

NOTICE OF DECISIONS

Meeting:	Executive	
Date:	Wednesday, 20 September 2023	
Place:	Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage	
Members Present:	Councillors:	Richard Henry (Chair), Jeannette Thomas (Vice-Chair), Sandra Barr, Lloyd Briscoe, Jackie Hollywell and Loraine Rossati.

THE DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN OF ANY OF THE DECISIONS BELOW IS FRIDAY, 29 SEPTEMBER 2023. SUBJECT TO THERE BEING NO CALL-IN THE ATTACHED DECISIONS MAY BE IMPLEMENTED WITH EFFECT FROM MONDAY, 2 OCTOBER 2023.

1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
	<p>Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs Joan Lloyd and Simon Speller.</p> <p>The Leader also submitted apologies for absence on behalf of the Chief Executive who, together with Councillor Speller, was attending the East of England Net Zero Conference in Cambridge.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
2	MINUTES - 18 JULY 2023	
	<p>It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 18 July 2023 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.</p>	
3	MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEES AND SELECT COMMITTEES	
	<p>It was RESOLVED that the following Minutes of meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees be noted –</p>	

Environment & Economy Select Committee – 6 July 2023
Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 24 July 2023
Community Select Committee – 26 July 2023

4

FUTURE COUNCIL 2025 TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME SAVINGS UPDATE

J. James

The Executive considered a report in respect of an update on the Future Council 2025 Transformation Programme savings.

In response to Members' questions, officers commented as follows:

- the majority of visitors to the Customer Service Centre (CSC) had pre-arranged appointments. Once the CSC had moved there would be a member of staff based in the Main Reception to greet customers and point them in the right direction as to how their enquiry could be resolved; and
- there would continue to be self-service PCs in the CSC, with staff on hand to assist customers if required.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the change of location of the customer service centre to the main reception entrance of Daneshill House be approved.
2. That the change of opening hours of customer services from 8am - 5pm to 9pm – 5pm be approved.
3. That the potential savings to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and General Fund in support of the Medium Term Financial Strategy be noted.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

5	CORPORATE PERFORMANCE - QUARTER 1 2023/24	R. Protheroe
<p>The Executive considered a report in respect of Corporate Performance for Quarter 1 (April – June 2023) of 2023/24.</p> <p>In reply to Members’ questions, officers replied as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there had been positive outcomes with recent recruitment processes in some service areas, including the appointments of a new Assistant Director for Housing Compliance, Repairs and Building Safety and a new Head of Building Safety. The Housing Repairs Service still had recruitment challenges, both to management roles and specialist tradespeople. Strategic Directors were soon to meet with Assistant Directors to monitor the use of agency/temporary staff, although it was acknowledged that the current employment market was very competitive; and • the Cartref site referred to in Appendix A to the report had been used temporarily as a depot/storage area in connection with the Major Repairs Contract and was owned by the Council. Should a scheme be developed, a planning application would be submitted and consulted upon in the usual manner. <p>The Leader drew attention to the Council’s green credentials by referring to the recent fitting of solar panels on to seven of the Council’s refuse lorries. As well as savings on fuel, the vehicles would save a considerable amount of Carbon Dioxide emissions in the coming years.</p> <p>The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Housing Development welcomed the progress toward completion of Helston House, with 29 new Council homes being delivered, and was appreciative of the community open day that took place in September. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that it was anticipated that the first occupants of the new eco-friendly Helston House development would be moving in during October 2023.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the service performance against 35 corporate performance measures and delivery of key milestones in Quarter 1 2023/24 through the Future Town Future Council Programme (Appendix A to the report) be noted. 		

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. That the Council’s performance as demonstrated through the 13 Community Measures (Appendix B to the report) be noted. 3. That the performance challenges in relation to homelessness preventions, number of homes provided, and voids (Section 4.2 of the report) be noted, and the planned measures to improve performance be endorsed. 4. That the strategic risk updates (Section 6 of the report) be noted. <p><i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i> <i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i></p>	
6	COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2024/25	C. Fletcher
	<p>The Executive considered a report in respect of the proposed Council Tax Support Scheme for 2023/24.</p> <p>The Strategic Director (CF) agreed to provide all Members with a Briefing Note to use when advising residents about the Council Tax Support Scheme, including signposting them to the Council’s online tool that they could use to determine eligibility for support under the Scheme.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 24 July 2023 to retain the current Council Tax Support Scheme for April 2024 be approved. 2. That a policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting be held post- Annual Council in May 2024 to determine whether there has been a transition to Universal Credit and a need to adapt the existing Scheme, as set out in Sections 4.4 - 4.5 of the report. 3. That the directive contained in the Social Security Administration Act 1992 be used to disregard, in full, awards of War 	

Widows, War Disablement and Armed Forces Compensation when determining entitlement for Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax support.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

7

GENERAL FUND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE (2023/24 - 2027/28)

**C. Fletcher
B. Moldon**

The Executive considered a report in respect of an update on the General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 – 2027/28.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the change to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) principles, as outlined in Paragraph 3.11 and as amended in Paragraph 4.9.11 of the report, be approved.
2. That, for modelling purposes, Council Tax increases be set at the threshold allowed assumed at 2.99%, 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 recommendation set out in Paragraph 4.3.4 of the report to transfer a maximum of £225,000 from the Business Rates Reserve should the SG1 Swingate site Joint Venture not proceed, be approved.
5. That the approach to “Balancing the Budget” options, as set out in Section 4.8 of the report, be approved.
6. That an amount of £300,000 for 2024/25 be approved for inclusion in the budget setting process to support the Transformation Fund, to help deliver the Balancing the Budget Target, as set out in Paragraph 4.8.3 of the report.
7. That a Balancing the Budget Target of £3.2Million (of which £1.23Million relates to 2024/25) be approved for the period

	<p>2024/25 – 2026/27, as set out in Section 4.9 of the report.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. That General Fund growth be only approved for the Council’s FTFC priorities and the growth allowance included in the 2024/25 budget be £75,000. Growth above that level will need to be funded by further savings in addition to the £3.2Million target identified. 9. That a minimum level of balances for the General Fund of £3.50Million be approved for 2023/24, as set out in Paragraph 4.10.8 of the report. 10. 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. 11. 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. <p><i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i> <i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i></p>	
<p>8</p>	<p>FIRST QUARTER REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2023/24</p>	<p>C. Fletcher B. Moldon</p>
	<p>The Executive considered a report in respect of the First Quarter Revenue Budget Monitoring 2023/24.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <p>General Fund</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the 2023/24 First Quarter projected net decrease in General Fund expenditure of £273,020 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.

3. That the proposed movement on reserves, as detailed in Paragraph 4.2.1 of the report, be noted.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

4. That the 2023/24 First Quarter projected net pressure in HRA expenditure of £154,510 be approved.
5. That two budget virements totalling £450,000, from planned maintenance budgets, to fund the proposed fencing works as detailed in Paragraph 4.5.9 of the report, be approved.
6. That the existing backlog of fencing works be prioritised to be completed and new fencing repairs be added to a waiting list, unless they relate to emergency repairs and those creating a health and safety risk, which will be dealt with immediately, with all other repairs being completed in order of date raised.
7. That a budget virement of £238,000 from revenue contributions to capital, for void property repair costs, be approved, as detailed at Paragraph 4.5.6 of the report.
8. That it be noted that the cumulative increases made to the HRA net budget remain within the £400,000 variation limit delegated to the Executive in the January 2023 budget report.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

9	ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW 2022/23 AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS	C. Fletcher B. Moldon
The Executive considered a report in respect of a review of the 2022/23 Annual Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators. It was RESOLVED that the 2022/23 Annual Treasury Management Review be recommended to Council for approval.		

	<p><i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i> <i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i></p>	
10	URGENT PART I BUSINESS	
	None.	
11	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. 	
12	PART II MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 18 JULY 2023	
	<p>It was RESOLVED that the Part II Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 18 July 2023 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.</p>	

13	STEVENAGE (SURVIVORS) AGAINST DOMESTIC ABUSE (SADA) SERVICE UPDATE	S. Pateman
	<p>The Executive considered a Part II report in respect of an update on the Stevenage (Survivors) Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) service.</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>	
14	URGENT PART II BUSINESS	
	None.	