

Daneshill House
Danestrete
Stevenage
Hertfordshire

7 December 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Stevenage Borough Council will be held in the Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage on Wednesday, 15 December 2021 at 7.00pm and you are summoned to attend to transact the following business.

Yours faithfully

Matthew Partridge
Chief Executive

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. MINUTES - 13 OCTOBER 2021

To approve as a correct record the attached Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 13 October 2021.

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3. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

To receive any communications that the Mayor may wish to put before the Council.

4. MAIN DEBATE

There is no Main Debate.

5. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

None received.

6. QUESTIONS FROM THE YOUTH COUNCIL

In accordance with Standing Orders, written responses to the following questions submitted by the Youth Council will be sent out on a supplementary agenda.

- (A) What can the Council do to improve bus services for young people?
Recently, the Youth Council has noticed bus frequencies have been further apart.
- (B) Following COP26, what are the Council's plans to reduce the effects of climate change?

7. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None received.

8. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S UPDATE

In accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, the Leader of the Opposition shall be given the opportunity to raise one matter relevant to the Borough that has arisen since the last meeting of the Council. The Leader of the Council shall then have the opportunity to advise the Council of matters relevant to the Borough that have arisen since the last meeting.

9. UPDATE FROM SCRUTINY CHAIRS

To receive updates from the Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees on the recent activities of those Committees.

10. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

In accordance with Standing Orders, the following motions have been received for consideration:

1. Bus Services in Stevenage

To be moved by the Labour Group

Bus services in Stevenage are vital to so many of our residents providing them with a vital link to work places, shops, medical services, social & leisure activity, access to education and so much more.

That is why it is so disappointing to see a deterioration in our bus services in town with residents reporting many bus services cut at short (or no) notice meaning they have long waits for their bus. For some time now we have experienced some areas left with no bus service from early evening or no service at all.

This Council is working towards our net zero carbon by 2030 target and with the County Council on our Sustainable Travel Town status. A key part of this will be to encourage more use of public transport rather than private cars. Our new bus interchange is part of building an integrated public transport system. However this depends on regular, reliable, sustainable and affordable bus services.

Therefore this Council resolves

1. To convene a bus summit with the bus operators to explore the

opportunities and address the challenges of delivering better bus services

2. To lobby the County Council, as transport authority, to work with us and bus operators to ensure every area of Stevenage has a bus service
3. To seek reassurance from the County Council that there will be no further cuts to bus subsidies for Stevenage bus routes
4. To explore with the County Council better ways of providing up to date travel information to passengers
5. To ensure we do all we can through the planning process to ensure bus routes are planned with new neighbourhoods and maximum use is made of CIL & Section 106 to incentivise bus use.
6. To encourage the County Council as the Local Transport Authority and Arriva to continue to work with SBC concerning the ZEBRA (Zero Emission Bus Regional Area) bid for Stevenage

2. Council Meetings

To be moved by the Conservative Group.

Council notes that in the interests of democracy, it is important to continue to encourage and allow all political parties represented in Council to table motions but, to ensure all Council meetings are conducted in a timely fashion, thus facilitating the continued attention and interest of both our members and the public, there is a need to limit the time spent in debate. This can be achieved by limiting the number of motions and the time allowed for both debate and individual speakers.

Also, Council notes that the main debate has not taken place for some while, so could be regarded as no longer necessary. However, it is appreciated that members may benefit from presentations on matters of interest to the community, as appropriate and, therefore, we should provide for this in Standing Orders.

The Council therefore moves that Standing Orders, 19. Rules of Debate, is amended, as follows:

A new point c. (i) is added, 'Each political party is allowed 1 motion per Council meeting'.

Point c (i) becomes point c (ii).

Point c (ii) becomes point c (iii)

Point c (iii) now becomes point c (iv), and is amended thus;

'Time limits for speakers during debates, unless otherwise stated elsewhere in the Standing Orders are as follows:

- Mover of a motion - four minutes
- Seconder of a motion - four minutes
- Leader of the Council - four minutes
- Leader of the Opposition - four minutes

- All other speakers - two minutes
- Right of reply - two minutes'

Point c (iv) becomes point c (v).

A new point c (vi) is added, 'If debate on all motions exceeds 1 hour 30 minutes in total, the Chair shall guillotine such debate, and instruct Council to move straight to the vote on the motion then being debated'.

The Council also moves that Standing Orders, 9. Main Debate is re-written, as follows:

'At any ordinary meeting of the Council there may be a presentation on a matter of interest to the community.

- Such presentation can be from a Councillor, officer and / or other invited person(s). If the presentation is from a Councillor or officer, it should last no longer than 10 minutes. If another person or persons are making the presentation, it should last no longer than 20 minutes. Collectively, no presentations should last longer than 30 minutes.
- At the Mayor's discretion, Councillors and members of the public may ask questions, but the total period for such questions should be no longer than 20 minutes.

3. Housing and Direct Services Departments

To be moved by the Liberal Democrat Group.

This Council calls for a thorough review of the housing and direct services departments to focus particularly on:

- Improving the response to tenants requesting attention to repairs and other property problems.
- Ensuring that all incoming calls are dealt with promptly, are recorded and tenants do not have to wait longer than 30 minutes maximum during normal working hours to speak to someone. Where this is impossible, a proper call-back system to tenants is initiated.
- Maintaining a detailed register of outstanding housing maintenance works and reporting same to councillors on a weekly basis.
- Ensuring that tenants are properly informed by phone, text or email when access to their properties is needed for work and visiting times are agreed.
- Compensating tenants when Council trade persons fail to turn up for previously agreed appointments.
- Ensuring that councillors are kept informed of the initiation and progress of refurbishment and upgrade programmes, especially in the wards they represent.

4. Communications and Stevenage Chronicle

To be moved by the Liberal Democrat Group.

Calls upon Council to properly manage its Communications & Media unit and those responsible for the publication of Stevenage Chronicle and other publications from time to time issued by the Council; particularly to ensure:

- (a) That the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity published by the Department for Communities Local Government is properly observed.
- (b) Editorial oversight is under the control of an Assistant Director.
- (c) There is close attention to detail and checking of dates and other facts.
- (d) That any featured events are to take place at least 14 days ahead of general publication and circulation.
- (e) An editorial schedule of contents is published for circulation to councillors.
- (f) A schedule of dates for potential contributors including copy dates, proofing and to press is published.
- (g) That there is a balance of editorial material between wards and Council groups without party political favour.
- (h) That photos are relevant and correctly captioned.

5. Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Policy

To be moved by the Liberal Democrat Group.

This Council commits to considering and in due course implementing a ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) policy to apply to the council's financial investment counterparties.

11. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO COMMITTEE CHAIRS / PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

In accordance with Standing Orders, written answers to the following questions will be circulated on a supplementary agenda.

(A) Question from Councillor Graham Lawrence -

'In light of this Council's commitment to protect our environment and reduce climate change, together with the government's recent announcement that all new homes should be fitted with EV charging points, will it be insisting that all new developments and current approved but unbuilt schemes,

- a. Have EV charging points
- b. Exclude gas fired heating systems
- c. Have sustainable electrical energy systems

(B) Question from Councillor Mitchell –

Do you think the level of spending on consultants by your administration is acceptable?

(C) Question from Councillor Julie Ashley-Wren -

In view of local and national calls in recent years for 'silent' fireworks:

- a. What changes have been made to SBC organised displays?
- b. What (if any) powers does the Council have over noise levels from fireworks sold and used in the Borough?

(D) Question from Councillor Booth –

- a. How many Council houses have been fitted with solar panels and what criteria have been adopted in identifying which ones are suitable?
- b. Which committee of the Council has approved this programme, what is the annual budget for it and for how long is it planned to run?

(E) Question from Councillor McGuinness -

Has an assessment been done about the roll out of the recycling bags and, if so, what did it show?

(F) Question from Councillor Parker -

Will SBC commit to continuing information and publicity locally about all known publicly available 24/7 automatic external defibrillators (AEDs) in the borough including locations and maps?

(G) Question from Councillor Graham Snell –

Reference the Covid Cobra snake, why is SBC now doing something different with it from that which residents voted for in the public consultation?

(H) Question from Councillor Wren –

How much money from central government grants has the Council used to insulate the following;

- a) Council Houses
- b) Flat blocks as part of the major refurbishment contract

(I) Question from Councillor Howells -

How much does the Council spend on the public firework display? and why are we not supporting the RSPCA's campaign to update our firework regulations to make fireworks less dangerous and threatening to pets and animals.

12. QUARTER 1 AND 2 MONITORING REPORT CAPITAL (GENERAL FUND) 2021/22

To consider recommendations relating to the Quarter 1 and 2 Capital Monitoring report (General Fund) 2020/22.

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13. MID YEAR REVIEW OF TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2021/22

The report circulated at Item 13 was considered by the Executive on 17 November 2021 when the following recommendations to Council were agreed:

1. That the 2021/22 Treasury Management Mid Year Review be approved.
2. That the list of approved Countries (with approved counterparties) for investments, as set out in Appendix D to the report, be approved.

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14. APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITORS - OPTING IN TO THE PUBLIC SECTOR AUDIT APPOINTMENTS (PSAA) PROCESS

The report circulated at Item 14 was considered by the Audit Committee on 10 November 2021 when the following recommendation to Council was agreed:

“That SBC opt in to the appointing arrangements made by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) for the appointment of External Auditors covering the period April 2023 to March 2028.”

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15. AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES

To note the Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 10 November 2021.

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16. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

To consider the following motions –

1. That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in Paragraphs 1 – 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

2. That Members consider the reasons for the following reports being in Part II and determine whether or not maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

17. APPROVAL OF EMPLOYEE MATTER

To consider an employee matter which requires Council approval under S.40 Localism Act 2011 and the Council's Pay Policy statement for 2021/22.

This meeting is being live streamed on the Borough Council's YouTube Channel and the recording of the meeting will be available to view on the Council's YouTube channel after the meeting:

www.youtube.com/user/SBCComms

Members of the public attending this meeting may be filmed, and those who have requested and are invited to speak at the meeting will be recorded. By remaining in the public gallery once the meeting commences or speaking at the meeting, consent is being given to being recorded, and for the recording of them to be made publicly available and used by the Council.

The recording of the meeting will remain on the Council's YouTube Channel for 6 months, after which time it will be removed.