

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS TAKEN PART I

MEETING: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Wednesday 17 February 2016, 6pm, Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Stevenage, SG1 1HN

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors: L Martin-Haugh (Chair), L Bell, J Brown, M Downing, M Gardner, C Latif, S Mead, R Parker CC and P Stuart.

THE AGENDA ITEMS REFERRED TO IN THIS SUMMARY OF DECISIONS MAY BE INSPECTED AT THE RECEPTION OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OFFICES, DANESHILL HOUSE.

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Bibby, L Briscoe and L Harrington. There were no declarations of interest.	G Moody Ext 2203
2. MINUTES – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – WEDNESDAY 20 JANUARY 2016	
It was RESOLVED that the Minutes from the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 20 January 2016 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.	G Moody Ext 2203
3. PART 1 DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE	
This report had not been circulated to Members five clear days before the meeting nor had it been made	

available for public inspection. The Chair determined however that given the short time left before the end of the call-in period on 24 February it be considered on this occasion.

Minutes – Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees

A Member commented that the Council could consider giving Local Community Budgets a higher profile on its website.

In reply the Committee was advised that this issue would be considered when the website was refreshed.

Prudential Code Indicators and Treasury Management Strategy 2016/17

The Assistant Director Finance advised the Committee that the proposed review of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy would be comprehensive and include input from the Audit Committee.

2016/17 Council Tax Setting and General Fund Budget

The Committee asked a number of questions about the level of the proposed Council Tax increase and the impact on Council services.

In reply the Officer advised the Committee that the increase was one of a number of measures outlined in the report to meet the ongoing challenges of a reducing Revenue Support Grant, other central government initiatives and inflationary pressures. However it was understood that it was the Council's intention to protect frontline services wherever possible.

To clarify, the Committee was further advised that the 2.65% increase would be applied across all council tax bandings.

In reply to a further question the Committee was advised that the cost to the Council of freezing Council Tax would be approximately £130,000 cumulatively per year. It was noted that a 'Freeze Grant' from central

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government would not be payable to the Council to offset this loss of revenue.

2016/17 Capital Forward Plan and 5 Year Capital Strategy

In reply to a question concerning the repayment of 'Right to Buy' receipts the Committee was advised that the Council was exploring every avenue to retain these receipts. Options under consideration included collaboration with neighbouring authorities and purchase of new build properties.

Crime Reporting and Performance

The Committee was advised that this item had moved to Part I following clearance from Herts Constabulary being given to the figures quoted in the report.

The Head of Service (Chief Executive's Unit) introduced the item and advised the Committee that the Executive had requested a report with a more detailed breakdown of the data for their April meeting. The initial report had been requested as a result of a balanced scorecard presentation and the purpose of that report was to recognise the changes in crime reporting and question the level of policing resource allocated to the town.

A Member commented that the facility provided under Section 136 of the Mental Health Act formerly at the Lister Hospital had been relocated outside of Stevenage. As a result more Police Officer time was being spent in supervision at the A&E Department with a knock on impact on the amount of resource available for policing work in the town. The Head of Service (Chief Executive's Unit) undertook to raise this issue with the Police.

It was noted that the Executive did have access to the data provided at appendix A when the initial report was commissioned. The Committee recommended that the Executive consider this information when reviewing the final report at their April meeting.

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<p>Part II Minutes – Executive 19 January 2016</p> <p>A Member requested that where figures in reports were corrected at meetings the minutes should record detailed reasons for the changes.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED that the following part 1 decisions of the Executive be noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Minutes – Tuesday 19 January 2016 • Minutes – Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees • Prudential Code Indicators and Treasury Management Strategy 2016/17 • 2016/17 Council Tax Setting and General Fund Budget • 2016/17 Capital Forward Plan and 5 Year Capital Strategy Update • Crime Reporting and Performance • Executive Part II Minutes – Tuesday 19 January 2016. 	
<p>4. URGENT PART 1 DECISION AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</p>	
<p>It was RESOLVED that the following urgent Part I decision authorised by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 25 January 2016 be noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Non-Domestic Rates 2016/2017 Tax Base 	<p>G Moody Ext 2203</p>
<p>5. URGENT PART I BUSINESS</p>	
<p>None.</p>	
<p>6. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC</p>	
<p>It was RESOLVED that:</p>	

<p>1. 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 involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1-7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by SI2006 No.88.</p> <p>2. Members having considered the reasons for the following report being in Part II and determined that the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighed the public interest in disclosure.</p>	<p>G Moody Ext 2203</p>
<p>PART II</p>	
<p>7. PART II MINUTES – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 20 JANUARY 2016.</p>	
<p>It was RESOLVED that the Part II Minutes from the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 20 January 2016 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.</p>	<p>G Moody Ext 2203</p>
<p>8. PART II DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE (if any)</p>	
<p>None.</p>	
<p>9. URGENT PART II BUSINESS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</p>	
<p>None</p>	
<p>10. URGENT PART II BUSINESS</p>	
<p>None.</p>	