

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

DECISION SHEET

Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices,
Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City
on Tuesday, 24th September, 2019 at 7.30 pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Judi Billing, Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg, Gary Grindal, Sam North, Helen Oliver, Sean Prendergast and Kay Tart.

2 MINUTES - 30 JULY 2019

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 30 July 2019 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

3 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman advised that the Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (in the absence of the Chairman of the Committee) had agreed for an urgent item to be heard. This item was listed on the agenda as Business Rate Pooling 2020/21 (Minute 48 refers).

4 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (1) The Chairman welcomed those present at the meeting, especially those who had attended to give a presentation;
- (2) The Chairman advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded;
- (3) The Chairman drew attention to the item on the agenda front pages regarding Declarations of Interest and reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question.

5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no presentations by members of the public.

6 QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

(A) Climate Emergency

Mr Philip Devonald asked a question which was answered by Councillor Steve Jarvis, Executive Member for Environment and Leisure.

7 ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

(A) Item Referred From Finance, Audit And Risk Committee: 16 September 2019 – Fraud Policy Review

RESOLVED: That the referral from the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee regarding the Fraud Policy Review be considered with the item on the agenda entitled Fraud Prevention Policy (Minute 45 refers).

8 STRATEGIC PLANNING MATTERS

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report on strategic planning matters be noted;
- (2) That the letter in Appendix A be noted and endorsed;
- (3) That the Local Plan Inspector's letter at Appendix B be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To keep Cabinet informed of recent development on Strategic planning matters and progress on the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

9 FRAUD PREVENTION POLICY

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Fraud Prevention Policy attached at Appendix A be approved with the following amendment:

The first line of Paragraph 6 in Section 2 entitled Reporting, 'that are reported' be removed from the Fraud Prevention Policy so that it read:

"The Council will investigate all suspicions, and where deemed appropriate the matter raised may be:"

- (2) That the Learning and Development Champions be requested to consider how e-learning modules can be better advertised to Members and how Members can be encouraged to undertake essential training such as anti bribery and fraud prevention.

REASON FOR DECISION: The new policy provides all the information in relation to fraud and similar offences. This makes it more accessible, especially as the total length of documentation is shorter. By making it easier to read and understand policies, it should aid compliance.

10 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2020/21

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the CTRS position relating to this and previous financial years be noted:
- (2) That it be noted that a full review of the CTRS is underway and that further recommendations for changes to the Scheme will be presented to Cabinet in September 2020 for implementation in 2021/2022:
- (3) That amount to be distributed to Parish, Town & Community Councils be continued and maintained at £38,885:
- (4) That the following proposed changes to the CTRS for 2020/2021 be subject to consultation:
 - A) That a deminimis amount of £2.50 per week be introduced for reductions in entitlement, with no deminimis amount for increases in entitlement;
 - B) That any payments made under the Windrush Compensation Scheme be disregarded for the purposes of CTRS;
- (5) That a further report on the outcome of the consultation be presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 17 December 2019.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To decide on whether any changes are proposed to the CTRS for 2020/2021 and enable the required consultation to be carried out.

11 REVIEW OF COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS POLICY

RESOLVED: That the updated Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy, as contained in Appendix A, be approved with the following amendments:

- (i) The addition of a flow chart to help customers navigate the document;
- (ii) That a short version of the Policy be made available describing how to make a simple comment, compliment or complaint.

REASON FOR DECISION: To ensure that the NHDC Policy for Comments, Compliments and Complaints is up to date and clear and easy for customers and our staff to understand.

12 BUSINESS RATE POOLING 2020/21

RESOLVED:

- (1) That it be approved in principle that the Council is part of a Hertfordshire Business Rates pool in 2020/21;
- (2) That, if it is proposed that Council is part of an optimum pool, that the authorisation for the final agreement be delegated to the Service Director- Resources in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and IT.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: It is recommended that NHDC joins a Business Rates pool due to the expected financial benefits. The delegation is necessary due to the deadline imposed by the MHCLG.