



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19 MARCH 2024

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

PART I

3. PART I DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

To consider the Part I Decisions of the Executive taken on 13 March 2024.

*Notice of Decisions attached – Pages 3 - 10

**This report had not been circulated five clear days before the meeting (nor was it available for public inspection at that time). The Chair will therefore be required to formally accept the business as urgent given the short period of time left before the end of the call-in period on 22 March 2024.*

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NOTICE OF DECISIONS

Meeting:	Executive	
Date:	Wednesday, 13 March 2024	
Place:	Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage	
Members Present:	Councillors:	Jeannette Thomas (Vice-Chair in the Chair), Lloyd Briscoe, Jackie Hollywell, Loraine Rossati and Simon Speller.

**THE DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN OF ANY OF THE DECISIONS BELOW IS FRIDAY, 22 MARCH.
SUBJECT TO THERE BEING NO CALL-IN THE ATTACHED DECISIONS MAY BE IMPLEMENTED WITH EFFECT FROM MONDAY, 25 MARCH 2024.**

1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
	Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Richard Henry (Chair), Sandra Barr and Mrs Joan Lloyd. There were no declarations of interest.	
2	MINUTES - 7 FEBRUARY 2024	
	It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 7 February 2024 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.	
3	MINUTES OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND SELECT COMMITTEES	
	The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Performance thanked the Chair and Members of the Environment & Economy Select Committee for their work and support throughout the 2023/24 Civic Year, particularly on Climate Change and Biodiversity issues.	

	<p>It was RESOLVED that the following Minutes of meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees be noted –</p> <p>Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 23 January 2024 Environment & Economy Select Committee – 12 February 2024</p>	
4	REGENERATION PROGRAMME DELIVERY UPDATE	D. Wells
	<p>The Executive considered a report which provided an update on the projects within the Government’s Towns Fund programme being delivered by Stevenage Borough Council and Stevenage Development Board partners.</p> <p>In response to a Member’s request, the Assistant Director (Regeneration) agreed to provide a map showing the locations of the 22 underpasses to be given makeovers, once these had been agreed with Hertfordshire County Council.</p> <p>In reply to a Member question regarding retail in the Town Centre, the Assistant Director (Regeneration) stated that the retail units in the Queensway scheme were fully let, with a mixture of uses. He added that it was a difficult time for the retail sector nationally, but hoped that the additional 1,900+ jobs created by the Autolus development and the Forum redevelopment, together with the planned 3,000 new residential units in the Town Centre over the coming years, would naturally provide a demand and opportunities for new retail provision to serve those new employees and residents.</p> <p>In response to a Member question regarding a spend comparison between SBC and other local authorities benefitting from Towns Fund monies, the Assistant Director (Regeneration) advised that the Council’s spend profile compared well to that of other recipients. He commented that, at approximately halfway through the Towns Fund programme in terms of spend, SBC was amongst the higher performers (helped in part by a fully-resourced Regeneration Team which the Council boldly invested in a number of years ago). He stated that SBC’s spend level was at 80% of where it expected to be, although some of the larger items in terms of spend would occur in later years. He was cautiously optimistic that SBC was achieving its ambitious Town Fund objectives when compared to other local authorities.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p>	

1. That the progress of the ‘Transforming the Town Centre’ regeneration programme, specifically the progress of projects which are being delivered using grant funded Towns Fund allocations provided by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), be noted.
2. That the progression of the Cycling and Pedestrian Connectivity (inc. Arts and Heritage Trail) project be authorised, the high-level budgets attributed to the three workstreams be approved, and the future collaboration with Environment and Economy and the Community Select Committees to support the delivery of these interventions be acknowledged.
3. That the reprofiling of the Towns Fund expenditure profile, as shown in the 3rd Quarter 2023/24 capital update report to the Executive, and following endorsement from the Stevenage Development Board, be approved.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

5

HOUSING CONSUMER STANDARDS - SOCIAL HOUSING (REGULATION) ACT 2023

R. Protheroe

The Executive considered a report in respect of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, which introduced wide ranging changes to the provision and management of social housing.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the work being undertaken by the Council to prepare for the adoption of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, and its implementation through the Regulator of Social Housing and the new Consumer Standards and the Housing Ombudsmen, be noted.
2. That the Housing Consumer Standards Action Plan, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

3. That a new Member-led Executive Housing Working Group be established, to oversee the delivery of the Housing Consumer Standards Action Plan.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

6

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE - QUARTER 3 2023/24

R. Protheroe

The Executive considered a report in respect of Corporate Performance for Quarter 3 of 2023/24 (October to December 2023).

In response to a Member’s comment about speeding up the turnaround on voids, the Chief Executive stated that the Senior Leadership Team was focussed on driving better performance in this area and that he welcomed any further suggestions from Members concerning potential improvements which could be made.

In reply to a Member question about lessons learnt from other stock-holding Councils regarding the turnaround on voids, the Chief Executive advised that conversation were held regularly with ARCH (Association of Retained Council Housing) and other Councils. The Portfolio Holder for Housing & Housing Development stated that resourcing in this area, both in relation to securing/retaining Trade staff and, in some instances, specific materials, was a national problem. The Chief Executive was hopeful that the multiple contractor approach would improve voids turnaround, but in any event officers would continue to investigate other opportunities too.

In response to a Member’s request, the Chief Executive agreed to arrange for figures to be provided showing how the number of right to buy properties sold by the Council in recent years compared with the 401 new properties built by the Council (ie. the net effect on the total housing stock).

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the service performance against 35 corporate performance measures and delivery of key milestones in Quarter 3 2023/24 through the Future Town Future Council Programme (as set out in Appendix A to the report) be noted.
2. That the Council’s performance, as demonstrated through the 13 Community Measures (set out in Appendix B to the report), be noted.
3. That the performance challenges in relation to voids (Section 4.4.2 of the report) be noted, and the planned measures to improve performance be endorsed.
4. That the strategic risk updates (Section 4.8 of the report) be noted.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

7	THIRD QUARTER REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING 2023/24 - GENERAL FUND AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT	C. Fletcher B. Moldon
<p>The Executive considered a report in respect of the third quarter monitoring of the Revenue and Capital budgets 2023/24 (General Fund and Housing Revenue Account).</p> <p>The Chair advised Members of a correction to the table contained in Paragraph 4.2.3 of the report. The figure in the “Less core resources at Budget Setting Report” row should read “(12,380)” instead of “(12,335)”, and hence the figure in the “Transfer (to)/from General Fund balances” rows should read “1,363” instead of “£1,408”.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p>		

General Fund

1. That the 2023/24 3rd Quarter projected net increase in General Fund expenditure of £171,980 be approved.
2. That it be noted that the cumulative changes made to the General Fund net budget remains within the £400,000 increase variation limit delegated to the Executive.
3. That note the proposed movement on reserves, as detailed in Paragraph 4.2.1 of the report, be noted.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

4. That the 2023/24 3rd Quarter net increase in HRA expenditure of £1.002Million be approved.
5. That it be noted that the cumulative increases made to the HRA net budget remains within the £400,000 variation limit delegated to the Executive.

Capital Programme

6. That the General Fund capital budget re-phasing of £10.6Million from 2023/24 to future years be approved.
7. That the Housing Revenue Account capital budget re-phasing of £2.3Million from 2023/24 to future years be approved.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

8

URGENT PART I BUSINESS

None.

9	EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC	
	<p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That under Section 100A 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 Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006. 2. That the reasons for the following reports being in Part II were accepted, and that the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure. 	
10	PART II MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 7 FEBRUARY 2024	
	<p>It was RESOLVED that the Part II Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 7 February 2024 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.</p>	
11	URGENT PART II BUSINESS	
	<p>None.</p>	

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