

**COUNCIL**

**9 MARCH 2022**

**SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA**

**PART I**

**5. QUESTIONS FROM THE YOUTH COUNCIL**

Answers to questions submitted by the Youth Council are attached.

Pages 3 - 6

**6. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Answers to questions submitted by the Public are attached.

***[Please note that the Mayor has accepted an additional question, the text of which, together with the answer, is attached. This question was formulated at a Stevenage Bus Users Group Meeting held on 1 March 2022, and hence was received after the deadline date for questions.]***

Pages 7 – 8

**9. NOTICE OF MOTIONS**

The Mayor has accepted an additional urgent motion submitted by the Labour Group, the text of which is attached.

Pages 9 - 10

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

Answers to questions submitted by Members to Committee Chairs / Portfolio Holders are attached.

Pages 11 - 16

**12. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2022/23**

An Addendum report and revised Appendix A are attached (to reflect the recently agreed NJC Pay Award for 2021/22 of a 1.75% increase in pay).

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**COUNCIL – 9 MARCH 2022**

**QUESTIONS FROM THE YOUTH COUNCIL**

**AGENDA ITEM**

**5**

- (A) What are the plans for the Youth Centre at Bowes Lyon House? Will this affect the Youth Council?**

*Answer (Councillor Richard Henry):*

Bowes Lyon House is owned and maintained by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and is currently the base for YC Herts as a centre for youth service. Stevenage Borough Council is not aware of any immediate plans the County Council have for the building however officers have held discussions with their HCC counterparts concerning the opportunity to build a brand new state of the art leisure centre, including a swimming pool on or near the existing swimming centre site on St. Georges Way funded in part through the Towns Fund scheme. There is an opportunity to include youth service provision within the new building, but this is yet to be determined with the County Council. Regardless of this decision, the support for the Youth Council will continue, as will this Council's ongoing advocacy for effective youth work and places for young people to meet across the town.

- (B) Are the Council supporting Young People to get a house or learn more about housing?**

*Answer (Councillor Jeannette Thomas):*

The Council's Housing Options service works closely with colleagues at Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) to ensure young people receive the support they need. We have a joint housing protocol to ensure that homeless young people or those faced with homelessness receive the best possible support. You have been sent some leaflets and information in respect of the Hertfordshire Joint Housing Protocol that you may find interesting and there's some links below to Centrepoin for further reading.

The Council also makes referrals to charities and partners, such as Herts Young Homeless, who can offer specialised support.

Applicants can join the Council's housing register for social housing in Stevenage at 16. The Council has an ambitious programme to develop more social and affordable housing, having completed 300 homes already with a further 300 currently under construction. However, the Council cannot address the town's housing needs on its own, hence why we are working very hard with partners such as MACE and the Guinness Trust amongst others, whilst also securing further affordable home provision through the Planning process. The information on our website may also be of interest to you:

<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/housing-register>

<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/housing/homelessness-and-housing-advice>

The part of your question concerning helping young people learn more about housing is really interesting and something which could be discussed further with colleagues at HCC. I agree it is vital for young people to have realistic expectations of the housing options available to them in the future. Training on managing of bills and the understanding of tenancy agreements is all vital and would no doubt reduce the challenges many young people face.

**Centrepoint** is the UK's leading youth homeless charity, providing housing and support for young people across the country. In 2021, they launched their strategy to end youth homelessness by 2037.

**Ed Tytherleigh** is the *Director of Support and Housing at Centrepoint*, and is responsible for the delivery of their frontline services across the country.

Ed spoke to **MyGovCentral.com** recently about:

- What needs to be done to end homelessness in the UK, and the 2037 Centrepoint strategy
- How the Government can provide better support to organisations working to end homelessness
- The impact of the 2018 Rough Sleeping Strategy so far

You can hear, and read, what Ed had to say in his interview at **MyGovCentral.com**, which is an online resource highlighting shared learning opportunities and best practice.

**(C) The Youth Council have noticed a high amount of litter in Stevenage. How are the Council looking to resolve this? The Youth Council would love to support a campaign on this subject.**

*Answer (Councillor John Gardner):*

Thank you for your question and for taking an interest in the appearance of the town. I am pleased to be able to inform you that there are a number of initiatives in place to help tackle littering in Stevenage:

- (1) The Council already supports residents and community groups who wish to undertake a litter pick in their local area. Advice is available on the Council's web pages - <https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/community-litter-picking> - and the loan of equipment (including litter pickers, high vis jackets, gloves etc) can also be requested from this link.
- (2) A new litter campaign will be launched in March 2022. Last autumn an artwork competition was held, via the Play Centres, to support the litter campaign. From March 2022 two of the Council's refuse trucks will be displaying banners with the winning artwork. This artwork will also be used on posters that will be displayed in notice boards in parks and

neighbourhood centres, and will also be shared via social media - #CleanGreen. Officers will also be providing updates on the campaign via the Council's webpages.

- (3) Each year we support the Great British Spring Clean campaign by Keep Britain Tidy. This year we will be delivering six community litter picks across the town during 25 March – 10 April. If the Youth Council would like to support any of these events please contact Amy Danaher, Environmental Development Officer, who is co-ordinating this year's activities.
- (4) There is also a programme of litter roadshow events taking place in litter hotspots in the town. The first of these was held in the Town Centre in January. These events have a focus on education; informing residents that littering is illegal and could result in a fine, or being prosecuted through the courts.
- (5) To support enforcement action the Council's Community Safety Officers and the Neighbourhood Wardens are having their Police accreditation renewed so that they are able to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for littering.

We will continue to consider opportunities for other events / activities to support the litter campaign and help keep Stevenage Clean, Green and Tidy. If the Youth Council have suggestions for getting involved themselves and/or communicating with and involving young people more widely I would be happy to meet them with our officers to discuss the matter further.

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**COUNCIL – 9 MARCH 2022****QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC****Questions to Portfolio Holders**

(A) Question from Mr Jim Borchers

“It has recently come to my attention that some secondary schools in Hertfordshire may not be recycling their waste paper due to cost.

Please could you let me know if there are any schools within the Stevenage District that Stevenage Borough Council does not currently collect waste paper for recycling from?

If there are any schools that do not recycle their paper with Stevenage Borough Council please could you provide a list of those that do and those that do not.”

***Answer (Cllr John Gardner):***

*SBC currently collects recycling materials, including paper, from 36 schools in Stevenage through our trade waste service.*

*We don't hold paper collection data on other schools within Hertfordshire, and all schools are able to make their own arrangements for this service through us or other trade waste organisations.*

**[The Mayor has accepted the following question, formulated at a Stevenage Bus Users Group Meeting held on 1 March 2022, and hence received after the deadline date for questions.]**

(B) Question from Mr David Martin (Treasurer, Stevenage Bus Users Group)

“With the proposed opening date of Stevenage Interchange now imminent, and decisions still required for the implementation of operational services on the site (e.g. customer information desk, facilities management, open/closure times, mobility centre, etc ) can the Portfolio Holder state at what stage(s) these operational considerations have reached, and when shall contracts for the services be determined?”

***Answer (Cllr Lloyd Briscoe):***

*The Council is really proud to be nearing the physical completion of the new bus interchange, which will provide significantly improved facilities for residents, as well as promote further opportunities for investment in bus services in Stevenage. The Council is grateful for the constructive engagement with stakeholders and the public, including BUGS, through the design process. The facility will deliver indoor passenger waiting facilities away from the cold and rain, real time passenger information, and high quality connections between the station, bus interchange and Town Square. The Council is pleased to report that the physical construction of the*

*building, public realm and bus stands is almost complete. The next stages of the project will include the final road improvements to Lytton Way, likely to take place in April 2022, and testing with the bus operator(s) to ensure a safe opening can be planned for. The process to secure an operator for the facility is underway, and we expect to be able to share more news on this next month. The Council will be inviting stakeholders to visit the facility over the coming weeks and look forward to offering the chance for BUGS members to view the facility again.*



## COUNCIL MEETING – 9 MARCH 2022

### ITEM 9 - MOTIONS

The Mayor has accepted as an urgent item of business the following motion, relating to the situation in Ukraine.

#### 6. Ukraine

To be moved by the Labour Group.

“That this Council expresses its strong solidarity and support for the people of Ukraine and agrees that this be expressed on behalf of the Council and the people of Stevenage.

We express our solidarity and support to the Ukraine community in Stevenage and pledge assistance within our powers with their humanitarian aid efforts.

Council agrees to undertaking the following action urgently and in writing:

- To the Russian Ambassador in the UK, demanding that he requests his Government to withdraw troops from Ukraine immediately;
- To the Ukrainian Ambassador in the UK, expressing the Council’s support and solidarity, and respect for his nation’s sovereignty, freedom and courage; and
- To the Prime Minister of the UK, asking that all efforts are made to welcome refugees coming from Ukraine to the UK, and advise of our willingness to help settle individuals and families whose lives have so sadly and suddenly been affected by the military action in Ukraine.”

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COUNCIL – 9 MARCH 2022

## MEMBERS QUESTIONS

### Questions to Portfolio Holders / Committee Chairs

(A) Question from Councillor Nicholas Leech

'Why are Stevenage Borough Council recycling rates so far below our neighbouring councils according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS)\*?'

\* See [Table 1: Local Authority Collected and Household Waste Statistics 2014-15 to 2020-21, England](#)

#### **Answer (Councillor John Gardner):**

*The “waste hierarchy” ranks waste management options according to what is best for the environment. It gives top priority to preventing waste in the first place, but where waste is created it then gives priority to preparing it for re-use, followed by recycling. In the five years prior to Covid (2014-15 to 2019/20), Stevenage achieved a 7.5% decrease in the amount of residual waste produced by residents, despite an increase of around 4.5% in the number of households within the town. During this same period recycling rates rose from 38.2% to 39.5%. The Council will continue to campaign for less waste, but to also increase up-take of re-use and recycling where necessary. The Council has developed a range of options to increase recycling participation, and is awaiting the release of the Government’s Resources & Waste Strategy to ensure consistency of approach and access to ‘new burdens’ funding.*

*There are a number of contributory factors to the recycling rate in Stevenage:*

- *Many of the other Local Authorities in Hertfordshire offer a separate food waste collection service. Regular weekly collections tend to encourage residents to be more proactive in their recycling of food waste. Hertsmere and Three Rivers are pilot study districts for a food waste recycling initiative, which could be increasing their food waste collections.*

*A report by WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme) advised that the introduction of separate weekly food waste collections in Stevenage would help increase household recycling rates by an anticipated 4-5%. Officers have been undertaking work to consider this, alongside the emerging national Resources & Waste Strategy, with the intention of rolling the new service out when Government ‘new burdens’ funding is available to cover the additional costs.*

- *We currently experience lower recycling rates at our many flat blocks in the town. We will begin to address the issue through improving understanding and education of recycling to flat block residents. However, not all of Stevenage flat blocks are currently provided with on-site recycling facilities. This is due to lack of access and/or lack of space for recycling facilities. A*

*project is being developed to provide or improve recycling facilities in some flat blocks, as a pilot, when funding is available.*

- Many of our neighbouring authorities provide a 180lt or 140lt refuse bin to their residents. This limits the amount of space for their residents to dispose of residual waste, thereby encouraging them to recycle more. Historically, Stevenage has provided a 240lt bin for residual waste, and that is what the vast majority of our residents have. The Stevenage Waste Policy, adopted in 2020, sets out that SBC will provide residents with a 180lt bin in future. However, the cost to provide a new 180lt wheeled bin to every household in Stevenage would be in excess of £750,000, so the new smaller bins are currently being rolled out on a needs basis, ie. the smaller bins being provided to residents as a new one is requested. Over time with smaller refuse bins in place for all households in Stevenage, WRAP indicate that a 4-5% increase in recycling rates could be achieved.*
- Most Hertfordshire authorities offer their residents a co-mingled recycling collection ie. one wheeled bin for tins, cans, plastic, paper and card, which may encourage higher recycling rates. In Stevenage we currently collect recycling in separate receptacles. Historically, the Council's ability to sell separate recycling materials has enabled us to obtain the best prices to offset the cost of operating the service, and the annual income from these sales has been in the region of £500,000 plus. However, with the proposed changes in the national Resources and Waste Strategy our ability to generate income to help off-set the cost of delivering waste management services may be reduced. Officers have already undertaken some preliminary work to consider our options (benefits and implications) for delivering our recycling services, including separate weekly food waste collections, differently in future.*

*Consultation on the national Resources & Waste Strategy has been carried out on a phased basis since 2019. Many of the local considerations for how we deliver, and fund, recycling services in the future are dependent on the outcome of the consultation. It is currently anticipated that further guidance will be made available by Government in Spring 2022, but initial indications are that it should be possible to increase the recycling rate in Stevenage to 50%+.*

(B) Question from Councillor Julie Ashley-Wren

*'Even before recent storms damage, we were receiving numerous reports about SBC owned fences not being repaired for months, sometimes years, after having been reported.*

- a. What was the reason for this?*
- b. What actions has the Council taken to put the matter right?'*

***Answer (Councillor Jeannette Thomas):***

*We have received over 300 reports of damaged fences following the most recent storms, and we are expecting this figure to rise, which places a huge burden on our capacity and resources. We appreciate the work of Stevenage*

*Direct Services colleagues in responding swiftly and effectively to the challenges presented, from fallen trees and safety challenges, to cleansing and clean-up operations, and other repair works.*

*Annual storms and high winds increase the demands on the Repairs service, which means cases sometimes have to be re-prioritised, resulting in delays to some cases.*

*As with a wide number of councils and Registered Social Landlords, the impact of Covid-19 has also been a factor, at times resulting in the delivery of essential / urgent works only across all Repairs trades. A resultant impact of the pandemic was also a global materials shortage, affecting a range of sectors.*

*We are assessing and prioritising the most recent reports, and are undertaking repairs via this analysis, using in-house staff and contractors, but it will take some time to work our way through these and we are grateful for customers' understanding during this period.*

*Maintaining fencing is a challenging aspect for many social landlords, who are balancing investment decisions in housing stock, alongside issues such as fencing.*

*We are assessing the longer term challenges and implications, to identify the options going forward for further consideration.*

*We are reviewing our Asset Management Strategy and supporting plans to help inform the refreshed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 30 year Business Plan, and our approach to fencing and future programmes will be incorporated as part of the review.*

(C) Question from Councillor Stephen Booth

'Which of the following has been the cause of the additional funding necessary to complete the new Bus Interchange:

Was it a failure by the contractor to include the additional works in their tender?; or

Was it a failure by the Council to properly scope the works before inviting tenders?'

**Answer (Councillor John Gardner):**

*The Bus Interchange project has seen the delivery of new indoor passenger waiting facilities, a covered concourse with bus gates, bus priority improvements on Lytton Way, enhanced pedestrian links between the rail station, bus interchange and Town Square, and the refurbishment of the station lift. The early stages of the project were exceptionally challenging. As Growth Deal 3 funding was restricted by the Government for over three years, this Council had to invest at risk, to ensure that if the money was released, designs and contracts would be sufficiently advanced to enable us to use the money for*

*the betterment of the town, rather than see it returned to Government, without any extension to the spend window.*

*In addition, the construction period of the bus interchange has coincided with the pandemic, causing untold pressures on material prices and availability, supply chains and safe working practices on site. Whilst a small increase to the overall budget was required to ensure that all of the benefits could be delivered, the project delivers excellent value for money, and we are proud of the way the project has been delivered in the face of adversity.*

(D) Question from Councillor Andy McGuinness

'What steps are the Council taking to alleviate the impact on local residents of the unwelcome and unnecessary development at Gresley Park?'

**Answer (Councillor John Gardner):**

*Stevenage Borough Council raised concerns over the impact of the Gresley Park development during the planning application that was considered by East Herts Council. It was acknowledged that although the development is in East Herts, the new residents would use parts of Stevenage's infrastructure to meet their needs.*

*Working collaboratively with East Herts Planning team, officers were able to secure direct payments in the Section 106 Obligation to SBC of £668,000 for Stevenage leisure and sports facilities; £437,000 to the NHS for Stevenage surgeries; £5.5M to Hertfordshire County Council (as education provider) for secondary schools in Stevenage; on site primary schools; subsidised bus routes into Stevenage and extended cycle routes and crossings into Stevenage. We trust this will go somewhere to mitigating the impacts of the development and providing access for the new residents to Stevenage as a whole.*

(E) Question from Councillor Robin Parker

Reference the recent traffic difficulties along Lytton Way, and acknowledging that HCC are the highway authority:

- a. What part did SBC play in the arrangements implemented?
- b. In retrospect, what should have been done better?
- c. What further disruption to traffic on Lytton Way is expected as a result of future town centre regeneration works?'

**Answer (Councillor John Gardner):**

*Works to Lytton Way have been carried out for a number of months, in conjunction with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and Ringway, to implement the highway improvements required by the bus interchange planning permission. Recent lane closures to carry out works to the central reservation, which was previously in a state of disrepair, were consistent with the methodology used over the past six months. However, due to the increase in traffic following the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions, and high demand for the*

*Town Centre, the lane closures resulted in a significantly greater level of disruption than at other stages of the project.*

*Despite the impact of Storm Eunice, the works were completed on time, ensuring the period of disruption was as short as possible. The Council is delivering a large-scale town centre regeneration programme, with the aim of keeping the town centre operational during the programme, rather than closing it down. This will unfortunately result in a level of disruption that is unavoidable at different stages in the works, but is essential to enable us to deliver an improved town centre.*

(F) Question from Graham Snell

'On the recently installed hoarding around the now closed Swingate car park in Stevenage Town Centre, there has been a number of information boards telling the story of Stevenage, which are very interesting.

- a. Are these the same boards that were previously around the new bus station?
- b. What was the cost of (i) supplying them (ii) installing them and (iii) who paid?'

**Answer (Councillor John Gardner):**

*Following positive feedback relating to the digital Stevenage timeline, which is available in full on the Stevenage Museum website, the existing design has been re-used on the hoardings currently located at Swingate House. This will enable the design and content to provide maximum value for money, by being used multiple times within the town centre. The total cost for the design, manufacture and installation of the timeline at Swingate is approximately £5,000, which will be funded by external project funding. The hoardings provide an excellent opportunity to showcase art and culture, as well as inform people about the regeneration proposals.*

(G) Question from Councillor Tom Wren

'Supplementary question to the question submitted by Cllr. Wren to Council for the 15th December 2021 meeting. Were any Government grants or funding schemes available for the Council to use for insulation or other works as part of the Major Refurbishment Contract?'

**Answer (Councillor Jeannette Thomas):**

*At the time the Major Refurbishment Contract (MRC) was procured there was not any applicable funding available to support the delivery of the programme. Whilst there has since been some Government funding which the Council can bid for, this has been focused on individual properties in an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) band D or below and not flat blocks. We do not have certainty over any future funding which may be available, and to date the Council has not secured any funding which would be applicable to, or support, the delivery of works to flat blocks through the MRC programme.*

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Part 1 – Release to Press



**Meeting: COUNCIL**

Portfolio Area: Members' Services



**Date: 9 MARCH 2022**

## **ADDENDUM REPORT – MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2022-2023**

Author – Ian Gourlay Ext No. 2307  
Lead Officer – Matt Partridge Ext No. 2456  
Contact Officer – Ian Gourlay Ext No. 2307

### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To recommend to Council a Members' Allowances Scheme for 2022-2023.
- 1.2 Since the drafting of the original report, the NJC Pay Award for 2021-2022 has been agreed, with a pay increase of 1.75%. Accordingly, the Allowances Scheme has been adjusted, as set out in a revised Appendix A attached to this addendum report

### **2. REVISED RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That a Members' Allowances Scheme be agreed for 2022-2023, as set out in the revised Appendix A to this addendum report, be agreed.
- 2.2 That the Scheme be updated should an NJC Pay Award be agreed for 2022-2023.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 As per the original report.

### **4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTIONS AND OTHER OPTIONS**

- 4.1 As per the original report.  
Council – 9 March 2022

## **5. IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Financial Implications**

As per the original report.

### **5.2 Legal Implications**

As per the original report.

## **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

- Report of Independent Remuneration Panel – January 2020
- Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003

## **APPENDICES**

- REVISED Appendix A - Recommended Members' Allowances Scheme for 2022-2023.

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME**

**EFFECTIVE FROM 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 (figures to be uplifted should an NJC Pay Award be agreed for 2022-2023)**

Stevenage Borough Council has made the following Members' Allowances scheme under the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

1. This scheme may be cited as the Stevenage Borough Council Members' Allowances Scheme, and shall have effect for the year 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

2. In this scheme,

“Councillor” means a Member of the Stevenage Borough Council who is a Councillor; “year” means the period ending on 31 March 2023.

3. Basic Allowance

A basic allowance shall be paid to each Councillor from 1 April 2022.

4. Special Responsibility Allowances

1) For each year a special responsibility allowance shall be paid to those Councillors who hold the special responsibilities in relation to the authority that are specified in the schedule to this scheme.

2) Subject to paragraph 6, (part year entitlements) the amount of each such allowance shall be the amount specified against that special responsibility in that schedule.

3) Members are only able to claim one SRA.

5. Renunciation

A Councillor may by notice in writing to the Chief Executive elect to forego any part of their entitlement to an allowance under this scheme.

6. Part-year Entitlements

Payment of Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances will be pro-rata where Councillors do not serve for a full year on the Council.

7. Payments

Payments shall be made on a regular monthly basis. Claims for dependent carer's allowances and travel and subsistence allowance shall be made within two months of being incurred.

## 8. Suspension of Payments

The Council will withhold all allowances to any Councillor who is suspended for misconduct and will require Councillors to repay any allowance already paid during a period of suspension.

### **Basic Allowances**

Basic Allowance	Paid to All Members	£8,160
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### **Special Responsibility Allowances**

(i)	Leader of the Council	£22,906
(ii)	Executive Members	£11,218
(iii)	Chair of Planning and Development Committee	£11,218
(iv)	Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee	£10,074
(v)	Chair of Licensing Committee	£4,582
(vi)	Chairs of Select Committees	£5,727
(vii)	Chair of Audit Committee	£4,582
(viii)	Leader of the Opposition	£4,582
(ix)	Leader of minority opposition party(ies)	£1,568

### **Payment to Specific Co-opted Members**

Independent Member - Audit Committee	£1,385
Independent person who must be consulted on alleged breaches of a code of conduct	£1,385

### **Carer's Allowance**

The following amounts may be claimed for Councillors attending approved duties.

Childcare	Maximum of £11.50 per hour
Dependant care	Maximum of £26.14 per hour

Payment to relatives that live in the same household as the Councillor will not be admissible and there will be a maximum allowance of 20 hours per month. Receipts will need to be provided.

### **Travel, Subsistence and Other Allowances**

The allowances for travel and subsistence will be the same as those fixed for employees of the Council from time to time. Claims to be submitted within 2 months of the date to which they relate.

### **Variations**

The Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances detailed above are index linked to any pay awards applicable to NJC staff that may be agreed for 2022-2023.