

NOTICE OF DECISIONS

Meeting:	Executive	
Date:	Wednesday, 17 January 2024	
Place:	Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage	
Members Present:	Councillors:	Jeannette Thomas (Vice-Chair in the Chair), Sandra Barr, Lloyd Briscoe, Jackie Hollywell, Loraine Rossati and Simon Speller.

THE DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN OF ANY OF THE DECISIONS BELOW IS FRIDAY, 26 JANUARY 2024. SUBJECT TO THERE BEING NO CALL-IN THE ATTACHED DECISIONS MAY BE IMPLEMENTED WITH EFFECT FROM MONDAY, 29 JANUARY 2024.

1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
	<p>Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Richard Henry (Chair) and Mrs Joan Lloyd.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p> <p>At this juncture, the Chair congratulated Sarah Pateman (Head of Community Advice and Support) on being awarded an OBE in the recent New Year's Honours List.</p>	
2	MINUTES - 13 DECEMBER 2023	
	<p>It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 13 December 2023 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.</p>	
3	MINUTES OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND SELECT COMMITTEES	
	<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 – 22 November 2023 Environment & Economy Select Committee – 12 December 2023 Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 19 December 2023</p>	
4	<p>STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN - MAKING STEVENAGE EVEN BETTER (2024 - 2027)</p>	<p>R. Protheroe S. Norman</p>
	<p>The Executive considered a report in respect of the proposed Stevenage Borough Council Corporate Plan – Making Stevenage Even Better (2024 – 2027).</p> <p>In response to a Member’s question regarding the relatively low level of public response to the consultation on the draft document (72 responses), the Strategic Director (RP) referred to the Consultation Report at Appendix B and commented that the draft Plan had been informed by feedback obtained from over 3,000 residents via the Residents Survey (2021), the Tenants Survey (2021) and the Co-operative Neighbourhoods Resident Proptech Survey (2023) amongst other engagement mechanisms which were used.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the five strategic priorities and three cross-cutting themes of Making Stevenage Even Better Corporate Plan (Appendix A to the report) be agreed, with final sign off delegated to the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Leader of the Council. 2. That the Making Stevenage Even Better Corporate Plan be brought to Full Council in February 2024. 3. That the Making Stevenage Even Better Corporate Plan be communicated with residents, local community groups and partners, as set out in Paragraph 4.11 of the report. 	

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.
Other Options considered: As contained in report.

5 FINAL HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET SETTING AND RENT REPORT 2024/25

**C. Fletcher
B. Moldon**

The Executive considered a report in respect of the final Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget and Rent Setting for 2024/25.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following proposals be recommended to Council on 24 January 2024:

1. That Housing Revenue Account (HRA) dwelling rents be increased (week commencing 1 April 2024) by 7.7%. This equates to an average increase of £8.56 for social rents, £13.30 for affordable rents and £10.09 for Low Start Shared Ownership homes per week (based on a 52-week year).
2. That the 2024/25 service charges be approved, as set out in Paragraph 4.2 of the report.
3. That the HRA budget for 2024/25, as set out in Appendix A to the report and as revised from the January 2024 draft budget report (as explained in Paragraph 4.8.1 of the report), be approved.
4. That the 2024/25 growth options, as set out in Section 4.4 of the report, be approved.
5. That the 2024/25 Fees and Charges, as set out in Appendix B to the report, be approved.
6. That the minimum levels of balances for 2024/25, as shown in Appendix C to the report, be approved.
7. That the Rent Increase Equalities Impact Assessments, appended to the report in Appendix D, be noted.
8. That the contingency sum of £400,000, within which the Executive can approve supplementary estimates, for 2024/25 (unchanged from 2023/24) be approved.

	<p>9. That the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out in Paragraph 4.10.2 of the report, be noted.</p> <p>10. That key partners and other stakeholders be consulted and their views considered as part of the 2024/25 budget setting process.</p> <p><i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i></p> <p><i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i></p>	
6	DRAFT GENERAL FUND AND COUNCIL TAX SETTINGS 2024/25	C. Fletcher B. Moldon
	<p>The Executive considered a report in respect of the Council’s draft General Fund, Council Tax Support Scheme and draft proposals for the 2024/25 Council Tax.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the 2023/24 revised net expenditure on the General Fund of £13,272,960 be approved, as set out in Paragraph 4.10.1 of the report. 2. That the draft General Fund Budget for 2024/25 of £11,427,090 be proposed for consultation purposes, with a contribution from balances of £50,494 and a Band D Council Tax of £239.26 (assuming a 2.99% increase). 3. That the updated position on the General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), as summarised in Section 4.12 of the report, be noted. 4. That the minimum level of General Fund reserves of £3,537,794, in line with the 2024/25 risk assessment of balances, as shown at Appendix C to the report, be approved. 5. That the contingency sum of £400,000 within which the Executive can approve supplementary estimates, be approved for 2024/25 (reflecting the level of balances available above the minimum amount). 	

6. That the 2024/25 Balancing the Budget options, as set out in Section 4.7 and Appendix A to the report, totalling £1,223,852 and £95,063 for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) respectively, be included into the Council's budget setting processes for consideration by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
7. That the events options, as set out in Paragraph 4.7.4 of the report, be approved for 2024/25.
8. That the Growth options included in Section 4.8 of the report be approved for inclusion in the 2024/25 General Fund (£167,120) and HRA (£47,265) budgets.
9. That the pressures identified in Sections 4.2 and 4.9 of the report be noted.
10. That the use of £200,000 of Business Rates in the base budget be approved, and any gains above that be used only once realised, and be ring fenced for use to maintain the Council's financial resilience.
11. That the use of 'pooling gains' of £220,000, as set out in Paragraph 4.4.7 of the report, be approved.
12. That the decisions taken on Resolutions 2 – 11 above be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration, in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework Rules in the Council's Constitution.
13. That the Equalities Impact Assessment appended to the report in Appendix D be noted.
14. That key partners and other stakeholders be consulted and their views considered as part of the 2024/25 budget setting process.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

7	DRAFT CAPITAL STRATEGY 2023/24 - 2028/29	C. Fletcher B. Moldon
The Executive considered a report in respect of the draft Capital Strategy for 2023/24 – 2028/29.		

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the Revised General Fund Capital Budget for 2024/25 of £33.6Million, as set out in Appendix B to the report, be proposed for consultation purposes.
2. That the Draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Budget for 2024/25 of £54.9Million, as set out in Appendix C to the report, be proposed for consultation purposes.
3. That the updated forecast of resources 2024/25 be approved, subject to the consultation process (set out in the report at Section 4.4 – General Fund, and Section 4.10 – HRA).
4. That the General Fund capital budget re-profiling of £2.6Million from 2023/24 to future years be approved (as set out in Paragraph 4.1.4 of the report).
5. That the General Fund capital budget savings (as set out in Paragraphs 4.1.3 and 4.1.5 of the report) be approved.
6. That the approach to resourcing the General Fund capital programme, as outlined in the report (Paragraph 4.4), be approved.
7. That the General Fund growth bids identified for inclusion in the Capital Strategy (as set out in Paragraph 4.2 and in Appendix A to the report) be approved in principle.
8. That the HRA budget increases identified for inclusion in the Capital Strategy (as set out in Section 4.9 and Appendix C to the report) be approved.
9. That the approach to resourcing the HRA capital programme, as outlined in the report (Paragraph 4.10), be approved.
10. That HRA capital budget re-profiling of £1.45Million from 2023/24 to future years be approved (as set out in Paragraph 4.9.3 of the report).
11. That the HRA growth bid (IT £21,000) identified for inclusion in the Capital Strategy (as set out in Paragraph 4.9.4 of the

	<p>report) be approved in principle.</p> <p>12. That the 2024/25 de-minimis expenditure limit (set out in Section 4.11 of the report) be increased from £7,500 to £9,999.</p> <p>13. That up to £500,000 of any revenue surplus in any year can be allocated to the capital reserve to support capital expenditure be approved.</p> <p><i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i></p> <p><i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i></p>	
8	URGENT PART I BUSINESS	
	None.	
9	EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC	
	<p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	

10	PART II MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 13 DECEMBER 2023	
	It was RESOLVED that the Part II Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 13 December 2023 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.	
11	ACTIVITY PROPOSALS FOR FAIRLANDS VALLEY PARK SAILING CENTRE AND MAIN LAKE	G. Caine
	<p>The Executive considered a Part II report in respect of proposed operational arrangements for Fairlands Valley Sailing Centre and Main Lake.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED that the recommendations set out in the report be approved.</p> <p><i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i></p> <p><i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i></p>	
12	URGENT PART II BUSINESS	
	None.	