

NOTICE OF DECISIONS

Meeting:	Executive	
Date:	Wednesday, 18 November 2020	
Place:	Virtual (via Zoom)	
Members Present:	Councillors:	Sharon Taylor OBE CC (Chair), Lloyd Briscoe, Rob Broom, John Gardner, Richard Henry, Jackie Hollywell and Jeannette Thomas.
Also Present:	Councillors Robin Parker CC and Simon Speller (observers).	

**THE DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN OF ANY OF THE DECISIONS BELOW IS 27 NOVEMBER 2020.
SUBJECT TO THERE BEING NO CALL-IN THE ATTACHED DECISIONS MAY BE IMPLEMENTED WITH EFFECT FROM 27 NOVEMBER 2020.**

1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
	Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs Joan Lloyd (Vice-Chair) and Phil Bibby CC (observer). There were no declarations of interest.	
2	MINUTES - 6 OCTOBER 2020	
	It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 6 October 2020 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.	
3	MINUTES OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND SELECT COMMITTEES	
	In relation to the Minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 23 September 2020, and in the light of the Government announcement regarding the cessation of the production of petrol and diesel driven vehicles by 2030, the Leader advised that increased Government funding would be required for the creation of a sufficient number of additional of charging points for electric vehicles both nationally and throughout the Borough.	

In respect of the Minutes of the meeting of the Community Select Committee held on 21 October 2020, the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People, Leisure & Culture commented that a Portfolio Holder Advisory Group meeting would be arranged in the New Year to consider the Leisure Management Contract procurement process. It was intended that other sports, leisure and voluntary sector stakeholders would be invited to attend this Group. In addition, the Portfolio Holder would be obtaining feedback and views from community groups involved in sports and leisure activities.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the following meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees be noted –

Environment & Economy Select Committee – 22 September 2020
Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 23 September 2020
Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 13 October 2020
Community Select Committee – 21 October 2020

4

COVID-19 UPDATE

**R Protheroe
x2938**

The Executive considered a verbal update/presentation led by the Strategic Director (RP) on the Covid-19 pandemic.

The following issues were raised by Members during the presentation:

- The Strategic Director (RP) was requested to ascertain from the Local Resilience Forum whether or not there was a targeted Covid suppression plan for Stevenage, and to share the answer with Executive Members;
- The Strategic Director (RP) was asked if there was an answer to why the actual number of daily Covid-19 tests being administered nationally was significantly below the daily testing capacity;
- The Leader undertook to raise the matter of statistics regarding cases of long Covid amongst children at the next Local Outbreak Management Board meeting;

- It was noted that, on or around 1 December 2020, a site in Stevenage may be one of the first Covid mass vaccination centres;
- In relation to the issue of those without transport being unable to attend mass vaccination centres, the Commercial & Licensing Manager undertook to raise this matter with the county-wide Vaccination Cell;
- A number of mechanisms for Local Enterprise Partnership funding support for businesses were outlined, although these were reliant on the businesses contributing some funding themselves;
- In reply to the question as to whether a business had to occupy premises in order to qualify for support funding, the Strategic Director (CF) stated that this was the case for Local Restriction Grants, but that officers were looking at how businesses excluded from previous financial support packages could be included in SBC's discretionary support scheme; and
- The Communications Team was requested to arrange for a message to be conveyed to the public with regard to the possibility that, due to officer time being focussed on issues relating to the pandemic, responses to some complaints may not be dealt with as speedily as in the past.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Covid-19 update be noted.

5	BIODIVERSITY SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD): PUBLIC CONSULTATION	D Hodbod X2579
<p>The Executive considered a report seeking the approval of the draft Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for public consultation.</p> <p>In response to Members' questions, officers replied as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) – if a development had a direct impact on a SSSI then the Council could request a biodiversity financial contribution from the developer. If the required biodiversity improvements could not be 		

provided on-site, then the financial contribution would be added to the biodiversity funding “bank” in order to provide improvements off-site (which could include the maintenance and enhancement of SSSIs); and

- Biodiversity SPD exemptions – the exemption relating to nationally significant infrastructure included projects such as HS2 or major motorway expansion schemes.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the content of the draft Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) be noted.
2. That delegated powers be granted to the Assistant Director (Planning & Regulation), following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Regeneration, to make minor amendments as are necessary in the final preparation of the draft SPD prior to its consultation.
3. That the draft Biodiversity SPD be published for consultation from 30 November 2020 to 25 January 2021.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

6	DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD): PUBLIC CONSULTATION	D Hodbod X2579
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The Executive considered a report seeking the approval of the draft Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for public consultation.

In reply to a Member’s question regarding the balance between developer and community interests in the operation of the SPD, the Principal Planning Officer stated that the Council invariably collected developer contributions on behalf of other infrastructure providers (such as the County Council). It would therefore be imperative that these providers robustly evidenced/justified their requirements to developers in seeking financial contributions.

	<p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the content of the draft Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) be noted. 2. That delegated powers be granted to the Assistant Director (Planning & Regulation), following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Regeneration, to make minor amendments as are necessary in the final preparation of the draft SPD prior to its consultation. 3. That the draft Developer Contributions SPD be published for consultation from 30 November 2020 to 25 January 2021. <p><i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i> <i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i></p>	
7	HERTFORDSHIRE GROWTH BOARD - PROPOSED FUTURE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS	S Banks x2331
	<p>The Executive considered a report seeking approval to proposed future governance arrangements for the Hertfordshire Growth Board, including the establishment of a Growth Board Joint Committee and Growth Board Scrutiny Committee as formal joint committees under the Local Government Act 1972 and Local Government Act 2000.</p> <p>In response to a number of Members' questions, the Borough Solicitor replied as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fact that the Growth Board Joint Committee would be a county-wide body considering large infrastructure projects may lessen the likelihood of schemes being called-in by the Government or being subject to holding directions, subject to the usual check and balances in planning processes; and • No details had been provided as to the operation of the Advisory Sub-Groups mentioned in the report, although there was the possibility that these could include the existing North-East & Central and South-West Area Growth Corridor Boards. <p>The Executive supported an addition to Recommendation 2.2.4 in the report, requiring that the nomination of a Councillor and substitute to the Growth Board Scrutiny Committee should be delegated to the Leader, in consultation with the Chair of the</p>	

Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the establishment of the Hertfordshire Growth Board Joint Committee as a Joint Committee (inaugural meeting being planned to take place in January 2021) be agreed.
2. That the Leader of the Council be nominated as the Council's representative on the Hertfordshire Growth Board Joint Committee with delegated authority to appoint a substitute representative as required.
3. That Council be recommended to agree to the establishment of the Hertfordshire Growth Board Joint Committee as a Joint Committee (inaugural meeting being planned to take place in January 2021).
4. That Council be recommended to adopt the Hertfordshire Growth Board Integrated Governance Framework into the Council's Constitution.
5. That Council be recommended to note that Leader of the Council is nominated as the Council's representative on the Hertfordshire Growth Board Joint Committee with delegated authority to appoint a substitute representative as required.
6. That the Council be recommended to delegate authority to the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, to nominate a Councillor and a substitute as its representative on the Hertfordshire Growth Board Scrutiny Committee (nominees must not be a Member of the Executive).

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

8	MID YEAR REVIEW OF 2020/21 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY	B White x2515
	The Executive considered a report with regard to the Mid Year Review of the 2020/21 Treasury Management Strategy.	

The Strategic Director (CF) advised that the Audit Committee, at its meeting held on 17 November 2020, had considered the report. The Committee had asked questions regarding why the Amundi Money Market Fund had closed, and about the level of self-financing borrowing costs for the Housing Revenue Account. The £200M of borrowing referred to in the latter question took place in 2012 and had cost SBC in the region of £6.5M a year to finance.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That Council be recommended to approve the 2020/21 Treasury Management Mid Year review.
2. That Council be recommended to approve the latest Countries for investment list (Appendix D to the report).
3. That the updated authorised and operational borrowing limits be approved (as set out in Paragraph 4.4.7 of the report).
4. That comments from the Audit Committee and Executive be incorporated into the report to Council on 16 December 2020.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

9	HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE (2020/21 -2024/25)	C Fletcher X2933
<p>The Executive considered a report in respect of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Medium Term Financial Strategy update 2020/21 – 2024/25.</p> <p>The Leader advised that she would be continuing to raise at national level the imbalance that there was no Covid-related Government financial support for Housing Revenue Accounts (ie. for those Councils with their own housing stock).</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the change in the Medium Term Financial Strategy principles, as outlined in Paragraph 4.1.5 of the report, be 		

approved.

2. That, for modelling purposes, the HRA 2021/22 rents will increase by 1.5% (based on the formula of CPI+1%, with September 2020 CPI at 0.5%).
3. That the updated inflation assumptions used in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (as set out in Section 4.2 of the report) be approved.
4. That a HRA Financial Security Target of £878,000 be approved for the period 2021/22 – 2023/24 (as set out in Paragraph 4.9.8 of the report).
5. That the approach to Financial Security, as set out in Section 4.9 of the report, be approved.
6. That an amount of £100,000 for 2021/22 and 2022/23 be approved for inclusion in the budget setting process as a Transformation Fund, to help deliver the Financial Security Target (as referred to in Paragraph 4.9.10 of the report).
7. That the HRA Covid impacts and 2nd Quarter changes to the HRA, as outlined in Sections 4.3 and 4.4 of the report, be approved.
8. That the financial impact of Covid in 2020/21 and future years be noted.
9. That the Leader's Financial Security Group oversee the development of the 2021/22 – 2023/24 savings package.
10. That the Medium Term Financial Strategy be regularly updated to for any material financial pressures so forecasts are updated and be re-presented to the Executive for approval.
11. That public consultation be commissioned in line with the requirements of the Council's Consultation and Engagement Strategy.
12. That the Trade Unions and staff be consulted on the key messages contained within the Medium Term Financial Strategies and more specifically when drawing up any proposals where there is a risk of redundancy.

	<p><i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i> <i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i></p>	
10	<p>SECOND QUARTER REVENUE MONITORING REPORT 2020/21 - GENERAL FUND</p>	<p>K Cousins x2383</p>
<p>The Executive considered a report with regard to Second Quarter General Fund Revenue Monitoring 2020/21.</p> <p>The Strategic Director (CF) drew attention to the fact that the losses outlined in the report related to Quarter 2 of 2020/21 (July to September 2020) and therefore did not include any amounts related to the current second Covid-19 lockdown.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the 2020/21 2nd Quarter net decrease in General Fund expenditure of £30,000 be approved. 2. That the net Covid budget pressures of £2,132,360 be noted, and the amount ring-fenced in the General Fund to ensure resources are available for 2020/21 if no further funding is forthcoming from the Government (other than that set out in Paragraph 4.1.20 of the report). 3. That it be noted that cumulative changes made to the General Fund net budget remains within the £400,000 increase variation limit delegated to the Executive, as set out in Paragraph 4.1.21 of the report. 4. That it be noted that the 2021/22 ongoing net pressure of £205,000 will be incorporated into the Budget setting process, and that further ongoing pressures identified as risks within the report will be determined and incorporated within the General Fund budget setting process. <p><i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i> <i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i></p>		

11	SECOND QUARTER GENERAL FUND CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT 2020/21	B White x2515
<p>The Executive considered a report in respect of Second Quarter General Fund Capital Monitoring 2020/21.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Council be recommended to approve the budget increase to the 2020/21 General Fund Capital Programme arising from the additional funding of £7.4Million received from the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), as identified in Paragraph 4.1.4 of the report, as these exceed the Executive's delegated limit, with the net increase in 2020/21 expenditure being £6.4Million, as summarised in Table One, Paragraph 4.1.1 of the report. 2. That the General Fund net increase (arising from slippage) of capital expenditure of £1.0Million in 2021/22, also as summarised in Table One, Paragraph 4.1.1 of the report, be approved. <p><i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i> <i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i></p>		
12	URGENT PART I BUSINESS	T Pike x2288
<p>The Chair had accepted an urgent item of business in respect of an update regarding the SG1 planning application, upon which the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government had placed a holding direction following a representation from the Stevenage MP.</p> <p>The Strategic Director (TP) advised that the application had been granted permission by the Planning & Development Committee at its meeting held on 20 October 2020. That decision had been made following a recommendation from Planning Officers and with the benefit of the opinions of a considerable number of expert advisors. In terms of the policy context, the Stevenage Local Plan had a strong focus on Town Centre regeneration, which had been recognised at the Examination in Public, when the Planning Inspector stated "the policies and visions for the Town Centre were well thought out and had the</p>		

	<p>potential to improve the town significantly in a number of ways”.</p> <p>The Strategic Director (TP) informed Members that, since the imposition of the holding direction, SBC Planning Officers and Mace (the applicant) had responded to the MHCLG addressing the points made in the holding direction. He understood that holding directions on specific planning applications were, on average, concluded within 3 to 6 weeks. Planning Officers would continue to maintain the pressure on the MHCLG for a prompt decision.</p>	
13	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. 	
14	NEW STATION NORTH MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK	C Barnes x2292
	<p>The Executive considered a Part II report in respect of proposals to progress the provision of a new Multi-Storey Car Park and sustainable transport facilities to be built on the existing surface car park to the north of Stevenage Station.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED that the recommendations contained 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>	

15	URGENT PART II BUSINESS	
	None.	