

NOTICE OF DECISIONS

Meeting:	Executive	
Date:	Wednesday, 19 January 2022	
Place:	Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage	
Members Present:	Councillors:	Sharon Taylor OBE CC (Chair), Mrs Joan Lloyd (Vice-Chair), Lloyd Briscoe, Rob Broom, John Gardner, Richard Henry, Jackie Hollywell and Jeannette Thomas.
Also Present:	Councillor Phil Bibby, CC (observer)	

THE DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN OF ANY OF THE DECISIONS BELOW IS FRIDAY, 28 JANUARY 2022. SUBJECT TO THERE BEING NO CALL-IN THE ATTACHED DECISIONS MAY BE IMPLEMENTED WITH EFFECT FROM MONDAY, 31 JANUARY 2022.

1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
	Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Robin Parker CC (observer). There were no declarations of interest.	
2	MINUTES - 8 DECEMBER 2021	
	It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 8 December 2021 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.	
3	MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND SELECT COMMITTEES	
	In relation to the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 24 November 2021, and in response to a question from the Chair, the Strategic Director (RP) confirmed that the Council's refuse collection and recycling vehicle fleet had remained operational throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. The Council had sufficient flexibility to redeploy staff and/or employ agency staff in order to maintain a continued service.	

In respect of the Minutes of the meeting of the Community Select Committee held on 30 November 2021, and with regard to Neighbourhood Wardens, the Chair advised that a series of short films was soon to be launched on social media and on the SBC website highlighting the work of various front line services, such as the Wardens, Regeneration Team and Stevenage Direct Services.

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

Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 24 November 2021
Community Select Committee – 30 November 2021
Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 14 December 2021

4

COVID-19 UPDATE

**R. Protheroe
x2938**

The Executive considered an overarching verbal update report from the Strategic Director (RP), together with a short presentation from the Corporate Policy & Research Officer, providing information concerning the Omicron variant and the latest epidemiology statistics relating to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The following issues were raised by Members:

- in response to a question, it was confirmed the availability of Lateral Flow Testing kits had increased nationally from 300,000 per day to over 1 Million per day (particularly via local pharmacies);
- New Nightingale Ward at Lister Hospital – the Senior Environmental & Licensing Manager agreed to raise at the next meeting of the Hertfordshire Health Protection Board the issue of whether this building would be remain in situ at the hospital for other uses once the Covid-19 pandemic had subsided;
- Hospitalised Covid-19 cases – the Senior Environmental & Licensing Manager agreed a request for the latest figures

regarding the numbers of those hospitalised who were unvaccinated at the next meeting of the Hertfordshire Health Protection Board; and

- Pop-up vaccination centre in Bedwell Ward – Officers were requested to continue to pursue the need for this facility, and that it should be provided on both weekdays and weekends with Public Health colleagues.

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

5

FUTURE TOWN FUTURE TRANSPORT STRATEGY - 12 MONTH REVIEW

**Z. Al-Jawad
x2257**

The Executive considered a report in respect of a 12 month review of the Council’s Future Town Future Transport Strategy.

The following comments were made by Members:

- the Assistant Director (Planning & Regulation) was requested to endeavour to arrange for meetings to take place with appropriate disability groups in order to consult them and seek their ideas on how to overcome practical difficulties experienced by them in transport-related matters;
- the Assistant Director (Planning & Regulation) undertook to highlight the issue of e-scooters as part of the Sustainable Travel Town initiative, with a view to urging the Government to introduce greater regulation of these vehicles, in order that they can be safely used on Stevenage’s extensive cycleway network; and
- the Assistant Director (Planning & Regulation) was requested to ensure that disabled access issues were fully taken into consideration as part of the planning process, in order to avoid the need for the retrofitting of disabled facilities after the completion of projects; and
- the Chair clarified that the Council had been able to rebuff attempts by Hertfordshire County Council to introduce on-street parking charges in the Old Town through the Sustainable Travel Town initiative. During 2020-2022, SBC had provided time-limited free parking in the former Waitrose car park to support local businesses recovering from the Covid-19

pandemic.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the progress with projects included within the Future Town, Future Transport Strategy be noted.
2. That it be noted that the Future Town, Future Transport Strategy will continue to be included within the quarterly Future Town, Future Council monitoring reports.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

6

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA): BUDGET SETTING AND RENT REPORT 2022/23

**C. Fletcher
x2933**

The Executive considered a report on the final Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget and Rent Setting 2022/23, for onward recommendation to Council.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That HRA rent on dwellings be increased, week commencing 4 April 2022, by 4.1% which is an average increase of £4.06 for social rents, £6.60 for affordable rents and £4.74 for Low Start Shared Ownership homes per week (based on a 52-week year). This has been calculated using the rent formula, CPI + 1% in line with the Government's rent policy, as set out in Paragraph 4.1.1 of the report.
2. That Council be recommended to approve the 2022/23 HRA Budget, as set out in Appendix A to the report.
3. That Council be recommended to approve the 2022/23 growth options, as set out in Section 4.8 of the report, with supporting impact assessments in Appendix B. This includes new match funding for a Decarbonisation Grant application of £950,000.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. That Council be recommended to approve the 2022/23 Fees and Charges, as set out in Appendix C to the report. 5. That Council be recommended to approve the 2022/23 service charges. 6. That Council be recommended to approve the minimum level of reserves for 2022/23, as shown in Appendix D to the report. 7. That the Rent Increase Equalities Impact Assessments set out in Appendix E to the report be noted. 8. That the contingency sum of £250,000 within which the Executive can approve supplementary estimates be approved for 2022/23 (unchanged from 2021/22). 9. That Council notes the comments from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Portfolio Holder Advisory Group, as set out in Paragraph 4.10 of the report. <p><i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i></p> <p><i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i></p>	
7	DRAFT GENERAL FUND AND COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2022/23	C. Fletcher x2933
	<p>The Executive considered a report in respect of the draft General Fund and Council Tax Setting 2022/23.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the 2021/22 revised net expenditure on the General Fund of £11,755,780 be approved. 2. That the inclusion of the 2022/23 Fees and Charges of £341,780 (Appendix B to the report) in the draft 2022/23 budget, be noted. 3. That the draft General Fund Budget for 2022/23 of £11,004,220 is proposed for consultation purposes, with a contribution 	

from balances of £1,238,955 and a Band D Council Tax of £225.57 (assuming a 2.26% increase).

4. That the updated position on the General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), summarised in section 4.14 of the report, be noted.
5. That the minimum level of General Fund reserves of £3,471,038 in line with the 2022/23 risk assessment of balances, as shown at Appendix C to the report, be approved.
6. That the contingency sum of £400,000 within which the Executive can approve supplementary estimates be approved for 2022/23 (reflecting the level of balances available above the minimum amount).
7. That the Making Your Money Count (MYMC) options, as set out in Section 4.2 and Appendix A of the report, totalling £780,945 and £39,370 for the General Fund and HRA respectively for 2022/23, be included into the Council's budget setting processes for consideration by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
8. That the Growth options included in Section 4.4 of the report be approved for inclusion in the 2022/23 General Fund (£120,078) and HRA (£63,360) budgets.
9. That the pressures of £1,773,340 be noted, as set out in Section 4.3 of the report.
10. That a further £300,000 be approved for inclusion in the Council's 2022/23 budget setting processes to pump prime Transformation, to enable a significant contribution to the savings targets, as set out in Section 4.12 of the report.
11. That the identification of a further £250,000 of Making Your Money Count (MYMC) options for the June 2022 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) report be approved, as set out in Paragraph 4.12.4 of the report.
12. That the business rate gains only once realised be ring fenced and used for firstly the financial resilience of the Council and, if required, be transferred to the Income Equalisation Reserve, and thereafter they be used for Regeneration or Co-operative Neighbourhood one-off spend.
13. That the 2022/23 Council Tax Support Scheme, as set out in Section 4.6 of the report, be approved.

	<p>14. That the decisions taken in Resolutions 3 to 13 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.</p> <p>15. That the Equalities Impact Assessments, as set out in Appendices D and E to the report, be noted.</p> <p>16. That the work of the Leader’s Financial Security Group (LFSG) in reviewing the efficiency, commercial and fees and charges, as outlined in Section 4.18 of the report, be noted.</p> <p>17. That key partners and other stakeholders be consulted and their views considered as part of the 2022/23 budget setting process.</p> <p><i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i> <i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i></p>	
8	DRAFT CAPITAL STRATEGY 2021/22 - 2025/26	C. Fletcher x2933
	<p>The Executive considered a report in respect of the draft Capital Strategy 2021/22 – 2025/26.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Draft General Fund Capital Budget for 2022/23 of £31.1Million, as set out in Appendix C to the report, be proposed for consultation purposes (subject to review by Leader’s Financial Security Group). 2. That the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) brings a report forward during the 2022/23 financial year setting out the Council’s key capital regeneration and community asset ambitions and key land and asset disposals not currently included in the capital strategy, which could be used to meet these Corporate priorities. 3. That the Draft HRA Capital Budget for 2022/23 of £64.7Million, as set out in Appendix D to the report, be proposed for consultation purposes. 	

4. That the HRA Capital Budget be brought back to Executive in 2022/23 as part of the HRA Business Plan refresh.
5. That the updated forecast of resources 2022/23, as detailed in Appendix C (General Fund) and Appendix D (HRA) to the report, be approved, subject to the consultation process.
6. That the Council's investment strategy for non-treasury assets, as detailed in Appendix E to the report, be approved for consideration by the Executive.
7. That the approach to resourcing the General Fund capital programme, as outlined in the report, be approved.
8. That the funding increase requested for the Bus Station project, as set out in Paragraph 4.1.2 of the report, be approved.
9. That progress on Locality Reviews be noted.
10. That progress on the Towns Fund be noted.
11. That the General Fund growth bids identified for inclusion in the Capital Strategy (Paragraph 4.2.2, table five and Appendix A to the report) be approved in principle, subject to further review work on Capital Priorities being undertaken by officers and the Leader's Financial Security Group.
12. That the HRA budget increases identified for inclusion in the Capital Strategy (Paragraph 4.9.2, table ten and Appendix B to the report) be approved.
13. That the 2022/23 de-minimis expenditure limit (Section 4.11 of the report) be proposed for consideration by the Executive.
14. That the 2022/23 contingency allowances set out in Paragraphs 4.12.1 and 4.12.2 of the report respectively, be proposed for consideration by the Executive.
15. That the Executive delegation set out in Paragraph 4.12.3 of the report, allowing the Executive to approve increases to the capital programme for grant funded projects, be proposed for consideration by the Executive.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

	<i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i>	
9	URGENT PART I BUSINESS	
	<p><u>SBC Award from Hertfordshire Public Health</u></p> <p>The Chair was pleased to announce that the Council had been awarded £90,000 by Hertfordshire Public Health to continue its work in reducing health inequalities in the town over the coming two years. She felt that this was testament to the excellent and proactive approach the Council had taken over a number of years to improve the health and wellbeing of the Borough's residents.</p> <p>The Chair commented that, as the Council refreshed its Healthy Stevenage Strategy over the coming year, this resource would help in tackling health inequalities that had been brought to the fore during the Covid-19 pandemic, and to work more closely with local Primary Care Networks and the Borough's two flagship Healthy Hubs provided through the Healthy Stevenage Partnership.</p> <p>The Chair expressed her gratitude to the Hertfordshire Director of Public Health, Professor Jim McManus, and his team for their ongoing commitment to District-level commissioning as a means to improving local health issues.</p>	
10	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.	
11	PART II MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 8 DECEMBER 2021	
	It was RESOLVED that the Part II Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 8 December 2021 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.	
12	URGENT PART II BUSINESS	
	None.	