

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

DECISION SHEET

Meeting of the Council held in the Council Chamber, District Council Offices, Letchworth Garden City
on Thursday, 20th January, 2022 at 7.30 pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gary Grindal, John Bishop, Jean Green, Sean Prendergast, Lisa Nash, Sam North, Terry Tyler, Ian Moody, Kate Aspinwall, Kay Tart, and Tony Hunter.

2 MINUTES - 11 NOVEMBER 2021, 7 DECEMBER 2021, 7 DECEMBER 2021

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meetings of the Committee held on 11 November 2021, 7 December 2021 and 7 December 2021 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

3 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business notified.

4 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (1) The Chair paid tribute to Councillor Paul Clark who passed away in December 2021 and a minutes' silence was held in his memory.
- (2) The Chair paid tribute to Honorary Alderman F John Smith who passed away in December 2021 and a minutes' silence was held in his memory.
- (3) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded;
- (4) Members were reminded that this Council had declared a Climate Emergency. This was a serious decision and meant that, as this was an emergency, all of us, officers and Members had that in mind as we carried out our various roles and tasks for the benefit of our District.
- (5) The Chair 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.
- (6) The Chair reminded Members that the usual rules in respect of debate and times to speak would apply.
- (7) The Chair advised Members that there was no longer a requirement to stand while addressing the Council.
- (8) The Chair advised that she intended to call a comfort break around 9pm at a suitable break in proceedings.
- (9) The Chair advised there would be a change to the order of business with Items 17 and 18 being taken immediately after Item 8.

5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chair invited Mrs Susan Foster to present a petition relating to extending the opening hours of Hitchin and Letchworth Outdoor Swimming Pools.

The Chair thanked Mrs Susan Foster for her presentation.

6 NOTICE OF MOTIONS

There were no motions on notice.

7 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

There were no questions from Members.

8 COUNCIL SIZE SUBMISSION TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND ('LGBCE')

RESOLVED: That Council approves the document on Council Size attached as Appendix A for submission to the LGBCE, noting the deadline for submission was 21 January 2022 with a Council Size of 50.

REASONS FOR DECISION: A Council Size of 50 Members has been proposed following discussion amongst Group Leaders at the Project Board, given the projected growth in the Local Plan; and the nature of the district with its mix of more densely populated towns and sparsely populated large rural areas that need to be a manageable size geographically for the rural ward councillors. It is also believed that reducing the number of Members (thereby increasing workload for others) could deter or discourage individuals from standing as a Councillor, thereby further impacting on diversity of representation.

9 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act (as amended).

10 POTENTIAL PROPERTY ACQUISITION

Details of decisions taken on this item are restricted due to the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

11 ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

9a. Referral from Cabinet - Integrated Performance Management

The Chair advised this referral would be taken with Item 10.

9b. Referral from Cabinet - Second Quarter Investment Strategy (Capital and Treasury) Review 2021-22

The Chair advised this referral would be taken with Item 11.

9c. Referral from FAR - Appointment of External Auditors

The Chair advised this referral would be taken with Item 12.

9d. Referral from Cabinet - Council Tax Reduction Scheme

The Chair advised this referral would be taken with item 13.

9e. Referral from FAR – Updated Contract Procurement Rules for 2022/23

RESOLVED: That Council adopts the Updated Contract Procurement Rules for 2022/23.

REASON FOR DECISION: That the Contract Procurement Rules are part of the Constitution (under Section 20) and are revised and updated periodically as part of the Council's governance and procurement review processes, contributing to effective organisational internal control.

12 INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

RESOLVED: That Council approves the changes to the Constitution as detailed in section 9 of the report.

REASON FOR DECISION: To improve the current processes that are in place which do not seem to be well integrated with each other or the Council Plan.

13 SECOND QUARTER INVESTMENT STRATEGY (CAPITAL AND TREASURY) REVIEW 2021/22

RESOLVED: That Council notes the position of Treasury Management activity as at the end of September 2021.

RESOLVED: 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.

14 APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITORS FOR 2023/24 TO 2027/28

RESOLVED: That the Council opts-in to the appointing person arrangements made by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) for the appointment of external auditors, for a period of 5 years from the 2023/24 audit.

REASON FOR DECISION: The Council is required to appoint an External Auditor, and an appointment through PSAA offers the only realistically viable option.

15 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME - 2022/2023

RESOLVED: That Council:

- (1) Note the CTRS position relating to this and previous financial years
- (2) Note that a full review of the CTRS had commenced and has been postponed due to the consequences on the scheme of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- (3) Agrees that the funding allocated for distribution to Parish, Town & Community Councils in relation to CTRS in 2022/2023 is unchanged from 2021/22
- (4) Agrees that no changes to the CTRS be made for 2022/2023.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS: To update Council on how the Scheme is working and to note that the full review planned to take place was postponed due to the impact of the COVID-9 pandemic and this remains the case. However, work is planned to start in January 2022.

16 REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

RESOLVED: That Council:

- (1) Considers the report and recommendations of the IRP, as attached as Appendix A of the submitted report.
- (2) Agrees that the 2021/22 Members' Allowances Scheme continue unchanged for 2022/23;
- (3) Agrees the increase to the Independent Person and Reserve Independent Persons allowances as detailed in 4.8 of Appendix A and 8.9 of this report at 1.75%
- (4) Agrees the allowance to the Independent Member on the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee as detailed in Appendix A and 8.12 of this report and should this figure not attract any suitable candidates that the Service Director in consultation with the Executive Member of Finance and IT be authorised to increase this to a maximum of £1500 per annum.

REASONS FOR DECISION: To ensure that the Council meets its statutory requirements of an annual review and adoption of the scheme.

17 ELECTORAL SERVICES - SCALE OF FEES 2022/23

RESOLVED: That Council agree the Scale of Fees for 2022/23 as set out in Appendix A.

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable the Council to remunerate the Returning Officer and the staff employed to carry out tasks during electoral events and to be open and transparent regarding other payments.

18 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER, SUBSTITUTE AND CHAIR TO THE PLANNING CONTROL COMMITTEE

RESOLVED:

- (1) That for the remainder of the civic year 2021/22 a Member and Substitute be appointed to the Planning Control Committee, namely:
 - Councillor Carol Stanier to become a Member of the Committee
 - Councillor Sam North to become a substitute Member of the Committee
- (2) That Councillor Mike Rice be appointed as Chair of the Planning Control Committee for the remainder of the civic year 2021/22.
- (3) That the appointment of Councillor Ruth Brown be noted as the Executive Member for Planning, and Deputy Leader for the remainder of the civic year 2021/22.

REASON FOR DECISION: To comply with the provisions of 4.8.1 (a) (vii), (viii) and (ix) of the Council's Constitution following Councillor Brown resigning from the Committee/ position of Chair of Planning Control Committee as of this Council meeting, following the Executive appointments.