

NOTICE OF DECISIONS TAKEN (PART I - FOR PUBLICATION)

MEETING: Executive – Tuesday 16 February 2016 – 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: Chief Inspector Richard Harbon

**The deadline for Call-in of any of the decisions below is 24 February 2016.
Subject to there being no call-in the attached decisions may be implemented with effect from 25 February 2016**

1. APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	J Cansick Ext 2216
None	
2. MINUTES – TUESDAY 19 JANUARY 2016	J Cansick Ext 2216
<p>It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 19 January 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.</p> <p>At this juncture the Chair notified the meeting that Report 10 ‘Crime Reporting and Performance’ was now a Part I report and would be considered in the open part of the meeting and would be available to the public and press. Furthermore, as Chief Inspector Richard Harbon was in attendance for this report it was brought forward and taken before item 3. (see Item 10 below).</p>	
3. MINUTES – OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – AND SELECT COMMITTEES	J Cansick Ext 2216
<p>It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the following meetings of the Scrutiny and Select Committees are noted</p> <p>3A Community Select Committee – 6 January 2016 3B Environment & Economy Select Committee – 12 January 2016 3C Community Select Committee – 18 January 2016</p>	

4. PRUDENTIAL CODE INDICATORS AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2016/2017

C Fletcher Ext 2933

Following a request from the Leader the Assistant Director (Finance) undertook to provide Members of the Executive with details of the implications of the recent Cabinet Office Guidance on local authority investment and procurement policies.

Concerning the review of the Treasury Management Strategy that was to take place in 2016/2017 officers undertook to ensure that the Audit Committee would be consulted and it was noted that the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy would also be included in the review.

It was noted that the report referred to increasing the counterparty limits, including money market funds, from £7million to £8million. It was considered appropriate for this to be specified in the recommendations to Council.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That Council be recommended to adopt the 2016/17 Treasury Management Strategy (appendix A) and approve the increase in counterparty limits from £7Million to £8Million for 2016/17
2. That Council be recommended to adopt the Prudential Code Indicators as detailed in Appendix C to the report.
3. That Council be recommended to note that there will be a fundamental review of the Treasury Management Strategy in 2016/2017 upon which the Audit Committee will be consulted and that the review is to include the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report and 1. To specify the change to the counterparty limits.

Other Options Considered: As contained in the report.

5. 2016/2017 COUNCIL TAX SETTING AND GENERAL FUND BUDGET

C Fletcher Ext 2933

The Executive Member for Resources explained that the final finance settlement had been received after the report had been published. The total grant loss of £661,893 (and £1.701Million for the four year settlement) remained unchanged and therefore the cumulative grant loss since 2011/2012 totalled £4.971Million.

The final finance settlement gave all district councils the option to increase council tax by £5 or up to 2% whichever was the

greater. £5 was a 2.65% increase in council tax for Stevenage in 2016/17 increasing income by £31k in 2016/17 and £132K cumulatively over four years. The report before the Executive assumed a 1.99% increase. The Executive was of the view that it was important not to fall behind on the council tax revenue base line.

The view was expressed that there was a need for a clear communications plan emphasising that with the £5 increase, of the £1,469,381 Band D Council Tax, only £193.52 would go to Stevenage Borough Council – 13p of every £1 collected. In turn the Council provided 120 Services for this £193 per year. The extent of savings made since 2011 should also be quoted, together with the level of cuts in Government funding.

The Executive recorded its concern at how late in the budget setting process the Government had issued notification of the final financial settlement which limited Council consultation and accountability. The Leader stated that this matter had been raised at the Local Government Association.

The Executive took the opportunity to record its thanks for all the staff involved in the report and budget process, particularly Clare Fletcher.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the Budget summarised at Appendix A to the report, subject to revision to account for the resolution at 2 below, be recommended to Council on 24 February 2016 as the Council's General Fund Budget for 2015/16 and 2016/17. A further update on the budgets will be given at the March Executive as part of the quarterly monitoring process.
2. That General Fund Budget Requirement for 2016/17 of £7,692,270 be recommended to Council, with a contribution from balances of £1,437,880 and a Band D Council Tax of £193.52 (assuming a maximum £5.00 on a Band D property or 2.65% increase) also be recommended based on the Government's final funding settlement. This to be reflected in the formal Council Tax resolution to be recommended to Council on 24 February 2016.
3. That Council be recommended to note the risk assessments of General Fund Balances of £2,796,985, as shown at Appendix I to the report
4. That Council be recommended to note the advice of the Chief Financial Officer on the robustness of the draft budget and the adequacy of reserves (Appendix C).
5. That Council be recommended to approve the contingency sum of £400,000 for 2016/2017 within which the Executive can approve supplementary estimates.

6. That Council be recommended to approve the 2016/17 proposed Fees and Charges increase of £201,440 (Appendix F).
7. That Council be recommended to approve the 2016/17 proposed Concessions Policy (Appendix G) and proposed concessions (Appendix H).
8. That the 2016/17 proposed Savings of £233,090 (Appendix D) be approved.
9. That Council be recommended to approve the 2016/17 proposed Growth options of £60,160 (Appendix E).
10. That Council be recommended to note that the General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy continues to meet the financial objectives set by the Chief Finance Officer.

*Reason for Decision: As contained in the report and 1. and 2 to take account of the Governments final finance settlement.
Other Options Considered: As contained in the report.*

6. 2016/2017 CAPITAL FORWARD PLAN AND 5 YEAR CAPITAL STRATEGY

C Fletcher Ext 2933

The Portfolio Holder for Housing stated that she had received no reply to her letter to the Government Minister regarding the requirement to hand the Treasury £7.2Million of the Right-to-Buy receipts that would require £16.87 more spend by 2017/2018. It was considered that this needed to be pursued.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That Council be recommended to approve the revised General Fund and HRA 2015/16 capital programme, as detailed in Appendix A and Appendix C to the report.
2. That Council be recommended to approve 2016/17 General Fund Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix A to the report.
3. That Council be recommended to approve the draft 2016/17 HRA Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix C to the report.
4. That Council be recommended to approve the updated forecast of resources as summarised in Appendix A (General Fund) and Appendix C (HRA) to the report.

5. That Council be recommended to approve growth bids identified for inclusion in the Capital Strategy (Appendix B).

6. That Council be recommended to note the work undertaken by LSPG on behalf of the Executive in reviewing and challenging the General Fund Capital Strategy

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report

Other Options Considered: As contained in the report

7. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS

J Cansick Ext 2216

None.

10. CRIME REPORTING AND PERFORMANCE

R Protheroe Ext. 2938

The Chair determined that this report be taken in Part I as the Constabulary had now cleared the figures quoted in the report.

As Chief Inspector Richard Harbon was present for this item the Executive considered the report immediately following the Minutes (item 2).

A glossary of terms was circulated to Members.

The Executive was concerned that police resourcing needed to be appropriate to the levels of crime. Additionally, it should be considered that Stevenage had a magistrates' court, a major hospital and an extensive night-time economy that added to the need for resources. In addition SBC was allocating Council funds for the provision of PCSOs. Members were of the view therefore that it was difficult to understand that the policing precept was likely to be cut when these resources were needed.

The Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Equalities undertook to write to the Police & Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire questioning what consultation had been undertaken on the proposals to reduce the precept.

In response to an observation that individual police officers had to spend time accompanying people with mental health problems when taken to the A&E Department, Chief Inspector Harbon stated that there was a need to consider the demand profile, particularly in relation to dealing with people with mental health problems and the role undertaken by police officers at the Lister Hospital. This was being addressed with the NHS Partnership.

It was noted that in Stevenage there was a 31% positive outcome of police action / intervention which compared favourably to other areas in the County. It was considered that there was a need to ensure that the public were aware of such positive action as fear of crime continued to be a concern in responses received in community consultations

It was **RESOLVED** that a further report be brought to the Executive in April, after the SoSafe Community Safety Partnership (CSP) has completed a more detailed analysis of crime trend data; which will be considered by the Responsible Authorities Group (RAG) in order to inform future priorities.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report

Other Options Considered: As contained in the report

8. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

J Cansick Ext 2216

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

9. PART II SECTION OF MINUTES – 19 JANUARY 2016

J Cansick Ext 2216

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 19 January 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

10. CRIME REPORTING AND PERFORMANCE

R Protheroe Ext. 2938

Taken in Part I – see above.

11. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.