

NOTICE OF DECISIONS

Meeting:	Executive	
Date:	Wednesday, 14 September 2022	
Place:	Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage	
Members Present:	Councillors:	Sharon Taylor OBE CC (Chair), Richard Henry (Vice-Chair), Sandra Barr, Lloyd Briscoe, Jackie Hollywell, Mrs Joan Lloyd, Simon Speller and Jeannette Thomas.

**THE DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN OF ANY OF THE DECISIONS BELOW IS FRIDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 2022.
SUBJECT TO THERE BEING NO CALL-IN THE ATTACHED DECISIONS MAY BE IMPLEMENTED WITH EFFECT FROM MONDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2022.**

1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
	The Leader of the Council paid tribute to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and highlighted that Members would be able to offer their own tributes during the Council meeting that would be taking place on Thursday, 15 September 2022 at 7pm. The Leader also offered her condolences and best wishes to King Charles III. There were no apologies for absence. There were no declarations of interest.	
2	MINUTES - 12 JULY 2022	
	It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 12 July 2022 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.	
3	MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND SELECT COMMITTEES	
	It was RESOLVED that the following Minutes of meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees be	

	noted – Environment & Economy Select Committee – 23 June 2022 Community Select Committee – 7 July 2022 Environment & Economy Select Committee – 13 July 2022 Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 19 July 2022	
4	GARAGES INVESTMENT BUSINESS CASE	N. Capuano x2377
	The Executive considered a report in respect of a proposed Garages Business Plan. The following comments were made by Members: • The Portfolio Holder for Environment & Climate Change suggested that it might be helpful for a meeting to take place with all relevant officers to co-ordinate the strategic element of the Garage Improvement Programme with the actual works taking place on the ground; • The Leader was looking forward to the Executive receiving a report regarding the strategic management of the Council's Garage Stock which was expected in early 2023; and • Officers were requested to ensure that Ward Members were consulted in advance on any works to Garage Blocks within their wards. It was RESOLVED: 1. That the virement of £234,000 of funding from the current underspend in the Garage Improvement Programme (GIP) to fund the backlog in works to the void garages be approved. 2. That £55,000 of General Fund balances be used to fund the investment in asbestos management surveys, to ensure	

	compliance. 3. That it be noted that a further growth bid may be required to manage any asbestos identified and that this will come back to Members at a later date once the survey work has been completed. 4. That it be noted that officers will develop a revised garages investment strategy / asset management strategy that can be considered at a future meeting of the Executive. <i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i> <i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i>	
5	STATION GATEWAY AREA ACTION PLAN - PREFERRED OPTIONS REPORT FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION	L. Claridge x2158
	The Executive considered a Preferred Option Report for public consultation concerning the Station Gateway Area Action Plan (AAP). In reply to a Member's question, it was confirmed that Govia Thameslink and Network Rail were broadly supportive of the need to upgrade Stevenage Railway Station (whilst acknowledging the resource/funding implications). Officers would continue to engage with them throughout the AAP process. The Executive debated consultation on the Preferred Options document. Following discussion, it was agreed that, as well as consulting key stakeholders, engagement with the public should be as wide as possible, including community and local disability groups. Consultation should be much wider than the minimum required under Town & Country Planning legislation. The Leader requested that a concise version of the Preferred Options Document be made available for the public as part of the consultation process, and that awareness of the AAP be raised through social media channels. It was RESOLVED:	

	1. That the content of the Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Preferred Options document, prior to the document going out to public consultation, be agreed. 2. That it be agreed that the public consultation methods for when the Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Preferred Options document goes out to public consultation, include the breadth of engagement/consultation outlined in the Minute preamble above. 3. That delegated powers be granted to the Assistant Director: Planning and Regulation, to make final amendments to the Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Report prior to going out to public consultation. 4. That the comments of the Planning & Development Committee regarding the Preferred Options Report be noted. 5. That it be noted that informal engagement with key stakeholders will continue, including the Stevenage Development Board, to test the Preferred Options ahead of final preparation of the Area Action Plan Preferred Options Report. <i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i> <i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i>	
6	CONFIRMATION OF TWO ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS TO REQUIRE CHANGES OF USE FROM CLASS E(g)(i) (OFFICES) AND CLASS E(g)(iii) (LIGHT INDUSTRIAL) to CLASS C3 (RESIDENTIAL) TO OBTAIN PLANNING PERMISSION	L. Claridge x2158
	The Executive considered a report seeking confirmation of two Article 4 Directions to require Changes of Use from Class E(g)(i) (Offices) and Class E(g)(iii) (Light Industrial) to Class C3 (Residential) to obtain planning permission. It was RESOLVED: 1. That the responses from consultation, 20 July to 17 August 2022, on the serving of the notice of the revised Article 4	

	Directions, as set out in Appendix C to the report, be noted. 2. That the Article 4 Directions [set out in Appendices A and B to the report] under Article 4 (I) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended), to remove permitted development rights in relation to changes of use from Use Class E(g)(i) and E(g)(iii) to Use Class C3 (as defined in the Town and County Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended), be confirmed, effective from 1 October 2022. <i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i> <i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i>	
7	CORPORATE PERFORMANCE - QUARTER 1 2022/23	R. Protheroe x2938
	The Executive considered a report outlining Corporate Performance for Quarter 1 of 2022/23. Officers were asked to investigate the potential for increasing the level of commercial sponsorship of Council events and initiatives. In reply to a question, the Chief Executive commented that the shortage of staff in certain areas was an issue at county, regional and national levels across many elements of the public and private sectors. There had been no indication that this situation might occur following the Covid crisis, but officers were endeavouring to develop creative solutions to seek to reduce the associated service impact. The Portfolio Holder for Housing & Housing Development drew attention to the possibility of an increased need for emergency and temporary accommodation due to the cost of living crisis, and confirmed that officers would be dealing with any related rent arrears issues on a case by case basis. It was RESOLVED: 1. That the delivery of priorities which form the Future Town, Future Council Programme (set out in Appendix A to the report)	

	and service performance across the key themes for Quarter One 2022/23 (set out in Appendix C to the report), be noted. 2. That the strategic risk updates, and new emerging risks, be noted. 3. That the performance challenges in relation to housing voids, repairs and customer service be noted, and the planned measures to improve performance be endorsed. 4. That the Executive Action Tracker, as set out at Appendix D to the report, be noted. <i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i> <i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i>	
8	GENERAL FUND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE (2022/23 - 2026/27)	C. Fletcher x2933 B. Moldon
	The Executive considered a report in respect of an update on the General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 – 2026/27. In response to a Member's question, the Strategic Director (CF), assisted by the Strategic Director (TP), advised Members that the level of parking in the Council-operated car parks had increased in recent weeks, although was still much reduced from pre-Covid pandemic levels. The Marshgate car park was under development for the Autolus project which, when completed, would return 50 parking spaces to the Council for public use. The new Multi-Storey Car Park (MSCP) at the Railway Station would further increase capacity. About 700 spaces were unoccupied in the St. Georges Way MSCP and 100 at the Westgate MSCP. There were therefore sufficient spaces for the public to use, but they may be in different locations from where they had parked previously. It was RESOLVED: 1. That the change to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) principles, as outlined in Paragraph 3.12 of the report and as amended in Paragraph 4.9.9 of the report, be approved.	

2. That, for modelling purposes, Council tax increases be set at the threshold allowed assumed at 1.99%, subject to any change in Government rules, in order to help achieve a balanced budget, as set out in Paragraph 4.6.8 of the report.
3. That the updated inflation assumptions used in the MTFS, as set out in Section 4 of the report, be approved
4. That the approach to Making Your Money Count budget options, as set out in Section 4.8 of the report, be approved.
5. That an amount of £300,000 for 2023/24 be approved for inclusion in the budget setting process to support the Transformation Fund, to help deliver the MYMC Target, as set out in Paragraph 4.8.3 of the report.
6. That a Making Your Money Count Target of £3.03Million (of which £1.5Million relates to 2023/24), be approved for the period 2023/24- 2025/26, as set out in Section 4.9 of the report.
7. That the revised fees and charges for Engineering charges, as set out in Appendix B to the report, be approved.
8. That General Fund growth be only approved for the Council's FTFC priorities and the growth allowance included in the 2023/24 budget is £75,000, and growth above that level will need to be funded by further savings in addition to the £3.03Million target identified.
9. That a minimum level of balances for the General Fund of £3.57million be approved for 2023/24, as set out in Paragraph 4.10.8 of the report.
10. That if there is an underspend in 2022/23, £200,000 be used to 'top up' the regeneration reserve, as set out in Paragraph 4.11.3 of the report.
11. That the MTFS be regularly reviewed and revised to reflect any material financial pressures so forecasts are updated and re-presented to the Executive for approval.
12. That the Trade Unions and staff be consulted on the key messages contained within the MTFS and more specifically when drawing up any proposals where there is a risk of redundancy.

	<i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i> <i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i>	
9	FIRST QUARTER REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2022/23 - GENERAL FUND AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT	C. Fletcher x2933 B. Moldon
	The Executive considered the First Quarter Revenue Monitoring report 2022/23 for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account. It was RESOLVED: General Fund 1. That the 2022/23 1st Quarter projected net increase in General Fund expenditure of £119,930 be approved. 2. That it be noted that the 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 4.1.20 of the report. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 3. That the 2022/23 1st Quarter projected net increase in HRA expenditure of £249,890 be approved. 4. That it be noted that the cumulative increases made to the HRA net budget remains within the £250,000 increase variation limit delegated to the Executive. <i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i> <i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i>	

10	ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW OF 2021/22 INCLUDING PRUDENTIAL CODE	C. Fletcher x2933 B. Moldon
	The Executive considered a report in respect of the Annual Treasury Management Review of 2021/22, including Prudential Indicators. In relation to the pie chart set out in Paragraph 4.2.3.2, the Strategic Director (CF) explained that the £29M figure for Housing Revenue Account balance available above minimum balances was solely for the repayment of debt. It was RESOLVED that the 2021/22 Annual Treasury Management Review be recommended to Council for approval. <i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i> <i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i>	
11	URGENT PART I BUSINESS	
	<u>Cost of Living</u> The Leader reminded Members that the Council had approved a motion declaring a Cost of Living Crisis in July 2022. Subsequent to that declaration, an Executive Member and Officer working group had been established to develop a Cost of Living Action Plan which would be presented to the Executive in October 2023. The Action Plan would focus on the impact on residents, businesses, partners, Council staff and Council finances, and would frame actions across a number of themes, including: a. Co-ordinating Government Support (to reach those that needed it); b. Welfare support and advice (promoting, signposting etc.); c. Maintaining good health (physical, mental, community wellbeing, volunteering); d. Access to food and nutrition (community larders, food banks, gardens, healthy eating); e. Housing (costs, repairs and improvements, retrofitting and decarbonisation); and	

- f. Working in partnership (to target support in localities / to the most in need).

The Leader advised that the Government had recently announced a new package of measures to be put in place to support people through this winter, and beyond. This was in addition to the previously announced universal and targeted payments, and included:

- i. Capping the cost of energy for households for 2 years from 1 October 2022, at an average of £2,500 per year;
- ii. Businesses, charities, and public sector organisations would receive equivalent support for six months, and then it would be reviewed every three months;
- iii. An energy supply task force to get contracts with international suppliers to bring down energy costs; and
- iv. A budget announcement to take place later in September, which would provide more detail about how the above measures would be funded and implemented.

The Leader stated that there was a wide range of support that the Council was already putting in place for people experiencing difficulties, including:

- a. The Government response and grant schemes, rebates and vouchers; and
- b. Stevenage Borough Council's universal and targeted support, including Benefits and grants; the use of the Community Renewal Fund, and Community Wealth Building approaches and developing the Social Inclusion Partnership; UK Shared Prosperity Fund including Community Wealth Building and VCSE access to business and sustainability support; Household Support Fund, including payments to foodbanks, schools and community centre cafes; Work to improve the EPC rating of our housing stock, including bidding for funding to improve the energy efficiency of homes and building new homes that are highly energy efficient; and Longer-term investment in skills development and employment opportunities, including the Stevenage Town investment plan and Stevenage Works programme.

The Leader commented that, in considering the potential impact on Council finances and staff, things underway included:

- a. The challenges being faced with recruitment and retention;
- b. Calculations suggesting that the impact of increased utility costs could be up to £300,000 this year, and £460,000 full year in 2023/24;

- c. The importance of the proposed national pay in helping staff meet increased costs, but also the impact on Council budgets as this was higher than anticipated (up to £700,000) and may not be fully funded by Government (the Local Government Settlement was still to be agreed);
- d. The value of existing flexible working arrangements, employee assistance programme, and availability of resilience support, coaching, and pay flexibility requests being considered; and
- e. Development of an online hub for staff.

The Executive was informed that initial priorities underway and being developed included:

- i. Information hub on the Council's website, signposting to support available – this included summary of grants and other support, such as with the cost of school uniforms;
- ii. Internal and external communications to residents, businesses, staff and Councillors – both supporting themselves, and supporting others;
- iii. Considering a Warm Spaces initiative, including potential links with community associations, public and voluntary sector partners;
- iv. Working with partners to offer “full financial MOTs” for people, focusing on short term and more sustainable longer term solutions;
- v. Surveying local Community Associations to understand the potential impact on them, how they were intending to manage pressures, and any support needed; and
- vi. Holding a Stevenage Together meeting on 20 September 2022 to co-ordinate work with partners and discuss / agree any joint work to support people.

The Leader commented that, in the longer term, further skills and investment opportunities would aid the town level response, and included the Stevenage Town Investment Plan (£37.5M secured from Government, STEM jobs, £900M investment from GlaxoSmithKline); Community Wealth Building Programme - £1M UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Stevenage Works (£340,000 secured), Community Infrastructure Levy; and Levelling Up - Step2Skills (£5.8M) Multiply Project. The Leader also noted that circa £31M had been secured from the Local Enterprise Partnership to support the delivery of various projects across the town, including the new Bus Interchange and projects within the Town Square.

12	EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC	
	It was RESOLVED: 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.	
13	PART II MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 12 JULY 2022	
	It was RESOLVED that the Part II Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 12 July 2022 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.	
14	URGENT PART II BUSINESS	
	None.	