

CABINET – TUESDAY, 23 JANUARY 2024

DECISION NOTICE

The following decisions were taken on Tuesday, 23 January 2024 by Cabinet.

Date notified to all Members: **Wednesday 24 January 2024.**
End of the call-in period is: **12 noon on Monday 29 January 2024.**

These decisions will not be implemented until after this date and time.

Present: P Peacock, R Cozens, S Crosby, L Brazier, K Melton, E Oldham, M Spoor, P Taylor and
R Holloway

<u>Agenda Item No.</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Decision</u>	<u>Action By</u>
6.	Council Tax Empty Homes Premium (Key Decision)	<p>That Cabinet recommends to Full Council the proposal to increase the long-term empty home premium as set out in paragraph 2.7 of the report, effective from 1 April 2024.</p> <p><u>Reasons for Decision:</u> To assist the Council with achieving its objectives of increasing the supply, choice, and standard of housing by reducing the number of empty homes across the district.</p> <p><u>Options considered:</u> The alternative is to leave charging unchanged.</p>	Nick Wilson, Business Manager- Financial Services
7.	2024/25 Housing Revenue Account Budget and Rent Setting (Key Decision)	<p>That Cabinet recommend to Full Council at its meeting on 13 February 2024:</p> <p>a) the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2024/25, as set out in Appendix A1 to the report;</p> <p>b) an increase of 7.7% in the 2023/24 rents of all properties in the HRA as at 31 March 2024 be applied from 1 April 2024; and</p> <p>c) the 2024/25 service charges, as set out in Appendix C to the report.</p> <p><u>Reasons for Decision:</u> To advise Members of the proposed HRA budget and charges in rent and service charge levels for 2024/25.</p> <p><u>Options considered:</u> Various modelling was undertaken to assess the impact of different rent levels on the viability of the HRA 30-year business plan to arrive at the recommendation made to</p>	Nick Wilson, Business Manager- Financial Services David Price, Business Manager – Housing Income and Leasehold Management

		<p>the Cabinet.</p> <p>Consideration was also given to varying increases between general needs and supported (sheltered and extra care) accommodation but no rationale was found to support this, alongside the equitable nature of any decision to do so.</p>	
8.	Biodiversity Net Gain - Policy and Actions (Key Decision)	<p>AGREED that Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) adopt and publish definitions of what constitutes 'significant enhancement' within mandatory BNG calculations as set out in Section 2 and Appendix A to the report; b) adopt and publish interim definitions to be used for 'strategic significance' within mandatory BNG calculations as set out in Section 2 and Appendix B to the report; c) approve for a 'call for sites – expressions of interest' exercise to be undertaken; and d) approve for officers to make an application for Newark and Sherwood District Council (NSDC) to be considered for Responsible Body status. <p><u>Reasons for Decision:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. '<u>Significant Enhancement</u>' – to provide clarity for applicants, facilitate efficiency for the Planning Development Team, future-proof alignment with emerging Policy DM7, and maximise opportunities to enhance and restore biodiversity within the district as required by Core Strategy Policy 12. 2. '<u>Strategic Significance</u>' – to provide clarity for applicants, in the interim period before the Nottinghamshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (NLRS) is published, and to facilitate efficiency for the Development Management Team when considering applications required to provide a BNG calculation. 3. '<u>Call for sites – expressions of interest</u>' – It is considered important for NSDC to be proactive regarding the potential provision of off-site biodiversity units within the district. This is to ensure that the biodiversity gains from development are provided close to development sites and at least within the district to avoid the district bearing the impacts on biodiversity with the benefits provided elsewhere. Also, to ensure that the district does not become an unfavourable area for developers due to an insufficient supply of off-site biodiversity units. 4. '<u>Responsible Body status</u>' – 	<p>Matt Lamb, Director - Planning and Growth Nick Law – Biodiversity and Ecology Lead Officer</p>

It is considered important that for NSDC to achieve full engagement of biodiversity net gain within the district, providers of off-site biodiversity units should not be constrained to a single option of entering into a Section 106 Agreement (s106) with NSDC. If their preference is to work with NSDC but via a Conservation Covenant rather than a s106, NSDC will only be able to do so if they have Responsible Body status.

DEFRA's timeline for deciding on Responsible Body applications is within 12 weeks. Therefore, it is recommended that NSDC is proactive and applies as soon as possible rather than be reactive in the future and potentially miss opportunities for engagement with landowners where the 12-week delay might be considered unacceptable.

This recommendation is made on the Lead Officer's understanding that, once awarded Responsible Body status, there is then no obligation to act as a Responsible Body if approached to do so.

All four proposals are considered to be consistent with, and provide an important contribution towards, Community Plan Objective 5 to Protect and enhance the District's natural environment and green spaces; specifically *"To plan an active role in biodiversity net gain for the district,..."*

Options considered:

For all four items, a 'do nothing' option has been considered.

For 'significant enhancement' and 'call for sites – expressions of interest' a further option involving a collaborative approach with other Nottinghamshire planning authorities has been considered.