

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

DECISION SHEET

Meeting of the Council held in the Council Chamber, District Council Offices, Gernon Road,
Letchworth Garden City, SG6 3JF
on Thursday, 11th July, 2024 at 7.30 pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor David Barnard, Chris Hinchliff and Lisa Nash.

2 MINUTES - 23 MAY 2024

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 23 May 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 that the normal procedure rules in respect of debate and times to speak will apply.
- (5) The Chair advised that 4.8.23(a) of the Constitution applied to agenda items 15 and 16 and the corresponding referrals 8F and 8G. A comfort break would be held at an appropriate time, should proceedings continue at length.
- (6) The Chair thanked everyone involved in the General Election, specifically the Elections team. The Chair congratulated the three elected MPs covering the North Herts area and thanked those MPs that were unsuccessful in their re-election or who had stood down, for their service to North Herts.
- (7) The Chair announced that Kevin Abbiss, Helpdesk Customer Services Team Leader, had been working at North Hertfordshire for 40 years, and extended her gratitude to Kevin for his services to the Council.

It was:

RESOLVED: That the Council placed on record its sincere thanks and appreciation to Kevin Abbiss for his long and valuable service to Local Government.

5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Thursday, 11th July, 2024

Presentations were received by the Council from, Ms Catherine Beach and Ms Lynsey Moorley on behalf of SANDs and from Mr Graham Fisher regarding item 15 Land to the North of the Grange.

6 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

In accordance with Standing Order 4.8.11, 4 question had been submitted by the required deadline set out in the Constitution.

(A) Legal Advice Received on the Waste Contract Award

Councillor Ralph Muncer to Councillor Daniel Allen, Leader of the Council.

(B) Local Authority Flex Collect Scheme Rollout

Councillor Joe Graziano to Councillor Dave Winstanley, Executive Member for Housing and Environmental Health.

(C) Electric Vehicle Chargers in North Hertfordshire

Councillor Ralph Muncer to Councillor Chris Hinchliff, Executive Member for Planning and Transport.

(D) Planning Control Committee Agenda Management

Councillor Ruth Brown to Councillor Elizabeth Dennis, Chair of Planning Control Committee.

7 NOTICE OF MOTIONS

There were no motions submitted in accordance with Standing Order 4.8.12.

8 ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

The Chair advised that the items referred from Cabinet and the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee would be taken with the respective items on the agenda.

9 KEY DECISIONS - LEADER'S ANNUAL REPORT ON CASES OF SPECIAL URGENCY

RESOLVED: That Council noted the report.

REASON FOR DECISION: To comply with Regulation 19 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 ("the Regulations").

10 DISREGARD OF WAR DISABLEMENT INCOME

RESOLVED: That Council adopted the policy at Appendix B.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

- (1) The Housing Benefit Regulations make provision for the first £10 of a war disablement or war widow's pension to be disregarded when calculating an applicant's income relating to an application for housing benefit. The cost of this disregard is fully reimbursed to the Council by government.
- (2) The legislation also allows the Council to disregard any other part of these pensions and this Council has wholly disregarded the payments for a number of years when calculating housing benefit or council tax reduction entitlement.

- (3) The Council's council tax reduction scheme is aligned to housing benefit regulations and disregards war disablement or war widow pension.

11 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW TERMS OF REFERENCE

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Council agreed the Terms of Reference for the Community Governance Review, signifying the formal start of the Review and commencement of the first stage consultation.
- (2) That Council approved the additional budget of £20k required for the use of the Association of Electoral Administrators consultancy service to assist with delivering the Community Governance Review.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: The Council is required to keep parish electoral arrangements under review. Following the LGBCE review of district electoral arrangements (Council size and warding patterns), it is necessary to review parish arrangements across the district to bring them into alignment, ensure they remain fit for purpose, and to ensure they continue to reflect local needs.

12 ANNUAL REPORT ON RISK MANAGEMENT GOVERNANCE 2023-24

RESOLVED: That Full Council noted the report.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

- (1) The responsibility for ensuring the management of risks is that of Cabinet, they are assisted by Finance, Audit and Risk Committee who monitor the effective development and operation of Risk Management.
- (2) The Risk Management Strategy and Financial Regulations determine that Council should have overall oversight of Risk Management.

13 INVESTMENT STRATEGY (CAPITAL AND TREASURY) END OF YEAR REVIEW 2023/24

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Council approved the actual 2023/24 prudential and treasury indicators.
- (2) That Council noted the annual Treasury Report for 2023/24.
- (3) That Council approved a change to the Investment Strategy allowing investments to be placed on Lloyds Call Account so the combined total of Current Account and Call Account is up to £5M.

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.

14 REVENUE BUDGET OUTTURN 2023/24

RESOLVED: That Council approved the net transfer to earmarked reserves, as identified in table 9, of £2.028million.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

(1) 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.

(2) Changes to the Council's balances are monitored and approved.

15 LAND TO THE NORTH OF THE GRANGE (LG1) - STRATEGIC MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

RESOLVED: That the Strategic Masterplan Framework for Land to the North of the Grange (LG1), attached at Appendix A, is approved and adopted as a material planning consideration for relevant planning decisions relating to the site.

REASON FOR DECISION: To facilitate the delivery of a strategic site within the Council's adopted Local Plan. To accord with policy requirements of the Local Plan.

16 NORTH STEVENAGE STRATEGIC MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK

RESOLVED: That the motion was lost.

17 FINANCE, AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

RESOLVED: That Council noted the Annual Report of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee as attached at Appendix A.

REASON FOR DECISION: To provide Full Council with assurance as to the effectiveness of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.

18 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

RESOLVED: That the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2023/2024 as attached at Appendix A was noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable Council to consider and comment on the report of the Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the work of the Committee in the 2023/2024 Civic Year.

19 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That Council received and noted the Annual Report, as Appendix A.

REASON FOR DECISION: In line with recommended good governance practice to report the work of Standards Committee to the full Membership, to promote and maintain high standards of conduct and to demonstrate a strong commitment to ethical values.

20 LEISURE INVESTMENTS AND DECARBONISATION PROJECT

RESOLVED:

(1) That Council approves an increase in capital expenditure of £2.4m into the capital programme for the decarbonisation work to the three leisure centres. The overall budget will be profiled across 2024/25 and 2025/26.

Thursday, 11th July, 2024

- (2) That Council approves an increase in the capital budget of £250k for the Royston Leisure Centre (RLC) gym extension, to ensure the extension is built to net zero carbon standards.
- (3) That Council approves revenue expenditure of up to £757k for termination and removal fees of the gas CHPs at North Herts Leisure Centre and Hitchin Fitness and Swimming Centre. This would be funded from General Fund reserves.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

- (1) In May 2019, North Herts Council passed a climate emergency motion. This declaration asserted the council's commitment toward climate action beyond current government targets and international agreements. This is currently pursued through the North Herts Climate Change Strategy 2022-2027 which sets out what the council will aim to do to reduce its own carbon emissions to achieve Carbon Neutrality for the Council's own operations by 2030 and a Net Zero Carbon district by 2040.
- (2) Gas use from our leisure centres is a significant contributor towards the Council's own emissions. In 2022-23, gas use across the three leisure centres accounted for 1,428 tonnes CO₂e. This equates to 45% of the Council's Scope 1-3 emissions. Taking action to replace gas heating for our leisure centres with low carbon alternatives is the single most effective action we can take towards meeting our target of being carbon neutral by 2030.
- (3) There is currently a capital allocation in the 2024/25 budget to build a gym extension at Royston Leisure Centre.