

# Public Document Pack

## NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### COUNCIL

**THURSDAY, 25TH JANUARY, 2024**

### **SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA**

Please find attached supplementary papers relating to the above meeting, as follows:

**Agenda No    Item**

8.            **ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES** (Pages 3 - 6)

To consider any items referred from other Committees.

8A) Cabinet – Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2024/25 – to be considered with Item 10.

8B) Cabinet – Second Quarter Investment Strategy (Capital and Treasury) Review 2023-24 – to be considered with Item 11.

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<b>Item No</b>	<b>Referred from:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>8A</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>16 JANUARY 2024</b>
	<b>Title of item:</b>	<b>COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2024/25</b>
<b>To be considered alongside agenda item:</b>		<b>Agenda Item 10</b>

The report considered by Cabinet at the meeting held on 16 January 2024 can be viewed here: [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 16th January, 2024, 7.30 pm | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](#)

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

(1) That the new branded scheme for working age applicants remains unchanged for 2024/25.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To ensure that the Council has a Council Tax Reduction Scheme that continues to:

- Provide the greatest support to the lowest income households.
- Reduce the administrative burden that has been placed on the Council since the introduction of Universal Credit (UC).
- Be simple to understand, meaning that customers will be able to calculate entitlement and assess the impact of potential changes in circumstance.

*Audio recording – 1 hour 53 minutes 9 seconds*

The Executive Member for Finance and IT, Councillor Ian Albert, presented the report entitled 'Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2024/25' and advised that:

- The aim of the new scheme was to provide significant help to the residents in North Herts who were in most need.
- This new scheme, in the first year, had cost more than was forecast and details of the additional costs were detailed in section 10 of the report, which was approximately £125k.
- The Discretionary Exceptional Hardship Scheme, previously agreed to provide additional transitional support, had been underspent. The surplus of this would be used to off-set the impact on the District Council in relation to the main scheme.
- A further review would take place ahead of consideration of the scheme in 2025/26 to seek to reduce these additional costs.
- The recommendation for 2024/25 to make no changes to the scheme was to allow time to provide the help that was needed and to collect 18 months of data before considering further amendments.
- In November and December 2023, a light touch consultation was carried out with Herts County Council, Police and Crime Commissioner and residents via the Council website.
- The Council acknowledged the Royal British Legion campaign for war veterans and confirmed that it already supported war veterans and was aligned to the aims of the RBL campaign.

- Herts County Council were proposing to provide council tax support to care leavers across the district up to the age of 21, which would be funded by the County Council. Details of this proposal were still being considered.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed and Councillor Alistair Willoughby seconded and, following a vote, it was:

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet:

- (1) Noted that the new scheme has had a greater financial impact than expected, and any resultant Collection Fund shortfall will be split between the Council and its Major Precepting Authorities. The Councils share will be around 12.5%.
- (2) Noted that the Discretionary Exceptional Hardship Scheme, previously agreed to provide additional transitional support, has been underspent, largely due to the positive impacts of the main scheme. (The surplus of this will be used to off-set the impact on the District Council in relation to the main scheme).
- (3) Noted a further review is being undertaken during 2024/2025, to ascertain any further changes to be considered for the scheme in 2025/2026.

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

- (1) That the new banded scheme for working age applicants remains unchanged for 2024/25.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION:** To ensure that the Council has a Council Tax Reduction Scheme that continues to:

- Provide the greatest support to the lowest income households.
- Reduce the administrative burden that has been placed on the Council since the introduction of Universal Credit (UC).
- Be simple to understand, meaning that customers will be able to calculate entitlement and assess the impact of potential changes in circumstance.

<b>Item No</b>	<b>Referred from:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>8B</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>16 JANUARY 2024</b>
	<b>Title of item:</b>	<b>SECOND QUARTER INVESTMENT STRATEGY (CAPITAL AND TREASURY) REVIEW 2023-24</b>
<b>To be considered alongside agenda item:</b>		<b>Agenda Item 11</b>

The report considered by Cabinet at the meeting held on 16 January 2024 can be viewed here: [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 16th January, 2024, 7.30 pm | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](#)

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

- (1) That it notes the position of Treasury Management activity as at the end of September 2023 including the new Capital items.
- (2) That it confirms the addition of the Local Authority Housing Fund Phase 2 to the capital programme for 2023/24 and approves the reprofiling of Bancroft & Priory Splash Pads from 2024/25 into 2023/24. Both as detailed in table 3.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION:** To ensure the Council's continued compliance with CIPFA's code of practice on Treasury Management and the Local Government Act 2003 and that the Council manages its exposure to interest and capital risk.

*Audio recording 1 hour 21 minutes 55 seconds*

The Chair invited Councillor Sean Nolan, as Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, to present the referral on this item. Councillor Nolan advised that the committee had raised a few items with increased costs, which included that:

- Options were still being sought for museum storage at Burymead, which was currently on hold.
- There were some concerns regarding the associated costs with the John Barker Place development and the impact of the contractor going into administration.
- There has been reduced costs of resurfacing of carparks, which was due to the better than expected conditions of the existing surfaces.
- Delays may mean that schemes would cost more due to inflation, but this would be partly off-set by increased returns from investing the money in the interim period.

Councillor Ian Albert, as Executive Member for Finance and IT, presented the report entitled 'Second Quarter Investment Strategy (Capital and Treasury) Review 2023/24' and advised that:

- This report detailed the reasons for the increase in investment income.
- Details of how the Council had complied with the Investment Strategy treasury and prudential indicators were detailed in the report and at Appendix B.

- The Local Authority Housing Fund allocation was fully funded by the grant and was to be referred to Council to confirm that it is in the capital programme as the amount is large, but the majority of the risk had been assumed by settle.
- Approval was sought for the replacement of CCTV cameras.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed and Councillor Keith Hoskins seconded and, following a vote, it was:

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet

- (1) Noted the forecast expenditure of £8.225M in 2023/24 on the capital programme, paragraph 8.3 refers.
- (2) Approved the adjustments to the capital programme as a result of the revised timetable of schemes detailed in table 2, increasing the overall estimated spend in 2024/25 and beyond by £3.898M.
- (3) Noted the position of the availability of capital resources, as detailed in table 4 paragraph 8.6 and the requirement to keep the capital programme under review for affordability.
- (4) Approved the additional 40K spend on CCTV Replacement, as detailed in table 3.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** Cabinet is required to approve adjustments to the capital programme and ensure the capital programme is fully funded.

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

- (1) That it notes the position of Treasury Management activity as at the end of September 2023 including the new Capital items.
- (2) That it confirms the addition of the Local Authority Housing Fund Phase 2 to the capital programme for 2023/24 and approves the reprofiling of Bancroft & Priory Splash Pads from 2024/25 into 2023/24. Both as detailed in table 3.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION:** To ensure the Council's continued compliance with CIPFA's code of practice on Treasury Management and the Local Government Act 2003 and that the Council manages its exposure to interest and capital risk.