

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

DECISION SHEET

Meeting of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee held in the Council Chamber, District Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 3JF on Wednesday, 31st January, 2024 at 7.30 pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Terry Tyler.

2 MINUTES - 13 DECEMBER 2023

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 13 December 2023 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 audio recorded.
- (2) 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.
- (3) The Chair advised that section 4.8.23(a) of the Constitution applied to this meeting.

5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation at this meeting.

6 SIAS PROGRESS REPORT 2023-24

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

- (1) Noted the SIAS Progress Report for the period to 12 January 2024.
- (2) Noted the implementation status of the reported high priority recommendations.
- (3) Noted the plan amendments to the 2023/24 Annual Audit Plan.

7 INVESTMENT STRATEGY (INTEGRATED CAPITAL AND TREASURY)

RESOLVED: That the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee provided comments on and recommended the Investment Strategy (Integrated Capital and Treasury) to Cabinet.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET:

That Cabinet recommends to Council that they:

- (1) Approve the adoption of the Investment Strategy (as attached at Appendix A), including the capital programme and prudential indicators. This incorporates the changes referenced in paragraphs 5.1 to 5.3.

- (2) That Council approve the adoption of the four clauses in relation to the Code of Practice on Treasury Management (as detailed in paragraphs 8.10 to 8.16).

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (1) To ensure that the capital programme meets the Council's objectives and officers can plan the implementation of the approved schemes.
- (2) To ensure the Council's compliance with CIPFA's code of practice on Treasury Management, the Local Government Act 2003, statutory guidance from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and the CIPFA Prudential Code. As well as determining and managing the Councils risk appetite in respect of investments.

8 REVENUE BUDGET 2024/25

RESOLVED: That the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee provided comments on and recommended the Revenue Budget 2024/25 to Cabinet.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET:

- (1) That Cabinet approves the decrease in the 2023/24 working budget of £301k, as detailed in table 7.

That Cabinet recommends to Council that it:

- (2) Notes the position on the Collection Fund and how it will be funded.
- (3) Notes the position relating to the General Fund balance and that due to the risks identified a minimum balance of £2.48 million is recommended.
- (4) Notes the net revenue savings that are likely to be required in future years, combined with the Chief Finance Officer's section 25 report (Appendix D) which provides a commentary on the risks and reliability of estimates contained in the budget.
- (5) Approves the revenue savings and investments as detailed in Appendix B.
- (6) Approves a net expenditure budget of £20.265m, as detailed in Appendix C.
- (7) Approves a Council Tax increase of 2.99%, which is in line with the provisions in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS: To ensure that all relevant factors are considered in arriving at a budget and Council Tax level for 2024/25. To ensure that the budget is aligned to Council priorities for 2024/25 as set out in the Council Plan.

9 POSSIBLE AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

The Chair led a discussion regarding possible agenda items for future meetings and it was suggested that the Committee could receive updates on whether new contracts had any impact on future budgets. This was agreed with the Committee.