

# NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## DECISION SHEET

Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, District Council Offices, Gernon Road,  
Letchworth Garden City, SG6 3JF  
on Tuesday, 19th March, 2024 at 7.30 pm

### 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received.

### 2 MINUTES - 16 JANUARY 2024 AND 6 FEBRUARY 2024

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 16 January 2024 and 6 February 2024 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 advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be recorded.
- (2) Members were reminded that this Council had declared both a Climate Emergency and an Ecological Emergency. These were serious decisions and meant that, as these were emergencies, 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.
- (3) 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.
- (4) The Chair advised for the purposes of clarification that 4.8.23(a) of the Constitution did not apply to this meeting.

### 5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation at the meeting.

### 6 ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

The Chair advised that items 6A, 6B and 6C, referred from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, would be taken with their respective items on the agenda.

### 7 ADOPTION OF A NEW HOUSING STRATEGY (2024-2029)

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet:

- (1) Approved the adoption of the Council's Housing Strategy (2024-2029).
- (2) Delegated to the Director of Housing and Environmental Health in conjunction with the Executive Member for Housing and Environmental Health, the power to make minor amendments to the Strategy.

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- (3) Delegated to the Director of Housing and Environmental Health in conjunction with the Executive Member for Housing and Environmental Health, the power to agree an annual action plan which will set out the specific actions to be undertaken to implement the Housing Strategy.
- (4) For matters that are not reserved for Cabinet, delegated to the Director of Housing and Environmental Health in conjunction with the Executive Member for Housing and Environmental Health, the power to decide on the specific allocation of homelessness funding received from central government in order to meet homelessness priorities, for the duration of the Strategy.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** The current Housing Strategy is coming to the end of its life. The proposed new Strategy will enable the Council to continue to undertake its strategic housing responsibilities over the next five years in a planned, transparent and inclusive manner.

## **8 EXPANSION OF THE SOFT PLASTICS COLLECTION TRIAL**

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet:

- (1) Agreed to the expansion of the Flex Collect trial and kerbside collections of soft plastics.
- (2) Delegated to the Service Director Place any necessary change to the collection demographic and area for the trial.

**REASONS FOR DECISIONS:**

- (1) One of the key aims of the project is to give insight into the types and quantities of soft plastics available for collection. The current Knebworth collections partially mimic the 2025 services, however the expansion of the service seeks to gather data from a wider demographic.
- (2) North Herts residents' current participation in the trial has yielded good participation levels with high volumes of soft plastics being collected per household. The Shared Waste Service is also gathering information on collection issues and the effectiveness of communication methods. Expanding the project will give the Council an opportunity to further test operational implications of collections, quantities and types of plastic collected from different areas and exploring processing requirements. The expanded trial more closely mimics the new service roll out in 2025.
- (3) The expanded trial coincides with the Shared Waste Service undertaking market testing in advance of considering processing options for material from 2025. The additional trial data will inform our future Material Recovery Facility (MRF) contract procurement or extension needs for 2025 and provide data for the wider industry to better prepare for the anticipated mandated collection of soft plastics.
- (4) The expansion of the trial is fully funded until April 2025 by the Flexible Plastics Fund.

## **9 SHARED PROSPERITY FUND PROCESS**

**R RESOLVED:** That Cabinet:

- (1) Considered and approved the proposed outline distribution of funding allocated (£510,000) to the Council by the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities for 2024/5 under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
- (2) Delegated approvals of individual grants and payments under the Fund to the relevant Executive Members and Service Directors, as identified with reference to Directorates in

table 8.1, and confirmed that the Parishes and Community Projects Fund decisions would be taken following consideration and recommendation by the Panel.

- (3) Approved the updated Cabinet Capital and Revenue Grants Panel's Terms of Reference, Appendix C.

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:** The approval of up to £518,000 capital investment for the Solar for Business Programme, in addition to the £51,285 capital funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

**REASONS FOR DECISIONS:**

- (1) The Council will be provided with funding in April 2024 to allocate to schemes which were originally outlined in the Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF) Investment Plan that was submitted in July 2021. This plan was approved by Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in January 2022.
- (2) The Funds regulations allow considerable flexibility in how the Council allocates funding and under which approved UK SPF Activities. Officers presented a report to the Leadership Team on 5th February 2024, which outlined how we are proposing to spend the remainder of the Fund in line with the UK SPF criteria set. The Leadership Team agreed with the proposal in principle, and therefore it has been brought to Cabinet for further consideration.
- (3) Once final approval has been obtained, the individual projects will be managed by the relevant North Herts Council (NHC) service areas. We are seeking approval to delegate approval of spend decisions, payments or grants made under the scheme to the relevant Executive Members and Service Directors, as identified under table 8.1 of this report.

## **10 STRATEGIC PLANNING MATTERS**

**RESOLVED:** That the report on strategic planning matters was noted.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To keep Cabinet informed of recent developments on strategic planning matters.

## **11 COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN: Q3 UPDATE AND PROJECTS FOR 2024/25**

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet:

- (1) Noted the progress against Council projects as set out in the Council Delivery Plan (Appendix A) and approves the changes to milestones.
- (2) Agreed the scope of the 24-25 Council Delivery Plan as detailed in paragraphs 8.8-8.10.
- (3) Noted the update on the Local Authority Housing Fund and wished to support round three of the scheme if it could.
- (4) Delegated to the Service Director Housing and Environmental Health and the Service Director Resources, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Environmental Health and Executive Member for Finance and IT, the final decision on submission of the validation form.

**REASONS FOR DECISIONS:**

- (1) The Council Delivery Plan (CDP) monitoring reports provide Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet with an opportunity to monitor progress against the key Council projects, and understand any new issues, risks or opportunities.

- (2) Making a recommendation on the 24-25 CDP means that the Q1 report will provide the information that the Committee wants. It also helps set the priorities for the Council, as those projects that form part of the CDP will be prioritised.

## 12 **THIRD QUARTER INVESTMENT STRATEGY (CAPITAL AND TREASURY) REVIEW 2023/24**

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet:

- (1) Noted the forecast expenditure of £6.521M in 2023/24 on the capital programme, paragraph 8.3 refers.
- (2) Approved the adjustments to the capital programme for 2023/24 onwards, as a result of the revised timetable of schemes detailed in table 2 and 3, increasing the estimated spend in 2024/25 by £0.960M.
- (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) Noted the position of Treasury Management activity as at the end of December 2023.

**REASONS FOR DECISIONS:**

- (1) Cabinet is required to approve adjustments to the capital programme and ensure the capital programme is fully funded.
- (2) 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.

## 13 **THIRD QUARTER REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2023/24**

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet:

- (1) Noted this report.
- (2) Approved the adjustments to the 2023/24 General Fund budget, as identified in table 3 and paragraph 8.2, a £415k decrease in net expenditure.
- (3) Approved the changes to the 2024/25 General Fund budget, as identified in table 3 and paragraph 8.2, a total £411k increase in net expenditure.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** Members are able to monitor, make adjustments within the overall budgetary framework and request appropriate action of Services who do not meet the budget targets set as part of the Corporate Business Planning process.