

NOTICE OF DECISIONS -

Meeting:	Cabinet	
Date:	Wednesday, 24 July 2024	
Place:	Council Chamber	
Members Present:	Councillors:	Richard Henry (Chair), Jeannette Thomas, Sandra Barr, Lloyd Briscoe, Jackie Hollywell, Conor McGrath, Loraine Rossati and Simon Speller

THE DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN OF ANY OF THE DECISIONS BELOW IS **Insert Date.**
SUBJECT TO THERE BEING NO CALL-IN THE ATTACHED DECISIONS MAY BE IMPLEMENTED WITH EFFECT FROM **Insert Date.**

1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
	<p>There were no apologies for absence and no declarations of interest.</p> <p><i>Reason for Decision:</i></p> <p><i>Other Options considered:</i></p>	
2	MINUTES - 5 JUNE 2024	
	<p>It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 5 June 2024 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.</p> <p><i>Reason for Decision:</i></p> <p><i>Other Options considered:</i></p>	
3	MINUTES OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY AND SELECT COMMITTEES	
	<p>The Cabinet thanked the Members of the Scrutiny Committees for their work particularly in relation to the focus on fly tipping and graffiti removal and the link to Biodiversity issues.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED that the following Minutes of meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees be noted –</p>	

Overview & Scrutiny Committee 11 June 2024
Community Select Committee 13 June 2024

Reason for Decision:
Other Options considered:

4 RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY AND FRAMEWORK

The Cabinet was presented with a report including a pre-consultation draft Resident Engagement Strategy along with the supporting Resident Engagement Framework and Scrutiny Implementation Plan. It was noted that the Strategy and supporting documents had been developed to ensure that the Council could meet the duties placed upon it by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH), to deliver effective engagement and be able to demonstrate that residents had a range of meaningful opportunities to scrutinise, influence and shape the services that they received.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing thanked the previous Portfolio Holder for Housing for her work in progressing this matter.

Officers agreed to follow up the suggestion of an additional KPI focussing on Member Engagement with discussions with the relevant Portfolio Holders.

It was **RESOLVED:**

- 1 That it be noted that the duty placed on the Council to provide a broad range of resident engagement and influencing opportunities that 'give genuine consideration of tenants' views and providing equitable opportunity to be involved in influencing and scrutinising strategies, policies and services and to foster a strong organisational culture of fairness, courtesy and respect where tenants are listened to and that they trust their landlord.
- 2 That the previous resident engagement delivered through the Council's Co-operative Neighbourhood Model be acknowledged.

	<p>3 That the draft Resident Engagement Strategy 2024-2027, as seen at Appendix A be approved and adopted.</p> <p>4 That delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director (RP) after consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing to approve the Resident Framework of Engagement and the Scrutiny Implementation Plan after further consultation with residents.</p> <p><i>Reason for Decision:</i> <i>Other Options considered:</i></p>
<p>5</p>	<p>HOUSING ANNUAL REPORT</p>
	<p>Cabinet received the Housing Annual Report which provided an overview of Council Housing performance between 2023-2024, including the results of the Tenant Satisfaction Measure (TSM) survey results that the council must publish, as prescribed by the Regulator for Social Housing.</p> <p>Cabinet was also presented with the Housing Complaints and Service Improvement report, which the Council was obligated, by the Housing Ombudsman Service, to publish annually.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <p>1. That the Housing Annual Report as seen at Appendix A be approved, and the planned measures to improve</p>

performance be endorsed.

2. That delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director (RP) to approve after consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing a fully designed ‘tenant friendly’ Annual Report and Housing Strategy that will set out the priorities of the housing service over the next 12 months. Both documents will be published in September 2024.
3. That the Housing Complaints and Service Improvement Report, including three Housing Ombudsman maladministration judgements from 2023/24 and the actions taken by the Council in response, as seen in Appendix B be noted.

Reason for Decision:

Other Options considered:

6

HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY 2025 - 2030

Cabinet received a report which presented a new Stevenage Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy for 2025 to 2030.

Cabinet welcomed the Strategy in particular the focus on addressing the increase in the number of people in the Council’s temporary accommodation along with the aim of eradicating rough sleeping within Stevenage. Members expressed the importance of ‘wrap around’ support ensuring that appropriate advice and guidance was available for clients.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the draft Stevenage Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2025 to 2030 be received.
2. That the public consultation on the Strategy commence during August 2024, for not less than 8 weeks.

3. That the final Strategy be reported to the Cabinet for approval in November and published in December 2024.

Reason for Decision:

Other Options considered:

7

TENANCY POLICY

Cabinet was presented with a report setting out a revised Tenancy Policy and which included a list of associated Housing Management and Property Services policies and strategies that the Council intended to update and deliver this financial year, in line with the 2023 Social Housing Regulation Act.

Members were advised that the Tenant Handbook was being refreshed and would be available in different formats to ensure ease of accessibility for Tenants.

It was **RESOLVED:**

5 That the duty placed on the Council via the Tenancy Standard to produce and publish clear and accessible policies related to key housing management functions and the on-going work to bring the Council's housing policies in line with new Regulations be noted.

6 That the content and the adoption of the draft Tenancy Policy 2024-2026, as seen in Appendix A be approved.

7 That the Strategic Director (RP), after consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, be given delegated authority to make minor updates and changes to this policy arising from new legislation.

Reason for Decision:

Other Options considered:

8	RESPONSIVE REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE POLICY	
	<p>Cabinet was presented with a pre-consultation Responsive Repairs and Maintenance Policy. It was noted that this policy would be subject to further consultation with tenants and leaseholders ahead of a final version being presented to Cabinet for approval later in the year.</p> <p>The Portfolio Holder thanked the Community Select Committee for their review of the Service.</p> <p>Members noted the significant challenges for the Council particularly in relation to fencing repairs and the rise in material costs which resulted in added financial and operational pressures. The importance of providing appropriate service for those tenants needing additional support and the Council being responsive to their needs was acknowledged.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. That the draft Responsive Repairs and Maintenance Policy, which will be subject to further tenant and leaseholder consultation, for no less than 6 weeks be approved. 5. That the final Responsive Repairs and Maintenance Policy be presented to the Cabinet for approval in Quarter 3, 2024/25. <p><i>Reason for Decision:</i> <i>Other Options considered:</i></p>	
9	CORPORATE PERFORMANCE SUITE 2024/25, PRODUCTIVITY PLAN 2024/25 AND ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24	
	<p>Cabinet were presented with the Council's Annual Report which outlined key achievements across the range of Council services and the Future Town Future Council (FTFC) programme in 2023/24. The report also summarised the key priorities for 2024/25 under the new Making Stevenage Even Better Corporate Plan which would inform the focus of quarterly reporting on the MSEB programme this year.</p> <p>Members thanked Officers for the new approach to setting out the Annual Report which clearly highlighted the Council's achievements and</p>	

priorities.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the significant progress in the delivery of the Future Town, Future Council programme as set out in the Annual Report 23/24 (Appendix A), be noted and agreed, and that a fully designed version of the report will be shared with the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council for agreement post Cabinet.
2. That the draft Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Corporate Performance Suite (Appendix B), MSEB Plan(s) on a Page (Appendix C) and Productivity Plan (Appendix D) for 2024/25 be agreed.

Reason for Decision:

Other Options considered:

10	4TH QUARTER MONITORING REPORT GENERAL FUND, HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT, CAPITAL AND GROUP COMPANIES	
	<p>Cabinet received a report setting out the 2023/24 Outturn position for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, Capital spending and the Council's Subsidiary Companies. The report sought approval for changes to 2024/25 working budgets, including an additional £2.434Million for the HRA which would also require Council approval.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <p>General Fund</p>	

1. That the 2023/24 actual General Fund net expenditure of £13.397Million be noted, subject to the 2023/24 audit of the Statement of Accounts.
2. That the 2023/24 actual core resources (government grants, business rates and council tax) of £12.747Million be noted, subject to the 2023/24 audit of the Statement of Accounts (paragraph 4.4).
3. That carry forward/spend requests totalling £535,600 be approved for the General Fund (paragraph 4.1.3 and 4.3).
4. That the Transfer to reserves of £1.902Million be approved for the General Fund (paragraph 4.7.1).
5. That Members note the transfer from allocated reserves in 2024/25 of £78,628 as detailed in paragraphs 4.6.1 - 4.6.3
6. That the increase in the new tenant administration fee on allotments from £15 to £25 with effect from September 2024 be approved for the General Fund (paragraph 4.6.6).
7. That the increase in the deposit for outbuildings on allotment plots, from £30 to £50 with effect from September 2024 be approved for the General Fund (paragraph 4.6.6).
8. That the introduced charge for the woodchips delivered to the allotment sites with effect from September 2024 be approved for the General Fund (paragraph 4.6.6).

Housing Revenue Account

1. That the 2023/24 actual in year HRA surplus of £106,271 be noted, subject to the audit of the Statement of Accounts.
2. That a carry forward requests for decant costs totalling £47,350 (paragraph 4.11.1) **be** approved.
3. That the 2024/25 budget pressure of £2,434,050 detailed at paragraph 4.11.2 and in Appendix C, be recommended to Council for approval on 31 July 2024.

Capital Programme

1. That the General Fund capital budget re-phasing of £4.4Million from 2023/24 to future years and that £1.2Million be re-phased from 2026/27 to 2024/25 be approved.
2. That the Housing Revenue Account capital budget re-phasing of £3.2Million from 2023/24 to future years be approved.
3. That the 2024/25 virement and in year growth funded from ringfences receipts detailed on paragraph **Error! Reference source not found.** of the report be approved.

Council's Subsidiary Companies

1. That Members note the 2023/24 outturn position for the Council's subsidiary companies as set out in paragraphs 4.20 to 4.25.
2. That additional funding for the Building Control Company be approved in principle and the decision delegated to the Strategic Director (CFO) after consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Transformation (paragraph 4.24.3).

Reason for Decision:

Other Options considered:

11	URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS	
	None.	

	<p><i>Reason for Decision:</i> <i>Other Options considered:</i></p>
12	EXCLUSION OF THE 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. <p><i>Reason for Decision:</i> <i>Other Options considered:</i></p>
13	MINUTES - 5 JUNE 2024
	<p>It was RESOLVED that the Part II Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 5 June 2024 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.</p> <p><i>Reason for Decision:</i> <i>Other Options considered:</i></p>

14	SOCIAL HOUSING DECARBONISATION PROGRAMME CONTRACT AWARD	
	<p>The Executive considered a Part II report in respect of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Programme Contract Award.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED that the recommendations set out in the report be approved.</p> <p><i>Reason for Decision:</i> <i>Other Options considered:</i></p>	
15	TOWNS FUND - SKILLS AND ENTERPRISE	
	<p>The Executive considered a Part II report in respect of the Towns Fund – Skills and Enterprise.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED that the recommendations set out in the report be approved.</p> <p><i>Reason for Decision:</i> <i>Other Options considered:</i></p>	
16	INVESTING IN THE TOWN CENTRE ASSETS	
	<p>The Executive considered a Part II report in respect of Investing in the Town Centre Assets.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED that the recommendations set out in the report be approved.</p>	

	<i>Reason for Decision:</i> <i>Other Options considered:</i>	
17	URGENT PART II BUSINESS	
	None. <i>Reason for Decision:</i> <i>Other Options considered:</i>	
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