*Other Options Considered: As contained in the report*

## **8. STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL BALANCED SCORECARD FOR QUARTER TWO 2015/16**

S Crudgington x 2185

The Chief Executive presented the Balanced Scorecard for Quarter Two.

It was noted that the indicators for the Community Safety Partnership had moved to red. Given that community safety and the fear of crime had been identified as priorities by residents the Leader requested that the issue be raised at the January RAG meeting. The Leader also requested that officers, in conjunction with the Police, strive to present a report to the next meeting of the Executive and that Chief Inspector Harbon be invited to attend.

The Executive discussed the performance of the Customer Service Centre (CSC) and ideas for simplified performance measures were suggested. The issue of the availability of staff in back office functions to answer calls that had been escalated was raised. Options to further improve performance within both the CSC and the back office services in the short and medium terms were in development.

With regard to the red indicator for Tenant Satisfaction with the Home Improvement Service, the Executive was advised that an improvement action plan that had been agreed with the contractors and was being closely tracked. Anecdotal evidence was then offered to the Executive of contractors offering to undertake work for non-tenants in the Town. The Strategic Director (Community) undertook to look into the issue and report back.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the overall performance results for the Stevenage Borough Council Balanced Scorecard for quarter two 2015/16 (as summarised at Appendix A to the report) be noted.

2. That performance improvement outlined in paragraphs 3.7 and status updates set out in paragraph 3.8 of the report as a result of the implementation of performance management activity previously approved be noted.

3. That for areas of performance considered outside an acceptable variance of the target set, the planned performance management activity in paragraph 3.9 of the report be endorsed.

*Reason for Decision: As contained in the report*

*Other Options Considered: As contained in the report*

#### **9. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

None.

#### **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 – 11 NOVEMBER 2015**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 11 November 2015 be 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 16 November 2015 be noted.

<b>13. URGENT PART II BUSINESS</b>
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None.
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