

**ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE  
MINUTES**

Date: Wednesday, 13 March 2019

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Shimkent Room - Shimkent Room - Daneshill House, Danestrete

**Present:** Councillors: Michael Downing (Chair) (Chair), Matthew Hurst (Vice-Chair) (Vice Chair), Lloyd Briscoe, Jim Brown, Lizzy Kelly and Adam Mitchell CC

**Start / End** Start Time: 6.00pm

**Time:** End Time: 7.15pm

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

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Sarah-Jane Potter and Simon Speller.

Councillor Michael Downing declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 2 – Environment and Economy Select Committee – Work Programme – Paragraph 5.1.6 relating to the Transport Strategy as Chairman of the Bus User Group (BUGS).

**2 ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered a report by the Council's Scrutiny Officer, which invited the Committee to agree its Scrutiny Work Programme for the 2019/2020 Municipal Year. The report highlighted Members responses to a Scrutiny survey, suggestion by Members and residents for future Scrutiny Reviews, Monitoring Reviews of Recommendations and Policy Development Scrutiny work to be undertaken by Portfolio Holder Advisory Groups. With regard to suggestions by residents, Members were informed that responses had been provided to the respective residents.

Members discussed the suitability of the topics proposed and whether the Committee was of the view that the scrutiny process could add value to their consideration.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That Scrutiny Members' feedback on ideas for improving Scrutiny as set out in section 4 of the report be noted.
2. That having considered ideas put forward by individual Members, the following matters be added to the list for consideration, prioritisation and scoping as possible Environment and Economy Select Committee Scrutiny Work Programme items for 2019/2020:

- **Post Office Provision across the Town:** The review should include coverage across the Town, ownership, the relationship between post offices and the shop operators, consideration of where the Post Office would be in five years time. Members also agreed it would be useful to speak to affected staff about how terms/conditions and training had changed.
- **Fairlands Valley Park:** it was agreed that this item should be taken in conjunction with the review of leisure facilities and parks detailed at paragraph 5.1.2 of the officer's report. The Assistant Director (Direct Services) suggested that the broader, strategic scrutiny could be undertaken by the Environment and Economy Select Committee with the more detailed Fairlands Valley Park scrutiny being undertaken by the Community Select Committee. The link with other Council strategies such as the Healthy Stevenage Strategy should also be considered.
- **Impact on Brexit on the Local Economy:** It was noted that the Senior Leadership Team was monitoring this on a daily basis and that the Council was actively tracking the developments on a Business Continuity basis so it would not be suitable to include the issue in the Committee's Work Programme.
- **Town Centre Regeneration/SG1 Project:** Agreed that this was in the remit of the Planning and Development Committee.
- **Emerging Transport Strategy:** The Planning Policy Manager advised that the consultation on the Strategy had been extended until the end of March. Responses would then be evaluated and a report would be submitted to the Executive and then on to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the Summer. An update on the Strategy could be provided to the Committee at a later date.
- **Outcome of the Local Plan:** Agreed that this was in the remit of the Planning and Development Committee.
- **Climate Change:** The Planning Policy Manager agreed to circulate to Members the Climate Change Strategy that was produced by the Council in 2009. The Assistant Director (Direct Services) suggested that this issue could be aligned with the Corporate Asset Management Strategy.
- **Non-Domestic Rate Income:** it was agreed that this should be suggested as a scrutiny item for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- **Impact on Schools of the Academisation Programme:** it was agreed that this should be suggested as a scrutiny item for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- **Local Neighbourhood Centres:** It was agreed that this be the Committee's main review item for the year commencing in the Autumn 2019.
- **Fly-tipping of Bulky Goods:** officers agreed to ask the Assistant Director (Housing and Investment) to circulate the relevant policy to Members.
- **Offer from Govia Thameslink Railways:** agreed that this should be an ongoing issue for the Committee including the involvement of

London North Eastern Railway (LNER).

- **Play Areas:** An update will be provided to the Committee on the unsupervised Area Play Equipment Programme which was currently underway.
- **Cycling:** officers confirmed that this would be linked to the Transport Strategy along with other relevant plans and strategies.

3. That the following items which were the subject of previous studies be included in the work programme for an update on the issues:

- Maintenance of trees, hedges and shrub beds linked to fly tipping;
- Business Technology Centre Review;
- In relation to the review of open spaces, it was noted that this would be included in the review referred to in recommendation 2 above.

4. That the following issues be included in the work programme for the Portfolio Holder Advisory Group (PHAG) meetings to carry out policy development work for 2019/2020 (Paragraph 7.1 to the report referred):

- Review of Bring Back Recycling Sites scheduled for Executive in July 2019, PHAG meeting in June 2019
- Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to be scheduled for Executive in 2019/20, PHAG meeting to be scheduled in 2019/20
- Parking Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to be scheduled for Executive in 2019/20, PHAG meeting to be scheduled in 2019/20
- Economic Development Strategy to be scheduled for Executive in 2019/20, PHAG meeting to be scheduled in 2019/20
- Town Centre Parking Strategy to be scheduled for Executive in 2019/20, PHAG meeting to be scheduled in 2019/20.

3 **URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

None.

4 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Not Required.

5 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

**CHAIR**