

# NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## DECISION SHEET

Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, District Council Offices, Gernon Road,  
Letchworth, Herts, SG6 3JF  
on Tuesday, 10th September, 2024 at 7.30 pm

### 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

### 2 MINUTES - 25 JUNE 2024 AND 9 JULY 2024

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 25 June 2024 and 9 July 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) The Chair reminded Members that the Council had declared both a Climate Emergency and an Ecological Emergency. These are serious decisions, and mean 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.
- (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) The Chair advised of a change in the order of the agenda. Agenda Item 15 would be considered after Agenda Item 8.
- (6) The Chair advised Members that all residents were invited to take part in the Churchgate conversation to help shape the future vision of the Churchgate shopping area of Hitchin, via an online survey and a meet the team event on 17 September 2024.
- (7) 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

The Chair advised that Guy Foxell, OneYMCA, was in attendance for Agenda Item 11.

### 6 ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

The Chair advised that items 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 COMMUNITY SURVEY ROUND TWO RESULTS (MARCH-MAY 2024)**

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet commented on and noted the key findings and observations from round two of the Community Survey and comment on the approach to future surveys (as detailed in section 8.7.2).

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To ensure that Cabinet are aware of the round two results of our digital Community Survey and how they compare to both our round one (2023) results and the Local Government Association (LGA) February 2024 Resident Satisfaction phone survey results.

**8 COUNCIL PLAN 2024-2028**

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

- (1) The approval of the Council Plan (Appendix A) with the four new Council Priorities as outlined below:
  - Thriving Communities
  - Accessible Services
  - Responsible Growth
  - Sustainability
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Managing Director and Leader of the Council to approve any minor amendments to wording required as a result of the design process.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION:** The Council Plan is a key element of the corporate business planning process, as a high-level strategic document it sets out the Council's Priorities for the next four years. As an overarching policy framework document, it guides and influences the use of Council resources; providing a focus for activities, plans, and services that the Council provide. The introduction to the plan highlights the link between the Council Plan and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and service delivery plans.

**15 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2025-2030**

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:** The adoption of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2025-30, as attached at Appendix A.

**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.

**9 SUSTAINABILITY SPD**

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) The Cabinet adopted the Sustainability SPD, attached as a Supplementary Document to the agenda.
- (2) That Cabinet delegated authority to the Service Director – Regulatory, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Transport, to make any minor non-material corrections (including but not limited to cosmetic additions or presentational alterations) to the adopted Sustainability SPD as considered necessary for publication and publicity in accordance with the relevant regulations.

- (3) To support the recommendation in 2.1, Cabinet resolved to pursue the preparation of a separate Parking and Transport SPD contrary to the previous resolution to incorporate it into the Sustainability SPD in July 2021.

**REASONS FOR DECISIONS:**

- (1) To allow the Sustainability SPD to be adopted to support the delivery of the policies in the adopted Local Plan and ensure the securing of sustainable development in the District.
- (2) To encourage higher standards of design quality and sustainability across the District responding directly to the Council's pledges and ambitions as set out in the Climate Emergency and Ecological Emergency declarations.

**10 STRATEGIC PLANNING MATTERS**

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet:

- (1) Noted the report on strategic planning matters.
- (2) Endorsed the documents at Appendices A, C and D.
- (3) Noted and endorsed the revised Terms of Reference for the Strategic Planning Project Board at Appendix B.

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

**11 REVISED USE OF COMMUTED SUMS**

**RESOLVED:** That, subject to the completion of the necessary legal documentation, planning and regulatory requirements, Cabinet approved the allocation of £388.3k of commuted sums to One YMCA to aid their acquisition of Anderson House, Florence Street, Hitchin.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** This proposal has been made in order to support One YMCA's acquisition of Anderson House and in turn help meet the needs of some of the District's most vulnerable residents.

**12 COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2024-25 (QUARTER 1) UPDATE**

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet noted the progress against Council projects as set out in the Council Delivery Plan (Appendix A) including the new milestones that have been set for the current year.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** 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.

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

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet:

- (1) Noted the forecast expenditure of £30.415M in 2024/25 on the capital programme, paragraph 8.3 refers.
- (2) Noted 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) Noted the position of Treasury Management activity as at the end of June 2024.
- (4) Approved that the Council should proceed with the Local Authority Housing Fund round 3 and submit the Memorandum of Understanding so that the Council can receive the initial allocation of funds.

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:** That Council:

- (1) Approves a capital budget of £0.080M to fund the purchase and installation of a new chiller at the museum, paragraph 8.4 refers.
- (2) 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.
- (3) 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.
- (4) That Council approved bringing forward £0.672M of leisure funding to allow upgrades to the fitness facilities in Hitchin to take place in this financial year, instead of next financial year. This would be made up of the £0.300M budget for Member Change and Relaxation Area Refurbishment, and £0.372M of the 2025/26 allocation of the budget for providing capital funding to our leisure provider.

**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 FIRST QUARTER REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2024/25**

**RESOLVED:** That Cabinet:

- (1) Noted this report.
- (2) Approved 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) Noted 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) Delegated 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 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.