

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Agenda Item:

**2**

**COUNCIL  
MINUTES**

**Date: Wednesday 8 October 2014**

**Time: 7.00 pm**

**Place: Council Chamber**

- Present:** The Mayor, S Batson MBE DL CC and  
Councillors D Bainbridge, L Bell, L Briscoe,  
R Broom, J Brown, H Burrell, M Cherney-Craw,  
L Chester, E Connolly, L Harrington, R Henry CC,  
J Hollywell, C Latif, Mrs J Lloyd, J Lloyd CC,  
A McGuinness, M McKay, J Mead, S Mead,  
R Parker CC, R Raynor, C Saunders, G Snell,  
S Speller, P Stuart, S Taylor OBE CC, H Tessier,  
J Thomas and A Webb
- Also present:** S Field (Youth Mayor) and J Barnes, H Jones,  
M Humberstone, I Boulton, J O MacCarthy, N Ani,  
A Garratt, J Klutse and M Monaghan (Youth Council)
- Start/End Time:** Start Time: 7.00 p.m.  
End Time: 9.58 p.m.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Bibby, G Clark D Cullen, J Gardner, M Gardner, D Kissane, M Notley, C Saunders and V Warwick.

There were no declarations of interest.

**2. MINUTES – COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY 16 JULY 2014**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on Wednesday 16 July 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

**3. MINUTES – SPECIAL COUNCIL - THURSDAY 28 AUGUST 2014**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Special Council held on Thursday 28 August 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

#### **4. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATION**

The Mayor provided Council with a brief update of events that she had attended since the last meeting.

She said that since the last update for Council she had attended 83 events, making 140 in total since taking office.

The Mayor then took the opportunity to draw Members attention to the 'See Less of Your Mayor' campaign in which she would be undertaking a sponsored slim to raise money for the Mayor's charities and to promote the benefits of living a healthier lifestyle.

The one stand-out event for the Mayor had been the parade in the town of the Royal Anglian Regiment on 24 July and she extended her thanks to everybody that had worked hard to ensure the success of the day. Council then received a short slide show of the event.

The Mayor concluded with a number of announcements:

Condolences were extended to Councillor Hugh Tessier following the death of his mother.

Congratulations were extended to Councillors Chris Saunders and Vickie Warwick on the birth of their son, Louis Peter, and to Councillor Howard Burrell on the event of his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday.

#### **5. MAIN DEBATE – 'THE VOTE FOR WORK EXPERIENCE'**

Council received a presentation from members of the Youth Council on the value of work experience under the title 'WE4YOU – The Vote for Work Experience'.

During the presentation which included personal feedback from members of the Youth Council of their experience of work placements the Youth Council put four proposals to the Council:

1. The Council was asked to significantly increase the number of quality work placements offered by the Authority.
2. The Council was asked to support the Youth Council with their initiative to sign up local businesses to WE4YOU and be the first employer to sign up for the campaign.
3. The Council was asked to support the Youth Council to produce a 'Hints & Tips' Guide for employers and promote it via a series of articles in the Economic Development Newsletter and to offer to print a separate Work Experience leaflet for distribution.

4. The Council was asked to partner the Youth Council to organise and host a Work Experience Fayre for local employers and young people and to provide financial assistance to meet the cost through the Local Community Budget scheme.

The Mayor thanked the Youth Council for their attendance and presentation.

In proposing the Motion Councillor Mrs Lloyd advised Council that a positive work experience placement could enhance a young person's CV; that a placement could sometimes 'open doors' and could inform an individual's decision making when it came to making career choices and that employers should be encouraged to make places available for young people.

She hoped that the Council could be the first employer in the Borough to sign up to an initiative to encourage Work Experience.

Councillor S Speller in seconding the Motion encouraged young people to try to find their own placements as it could encourage their self-sufficiency to do so. He said that it was important that the talents of young people in the town be developed.

A full debate ensued with both Councillors and members of the public taking part. Members spoke in favour of Work Experience and other points raised included:

- Disappointment that some schools appeared not to fully support work experience for their students
- The shortage of suitable places was a major obstacle
- The Council should be a model employer in terms of offering Work Experience in all its forms
- The Council could work with the Youth Council to draw up a charter to encourage schools, colleges and local employers to sign up to the promotion of work experience for young people.
- The production of a 'hints and tips' guide would be vital for employers as all too often placements could be ad hoc and of varying usefulness
- Other partners, such as the County Council, should be encouraged to participate
- Careers guidance that used to be offered by the County Council was now the remit of Herts Connexions.
- Members of the Youth Council should challenge the governors of their schools to be more positive in their support of Work Experience placements for their students.

The Motion was then put to vote and it was **RESOLVED:**

"That this Council actively explore the proposals made in the presentation with a view to supporting and or implementing them,

where financially and practically possible, in partnership with the Youth Council."

The Leader concluded by saying that she hoped the Youth Council could return on an annual basis to present on a topic relevant to young people.

**6. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS**

None

**7. QUESTIONS FROM THE YOUTH COUNCIL**

None

**8. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC.**

None.

**9. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S UPDATE**

In the absence of the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition Council moved straight to the Leader of the Council's updates.

Council received updates about the following:

- SOActive (Bedwell)
- Stevenage Rugby Club
- Stevenage Museum's 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday
- Stevenage Against Domestic Violence
- Operation Vector
- National Older People's Day
- Children's Centres Procurement Update
- Summer Holiday Play Schemes
- Summer Fillerz
- Herts Bus Consultation
- On-Line Business Consultation
- Resident Involvement
- Housing Enforcers TV Programme

The Leader commented that the Housing Enforcers programme had demonstrated high levels of customer service in both the Homeless and Housing Advice teams and passed on her thanks to all concerned.

**10. NOTICE OF MOTIONS**

None

**11. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO COMMITTEE CHAIRS /  
PORTFOLIO HOLDERS**

Council had received three questions that were outlined in the order of business:

- A. The Portfolio Holder Resources replied to the question relating to the refurbishment works to the Arts and Leisure Centre Walkway.

Council was advised that the works to the walkway had been funded through an allocation of New Homes Bonus and that the anticipated total cost would amount to £82,000. The Portfolio Holder detailed the work that had been carried out and said that the remaining work of installing some panels depicting rural scenes required the permission of neighbouring businesses to complete.

The Portfolio Holder then replied to a supplementary question concerning measures to address the issue of beggars and vagrants in the area.

Council was advised that a campaign to deter townspeople from giving money to such individuals had been initiated and that the Police, assisted by increased numbers of British Transport Police Officers based at the railway station, would move on any persons found to be begging in the vicinity of the walkway.

- B. The Portfolio Holder Economy, Enterprise and Transport replied to the question concerning the changes to bus services as a result in the cuts to route subsidies made by the County Council .

Council was advised that concerns had been expressed at the level of reductions to subsidies and their impact on residents of the town, however it would be the responsibility of the County Council to carry out a study into the effects on residents. The County Council were then called upon to carry out such a study.

In reply to a supplementary question concerning the factual accuracy of a press release issued by the Council concerning the cuts, the Portfolio Holder undertook to check the content of the press release.

- C. The Portfolio Holder Resources replied to the question concerning the implementation of car parking charges in the Fairlands Valley Showground on days when Stevenage Football Club played home games.

Council was advised that in total £1400 had been spent with regard to the implementation of match day car parking and that Executive Members and senior officers had met with the Football Club's

Chairman and the Supporters Association to discuss future implementation.

The Portfolio Holder then replied to a supplementary question concerning the extent of consultation undertaken and the level of the proposed charge.

Council was advised that a high level of consultation had taken place in advance of the proposed implementation and that local residents had given their feedback, however consultations with the Supporters Association and a wider swathe of residents remained ongoing.

## **12. ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW**

Council considered a report seeking approval for updates to the 2014/2105 Treasury Management and Investment Strategy.

Council was advised that the Audit Committee and the Executive had concurred with the recommendations as set out in the report.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED**:

1. That the 2013/14 Annual Treasury Management Review and 2014/15 Mid-Year Review and the prudential and treasury indicators contained within the report be approved.
2. That changes to the treasury limits (as detailed in paragraph 4.8.2 of the report) be approved.
3. That the change to the operational borrowing limit for the General Fund and hence the change to the authorised limit (as detailed in paragraph 4.8.5 of the report) be approved.

## **13. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES**

Council considered an Officer report proposing amendments to the existing Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations Order.

During the debate it was noted that an Equality Impact Assessment had not been presented with the report and that preparation of such an assessment should be considered in future.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That a new Polling Districts and Polling Places Order, to come into operation on 1 December 2014, be made.

2. That each Polling District and the Polling Districts bordering it be designated as the Polling Place for that Polling District.
3. That the new Polling Districts and Polling Places Order be based on the existing Order in so far as no changes to the Polling Districts are recommended but it is noted that the Returning Officer has agreed the following changes to Polling Stations –
  - Polling District CBB (Old Town Ward) to be changed from the Bunyan Baptist Church to the Cromwell Hotel.
  - Polling District CBD (Old Town Ward) to be changed from the Scout Association Building, rear of Barclay School to The Royal Oak Public House.

#### **14. REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS**

Council considered an Officer report detailing revisions to Standing Orders along with a draft protocol for members of the public wishing to report on Council meetings.

The Chief Executive informed Council that he had been notified by the Leader of the Opposition of his agreement to the content of the report.

Concern was expressed at the proposed method for choosing the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Opposition and it was suggested that there should be two Leaders of the Opposition.

The Leader commented that the appendix attached to the report indicated that WiFi was not available in the Council Chamber and requested that the lack of provision be investigated.

It was **RESOLVED** that the revisions to Standing Orders as detailed in section 4 of the report are approved\*.

\* Councillors A McGuinness, R Parker CC and G Snell requested that their votes opposing this resolution be recorded.

#### **15. AUDIT COMMITTEE – 12 JUNE 2014**

The Council had before it the minutes from the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 12 June 2014.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the minutes from the Audit Committee meeting held on 12 June 2014 are noted.

**16. AUDIT COMMITTEE – 3 SEPTEMBER 2014**

The Council had before it the minutes from the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 3 September 2014.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the minutes from the Audit Committee meeting held on 3 September 2014 are noted.

**17. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED**:

1. That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of Exempt information as described in paragraphs 1-7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by SI 2006 No. 88.
2. That Members having considered the reasons for the following item being in Part II determined that maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighed the public interest in disclosure.

**PART II**

**18. PART II MINUTES – SPECIAL COUNCIL – 28 AUGUST 2014**

Council had before it the Part II Minutes of the Special Council meeting held on 28 August 2014.

Council was informed that as soon as the information in the Part II Minutes could be made public Members would be advised as soon as possible.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II Minutes of the Special Council meeting of 28 August 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

**Mayor**