

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

DECISION SHEET

Meeting of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee held in the Council Chamber, District Council Offices, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 3JF on Wednesday, 4th September, 2024 at 7.30 pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2 MINUTES - 19 JUNE 2024

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 19 June 2024 be approved as amended, 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) 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 did not apply to this meeting.
- (4) The Chair confirmed that the meeting listed for the 25 September 2024 had been cancelled.
- (5) The Chair advised Members of the ongoing Community Governance Review survey which was being conducted to look at parish arrangements. The survey was open until the 7 October 2024 and posters had been provided to Members to distribute in their wards.

5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation at this meeting.

6 SAFS ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

RESOLVED: That the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee noted:

- (1) The activity undertaken by the Shared Anti-Fraud Service (SAFS) to deliver the 2023-24 Anti-Fraud Plan.
- (2) All anti-fraud activity undertaken by Council Officers and SAFS to protect the Council and the public fund it administers.

7 SAFS ANTI-FRAUD PROGRESS REPORT 2024-25

RESOLVED: That the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee noted the progress by Officers and the Shared Anti-Fraud Service to deliver the Anti-Fraud Plan for the Council.

8 SIAS ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

RESOLVED: That the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee noted the SIAS Annual Report 2023-24.

9 SIAS PROGRESS REPORT 2024-25

RESOLVED: That the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee noted:

- (1) The SIAS Progress Report for the period to 16 August 2024.
- (2) The implementation status of the reported high priority recommendations.
- (3) The plan amendments to the 2024/25 Annual Audit Plan.

10 UPDATED CONTRACT PROCUREMENT RULES FOR 2024-25

RESOLVED: That the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee noted the report.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: The adoption of the updated Contract Procurement Rules for 2024-25.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

- (1) The Contract Procurement Rules (CPRs) are part of the Council Constitution (under Section 20) and must be regularly reviewed and updated as part of the Council's governance and procurement review processes. This contributes to the Council's system of effective internal control.
- (2) The new CPRs reflect a significant update in line with the requirements of the Procurement Act 2023, incorporating detailed procedural guidance, and enhanced compliance and transparency measures. These changes aim to improve the efficiency, accountability, and effectiveness of the Council's procurement activities.

11 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2025-30

RESOLVED: That the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee noted the report.

RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET: The adoption of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-30.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION: Adoption of a MTFS and communication of its contents will assist in the process of forward planning the use of Council resources and in budget setting for 2025/2026 to 2029/2030, culminating in the setting of the Council Tax precept for 2025/26 in February 2025. Alongside the Council Plan, this will support the Council in setting a budget that is affordable and aligned to Council priorities.

12 FIRST QUARTER REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2024/25

RESOLVED: That the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee noted the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET:

- (1) That Cabinet note this report.
- (2) That Cabinet approves the changes to the 2024/25 General Fund budget, as identified in table 3 and paragraph 8.2, a £858k decrease in net expenditure.

- (3) That Cabinet notes the changes to the 2025/26 General Fund budget, as identified in table 3 and paragraph 8.2, a total £244k increase in net expenditure. These will be incorporated in the draft revenue budget for 2025/26.
- (4) That Cabinet delegates to the Service Director: Resources (in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance and IT) authority to enter in to a Business Rate Pooling arrangement (if available) if it is estimated that it will be in the financial interests of the Council.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS: 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.

13 FIRST QUARTER INVESTMENT STRATEGY (CAPITAL AND TREASURY) REVIEW 2024/25

RESOLVED: That the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee noted the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET:

- (1) That Cabinet notes the forecast expenditure of £30.415M in 2024/25 on the capital programme, paragraph 8.3 refers.
- (2) That Cabinet notes the position of the availability of capital resources, as detailed in table 2 paragraph 8.10 and the requirement to keep the capital programme under review for affordability.
- (3) Cabinet is asked to note the position of Treasury Management activity as at the end of June 2024.
- (4) Cabinet is asked to approve that we should proceed with the Local Authority Housing Fund round 3 and submit the Memorandum of Understanding so that we can receive the initial allocation of funds.

That Cabinet recommends to Council

- (5) That Council approves a capital budget of £0.080M to fund the purchase and installation of a new chiller at the museum, paragraph 8.4 refers.
- (6) That Council approves a capital budget of £1.920M (£0.96M in 24/25 and £0.96M in 25/26) for round 3 of the Local Authority Housing Fund. This will be fully funded from Government grants and housing provider contributions, paragraph 8.5 refers.
- (7) That Council approves bringing forward £0.008M of the backup and business continuity hardware capital budget (from 2025/26 to 2024/25) and reducing the 2025/26 budget to £0.057M.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (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.

14 POSSIBLE AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

The Chair led a discussion regarding possible agenda items for future meetings, no new items were suggested, and it was agreed that there would be pre-meeting training on risk scoring ahead of the November meeting.