

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

Meeting:	Council	
Date:	Wednesday, 26 February 2020	
Place:	Council Chamber	
Members Present:	Councillors:	Simon Speller (Mayor), Jim Brown (Deputy Mayor), Sandra Barr, Philip Bibby CC, Stephen Booth, Lloyd Briscoe, Rob Broom, Teresa Callaghan, Laurie Chester, Michael Downing, Alex Farquharson, John Gardner, Michelle Gardner, Jody Hanafin, Liz Harrington, Richard Henry, Jackie Hollywell, Graham Lawrence, John Lloyd, Mrs Joan Lloyd, Lin Martin-Haugh, Sarah-Jane McDonough, Andy McGuinness, Maureen McKay, John Mead, Sarah Mead, Adam Mitchell CC, Margaret Notley, Robin Parker CC, Claire Parris, Loraine Rossati, Graham Snell, Sharon Taylor OBE CC, Jeannette Thomas and Tom Wren

1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
	<p>Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Doug Bainbridge, Adrian Brown, Dave Cullen and Lizzie Kelly.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p> <p>At this juncture, Council agreed to suspend Standing Order 19 (c) so that Members could stay seated when speaking.</p>	
2	MINUTES - 29 JANUARY 2020	
	<p>It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 29 January 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.</p>	
3	MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS	
	<p>The Mayor introduced a short film entitled "The Canyon". The film featured Stevenage District Scouts at the Activity Centre. It was noted that the centre had received Local Community Budget funding from some Members. The Leader thanked</p>	

	<p>Stevenage District Scouting for a wonderful addition to the young people offer in Stevenage.</p> <p>The Mayor highlighted the following upcoming events:</p> <p>Mayor’s Charity Concert – 11 March 2020</p> <p>Environment Action Day – 26 March 2020</p> <p>Litter picks with Stevenage District Scouts – 28 March 2020</p> <p>Mayor’s Reception for Stevenage Community Trust and Stevenage Kadoma Link Association – 21 April 2020</p> <p>The Mayor also provided updates on the Community History Project and plans to mark the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>MAIN DEBATE - 2020/21 COUNCIL TAX AND GENERAL FUND AND CAPITAL BUDGETS</p>
	<p>The Main Debate related to item 4 on the agenda.</p> <p>The Leader then presented the 2020/2021 Budget, projected 2019/20 General Fund Budget and final proposals for the 2020/21 Council Tax and Council Tax Support Scheme. The Leader moved the Motion, recommendations of the Executive and the formal Council Tax Resolution that was circulated around the Chamber.</p> <p>Council agreed to an additional recommendation that officers report back on the feasibility and implications of allowing members to roll forward, within limits, their Local Community Budgets at the financial year end.</p> <p>After a full debate, a recorded vote* was taken and it was RESOLVED:</p> <p>1. That the following be approved:</p>

- a. the revised working revenue estimates for the year 2019/20 amounting to £9,678,680 and the revenue estimates for 2020/21 amounting to £9,069,830;
 - b. the contribution from balances totalling £924,606 in 2019/20;
 - c. the contribution from balances totalling £349,030 in 2020/21.
2. That it be noted that at its meeting on 22 January 2020 the Executive calculated the amount of 27,780.7 Band D equivalent properties as its council tax base for the year 2020/21 in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 made under Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by Section 74 of the Localism Act 2011.
3. That the following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2020/21 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by Section 74 of the Localism Act 2011:
- a. £82,599,746 Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2)(a) to (f) of the Act, less the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3)(a) to (d)
 - b. £76,611,145 Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3)(a) to (d) of the Act.
 - c. £5,988,601 Being the amount by which the aggregate at 3a above exceeds the aggregate at 3b above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year.
 - d. £215.57 Being the amount at 3c divided by the amount at 2 above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B (1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year
 - e. Valuation Bands

A	£ 143.71
B	£ 167.67
C	£ 191.62
D	£ 215.57
E	£ 263.47
F	£ 311.38
G	£ 359.28
H	£ 431.14

Being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at 3d. above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

4. a. That it be noted that for the year 2020/21 Hertfordshire County Council have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of the dwellings shown below:

Valuation Bands

	Basic Amount Of Council Tax	Adult Social Care Charge	2020/21 Council Tax
A	£ 860.82	£ 81.98	£ 942.80
B	£ 1,004.26	£ 95.67	£ 1,099.93
C	£ 1,147.75	£ 109.32	£ 1,257.07

D	£ 1,291.21	£ 122.99	£ 1,414.20
E	£ 1,578.16	£ 150.31	£ 1,728.47
F	£ 1,865.07	£ 177.66	£ 2,042.73
G	£ 2,152.03	£ 204.97	£ 2,357.00
H	£ 2,582.42	£ 245.98	£ 2,828.40

- b. That it be noted that for the year 2020/21 Hertfordshire Police Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and amended by Section 27 of the Police and Magistrates' Court Act 1994, for each of the categories of the dwellings shown below:

Valuation Bands

A	£ 132.00
B	£ 154.00
C	£ 176.00
D	£ 198.00
E	£ 242.00
F	£ 286.00
G	£ 330.00

H £ 396.00

5. That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 3e. and 4a. and b. above, the Council in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts for council tax for the year 2020/21 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Valuation Bands

A £1,218.51

B £1,421.60

C £1,624.69

D £1,827.77

E £2,233.94

F £2,640.11

G £3,046.28

H £3,655.54

6. That in accordance with Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992 it be determined that the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2020/21 is not excessive in accordance with principles approved by the Secretary of State under Section 52ZC having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 3e above.
7. That the updated position on the General Fund and the Risk Assessment of General Fund balances, be approved.

8. That a minimum level of General Fund reserves of £2,920,935, in line with the 2020/21 risk assessment of balances be approved.
9. That the contingency sum of £400,000 within which the Executive can approve supplementary estimates, be approved for 2020/21, (unchanged from 2019/20).
10. That the 2020/21 proposed Financial Security Options of £846,964 and including fees and charges of £117,490 be included in the final budget.
11. That the 2020/21 proposed Growth bids and pressures of £653,220 be approved
12. That 2020/21 business rate gains totalling £1.14Million above the baseline need be allocated as set out in paragraph 4.6.7 of report 4A.
13. That the 2020/21 Council Tax Support scheme is approved as set out in section 4.8 of report 4A.
14. That New Homes Bonus of £30,380 be transferred to the reserve to fund future potential shortfalls in funding.
15. That the advice of the Assistant Director (Finance and Estates) on the robustness of the draft budget and the adequacy of reserves as set out in Appendix D of report 4A, be noted.
16. That the comments from Overview and Scrutiny be noted.
17. That the final 2020/21 General Fund Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix C of report 4B be approved.
18. That the final 2020/21 HRA Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix D of report 4B be approved.
19. That the updated forecast of resources as detailed in Appendix C (General Fund) and Appendix D (HRA) to report 4B be approved.

20. That the Council's investment strategy for non-treasury assets as shown at section 3.2 of report 4B be approved.
21. That the approach to resourcing the General Fund capital programme as outlined in report 4B be approved.
22. That the actions required to ensure the General Fund programme is funded as outlined in paragraphs 4.9.3-4.9.8 of report 4B be noted.
23. That the approach and progress on Local Asset Reviews be noted together with the target to realise receipts for 2020/21.
24. That the growth bids now included in the Capital Strategy (Appendix A to report 4B) be approved.
25. That the return of Right to Buy one for one receipts as outlined in section 4.14 of report 4B be noted.
26. That the 2020/21 de-minimis expenditure limit as set out in section 4.15 of report 4B be approved.
27. That the 2020/21 contingency allowances as set out in section 4.16 of report 4B be approved.
28. That the work undertaken by LFSG on behalf of the Executive in reviewing and challenging the General Fund Capital Strategy be noted.
29. That officers report back on the feasibility and implications of allowing members to roll forward, within limits, their Local Community Budgets at the financial year end.

*Details of the recorded vote will be published in the Minutes of the meeting.

5	PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS	
	None.	
6	QUESTIONS FROM THE YOUTH COUNCIL	
	<p>Council received four questions from the Youth Council. The responses to the four questions were circulated at the Meeting and are appended to the Minutes.</p> <p>The Youth Council representative did not ask supplementary questions.</p>	
7	QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC	
	None.	
8	LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S UPDATE	
	<p>The Leader of the Opposition asked about the Council's plans to contribute towards the Labour Party's 2019 general election pledge to plant two billion trees by 2040. In response, the Leader of the Council acknowledged that planting trees across the world was one of the most effective means of tackling the climate crisis. Councillor Taylor indicated that the Council would work with communities, business and other partners on the climate change agenda.</p> <p>In light of the current outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), the Leader of the Council invited Strategic Director (RP) to give Members an update on global and local perspectives of the outbreak. The World Health Organisation (WHO) had declared the outbreak a public health emergency of international concern and the UK had raised the risk to from low to moderate. Central government and local authorities were planning for all scenarios.</p>	

The Herts Strategic Co-ordinating Group was now holding weekly meetings to monitor the situation and agree actions to be taken. Resilience officers across Hertfordshire were monitoring the situation daily. An officer working group had been established to co-ordinate the Council's response to a potential coronavirus outbreak within the town. General advice had already been issued to Members and SBC staff. Regular updates based on the latest Public Health and government travel advice would be provided.

The Leader of the Council welcomed the announcement by the Health Secretary that staff self-isolating due to coronavirus should get sick pay. Members recommended that links to government advice on the coronavirus outbreak be added to the Council website.

9	NOTICE OF MOTIONS	
----------	--------------------------	--

	None.	
--	-------	--

10	QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO COMMITTEE CHAIRS/PORTFOLIO HOLDERS	
-----------	---	--

Council received four questions. The responses to the four questions were circulated at the Meeting and are appended to the Minutes.

A. Question from Councillor Alexander Farquharson

In response to a supplementary question from Cllr Farquharson, Cllr Sharon Taylor stated that the government's austerity measures and the introduction of Universal Credit had driven some vulnerable residents into poverty.

B. Question from Councillor Jody Hanafin

Cllr Lloyd Briscoe advised Cllr Hanafin that no timescales had been set for a new Post Office in Old Town High Street noting

the autonomy of Post Office Limited in this matter.

C. Question from Councillor Graham Lawrence

Councillor Lawrence sought clarification on whether the Council had considered installing electric vehicles (EV) charging points in recently completed schemes. Cllr John Gardner confirmed that the Council had held discussions with developers regarding EV charging points and existing and future housing developments. The Portfolio Holder also stressed that further government funding was vital for these projects if Climate Change targets were to be met.

D. Question from Councillor Margaret Notley

In response to a supplementary question, Cllr Briscoe indicated that there was no indication of a significant increase in rail passenger numbers in the short term. The Leader assured Members that extra disabled parking spaces would be available after the planned construction of a multi-storey car park at the railway station.

11

UPDATE FROM SCRUTINY CHAIRS

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee reported that due to other business the review of the Council's scrutiny arrangements was still in progress.

The Chair of the Community Select Committee informed Council that since the last meeting, the Committee had met as a Group to advise the Portfolio Holder on Damp and Condensation Policy and Aids & Adaptations Policy. The Chair invited Members to submit topics for consideration in the work programme for 2020/21.

The Chair of the Environment and Economy Select Committee also invited Members to submit topics for consideration in the work programme for 2020/21. He informed Council that the Committee was at the fact-finding stage of the Neighbourhood Centres review and had commenced with site visits to inform the approach to be taken to the review.

12	ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY INCLUDING PRUDENTIAL CODE INDICATORS 2020/21	
	<p>It was moved, seconded and RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Treasury Management Strategy be approved 2. That the prudential indicators for 2020/21 be approved 3. That the minimum revenue provision policy be approved 4. That an increase to the maximum level of long term (invested for longer than 12 months) investments from £10Million to £20Million when cash balances are higher than £30Million be approved 	
13	MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2020/21 (INCLUDING IRP REPORT)	
	<p>It was moved, seconded and RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the report of the Independent Panel be noted and that findings form the basis of the formal Members' Allowances Scheme and the allowances paid the Mayor and Deputy Mayor 2. That in accordance with the comments of the Panel regarding payment of carers' allowances, the scheme be extended to accept payments to relatives who do not live in the same household as the Councillor. In all circumstances receipts must be submitted 3. That in the light of the report of the Independent Panel the draft formal Scheme shown at Appendix B to this report be approved for 2020/2021 	

	4. That following the recommendation from the Independent Panel allowances be increased in line with future staff pay wards covered by the terms and conditions of the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) once known and as recommended by the Panel. This indexation to apply until 2024 subject to any further Independent Panel reports
14	PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2020/2021
	It was moved, seconded and RESOLVED : 1. That the Pay Policy Statement set out in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and the Local Government Transparency Code 2015, as attached at Appendix 1 to this report, be approved 2. That the pay policy is placed on the Council's web site and that a notice of the policy is published in the next edition of Chronicle
15	LICENSING ACT 2003 STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES/POLICY
	It was moved, seconded and RESOLVED that Council adopts the proposed Stevenage Borough Council Licensing Act Statement of Policy 2020-2025 as attached at appendix A of the report.
16	AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES
	It was moved, seconded and RESOLVED that the Draft Minutes of the Audit Committee of 3 February 2020 are noted.