



ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 5 July 2021

Time: 6.00pm,

Location: Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete

Contact: Ramin Shams (01438) 242308

committees@stevenage.gov.uk

Members: Councillors: M Downing (Chair), A Mitchell CC (Vice-Chair), Ashley-Wren, D Bainbridge, S Booth, A Brown, Kerby, M McKay, S Mead, C Parris and S Speller

AGENDA

PART 1

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. SUMMARY OF DECISION FROM 22 JUNE MEETING

To consider the Summary of Decisions from the meeting of the Environment & Economy Select Committee held on 22 June 2021. The full Minutes will be considered at a future meeting of the Committee.

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3. EXECUTIVE PORTFOLIO HOLDER RESPONSE TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES REVIEW

To consider the Executive Portfolio Holder response to the Neighbourhood Centres Review.

7 – 10

4. NEXT STEPS IN THE REVIEW INTO THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON STEVENAGE

To consider the next steps in the review into the economic impact of Covid-19 on the local economy on Stevenage and to receive the updated mapping exercise document for the review, pinpointing completed actions and any outstanding data or interviews still to be undertaken.

11 – 24

5. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS

To consider any Part 1 business accepted by the Chair as urgent.

6. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

To consider the following motions –

1. That under Section 100(A) 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.

7. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

To consider any Part II business accepted by the Chair as urgent.

NOTE: Links to Part 1 Background Documents are shown on the last page of the individual report, where this is not the case they may be viewed by using the following link to agendas for Executive meetings and then opening the agenda for Monday, 5 July 2021 – <http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/have-your-say/council-meetings/161153/>

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS -

Meeting:	Environment & Economy Select Committee	
Date:	Tuesday, 22 June 2021	
Place:	Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete	
Members Present:	Councillors:	Adam Mitchell CC (Chair), Julie Ashley-Wren, Doug Bainbridge, Stephen Booth, Adrian Brown, Wendy Kerby, Sarah Mead, Claire Parris and Simon Speller

1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
	Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Michael Downing and Maureen Mckay.	
2	TERMS OF REFERENCE	
	The Committee noted the Terms of Reference.	
3	MINUTES - 13 JANUARY 2021	
	It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the Committee meeting held on Wednesday 13 January 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.	
4	REPORT BACK FROM THE SUB GROUP LOOKING AT THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON YOUNG PEOPLE	
	<p>The committee received a sub-group report and suggested recommendations relating to the impact of Covid19 on young people as part of the Committee's wider review of the economic impact of the pandemic on Stevenage.</p> <p>The Committee met on 10 October 2020 and agreed a scope for this work and the sub-group was led by Councillor Simon Speller.</p> <p>The Committee agreed on the following scope for the sub-group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with Schools Head Teachers, North Herts College Principal, HCC YCH Services for young people and STEMPOINT East 	

- Find out what are the main challenges to young people regarding Covid-19 in education and employment
- Make recommendations for partners to work together to offer practical help for local young people

Councillor Speller described the sub-group report as qualitative and case driven. He advised Members on Near Horizon and Far Horizon Recommendations as set out in the report.

Members debated the sub-group report, and appreciated the time and efforts that had been put in to the report. Members suggested the following could be added to the recommendation:

- The Council to provide help and support to arts and STEM students.
- The Council to work with contractors and partners to provide work experience opportunities.
- To provide opportunities for young people to help in cleaning the environment e.g. through litter picking.

It was **RESOLVED:**

- That the Committee endorsed the recommendations as set out in the sub-group report, together with the Members recommendations at the meeting as set out above.
- That a copy of the sub-group’s report be sent to the contributors

5	ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2021-22	
	<p>The Committee received a suggested Work Programme and agenda planning for the future meetings. The Work Programme is a flexible working document that is subject to change as new issues arise. Members were encouraged to suggest items to be included in the Work Programme at any time.</p> <p>The Scrutiny Officer outlined the following key issues that would be discussed at the future meetings:</p>	

- Continue the scrutiny of the impact of Covid19 on Economic Development in Stevenage and the Council's response (To agree any further evidence and meetings required to complete the review);
- Scrutinise the Council's Climate Emergency Strategy Action Plan (Review of the Action Plan Consultation response)
- Update on the 2016 Business Technology Centre Review (To consider delivery of WENTA contract July 2019)
- Local Neighbourhood Centres – Consider the Executive Portfolio Holder Response
- Bulky Waste Charging Proposal – Officer Key Decision – In a Portfolio Holder Advisory Group
- Indoor Market Medium Term Investment Business Case – - In a Portfolio Holder Advisory Group
- Final Future Town Future Parking Strategy – Keep a watching brief on the progress of the Strategy
- Parks and Open Space Strategy – In a Portfolio Holder Advisory Group
- Trees and Woodland Strategy – In a Portfolio Holder Advisory Group

It was **RESOLVED**:

- That the Committee noted the Work Programme.

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ACTION TRACKER

The Scrutiny Officer presented the Action Tracker to the Committee. The Action Tracker contained useful information to track the progress of items that the Committee had previously scrutinised.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- That the Committee noted the Action Tracker

7	URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS	
	None.	
8	EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS	
	Not required.	
9	URGENT PART II BUSINESS	
	None.	

Executive Member Response To Neighbourhood Centres Scrutiny Review

Date Recommendations agreed by Environment & Economy Select Committee:

Environment & Economy Select Committee, Wednesday 13 January 2020
(circulated Monday 1 March 2020)

Date responses should be made by:

Executive responses on behalf of the Executive Portfolio Holders for:
Neighbourhoods and Co-operative Council; Environment & Regeneration; Economy, Enterprise & Transport;
Communities, Community Safety and Equalities; Resources should be received by Friday 30 April 2020

Recommendations:

Executive Response:

RECOMMENDATION 1 - Small scale timely interventions are made to maintain each area using what means are at the Council's disposal including its current regime of routine maintenance, cleansing, repair and using existing budgets or where appropriate the use of ward Members Local Community Budgets via funding bids as well as local County Councillors LCBs.

Co-operative Neighbourhood teams will work with ward Members and local residents to shape Community Plans over the coming months.
Each community plan will identify areas of environmental / physical improvement within neighbourhoods and will include reference to Neighbourhood Centres where these have been identified as a priority, with interventions and actions identified and clear resource

	<p>and timescale monitors. This will include all relevant Council service areas and will focus on both existing resources and budget allocations and the securing of additional resources through Local Community Budgets, HCC Locality Budgets or grant funding pursued by local community groups.</p> <p>The Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Co-operative Working will ensure that this is routinely reviewed at the Neighbourhood Strategic Board, as the physical appearance of Neighbourhood Centres may be noted as a priority or concern, and should be the subject of an annual visual inspection, to ensure needed improvements are identified, and followed up. This will also feature within the Communities & Neighbourhoods service plan.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 2 - Approach partner authorities/partner bodies to hold them to account for failure to maintain infrastructure.</p>	<p>SBC will work with partner authorities and infrastructure providers to ensure that their infrastructure in Stevenage for which we all rely is properly invested in and suitably maintained.</p> <p>Where suitable / appropriate, key actions will be incorporated into the respective Cooperative Neighbourhood Community Plans.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION 3 - That the Co-operative Neighbourhood Management approach to addressing local issues in the Neighbourhood Centres be monitored by the Executive Member with Portfolio responsibility for Neighbourhoods and Co-Operative Working to see if this is working (perhaps with a short report back in a year to monitor progress and see if the interventions are</p>	<p>Community Plans will identify improvements to Neighbourhood Centres where they have been put forward as a priority for investment or improvement. The progress of these plans will be monitored in each neighbourhood. In addition, the Co-operative Neighbourhood Strategic Board is chaired by the Portfolio Holder will maintain oversight on progress across all six neighbourhoods</p>

<p>timely and the resources are adequate to remedy problems that are identified at the Neighbourhood Centres).</p>	<p>and will seek to remedy issues which might arise for the timely delivery of interventions, subject to funding availability.</p>
<p><u>RECOMMENDATION 4</u> - That each Neighbourhood Centre area establishes a friends group to help with projects and community gardens at each Centre.</p>	<p>The Community Development team will work with ward Members, businesses and local residents to develop local ownership over Neighbourhood Centres where the need has been identified. This may include Friends of Groups or may also include sponsored community clean up days or associated activity groups. The form of the group would not be prescribed but the purpose of achieving community ownership would be fundamental to this process.</p>
<p><u>RECOMMENDATION 5</u> - That when Members have met with the Head of Estates and the Assistant Director Housing Development they will then be able to include a relevant recommendation in regard of these plans.</p>	<p>The visioning and proposition for the Neighbourhood Centres will need to align with planning policy and changing consumer and community preferences for shopping, living and community activities in a post Covid environment. Work in this area will begin to develop over the summer months, working closely with Members and engagement with the Cooperative Neighbourhood teams. It is proposed that Officers meet with Members of the Environment and Economy Select Committee in Quarter 3, 2021 – 2022.</p>

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Next steps in the review of the economic impact of Covid-19 on Stevenage

- Revisit issues touched on with the Leader and Cllr Briscoe when they were interviewed in January 2021 - (i) What is the economic position of the Council now (Summer 2021) due to Covid-19? (ii) In terms of those who had been labelled as “low skilled” in academic qualifications but potentially “highly skilled” in other ways, what work has WENTA and the BTC been doing to address this cohort (it was identified that both WENTA and BTC would be addressing this)? (iii) What progress has the Community Reassurance Cell had with drawing up its action plan to address the effects of the pandemic on a number of groups including low socio economic backgrounds, the young, people with disabilities and BAME communities?
- Revisit other evidence gathered back in Dec 2020/Jan 2021 to see what the current position is now including:
 - Business Relationship Manager, Mena Caldbeck – impact on young people – Job Centre plus – YP targeted Kickstart Scheme;
 - Gareth Wall , Corporate policy and Research Officer – Impact on BAME communities;
 - Chris Barnes, Assistant Director Regeneration – Impact on the Town Centre Investment Plan and Stevenage Works;
 - Paul Cheeseman, Community Development Officer – Co-operative Economy Charter; and
 - James Chettleburgh, Principal Planning Officer – Impact on private investment (planning and development activity).
- Identify any key witness who have not yet been interviewed – including the witnesses from the business community that the Business Support Manager had made links with prior to the Select Committee’s stopping to meet formally back in January 2021. Evidence and witnesses yet to meet with Members include:
 - Impact on self-employed – Interviews arranged by Mena Caldbeck
 - Impact on SMEs - Interviews arranged by Mena Caldbeck
 - Impact on larger companies - Interviews arranged by Mena Caldbeck
 - Generation Stevenage / Skills: Adrian Hawkins and Norman Jennings – written input if unable to attend a meeting
 - Job Centre Plus – YP targeted Kickstart Scheme (6 month job placements for 16 – 24 year olds) – Mena to collect data from JCP
 - Impact on Women – Cllr Rosatti/Gareth Wall have provide a link to the Women & Equalities, Parliamentary Select Committee report – Unequal Impact? Coronavirus and the gendered economic impact.

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**Mapping exercise for E&E Select Committee – Economic Impact of CV-19 pandemic on the local economy –
UPDATED 5 JULY 2021**

Issue	Who's effected?	Who identified to address this/provide data and interview? (whether they are internal SBC or external partner)	What evidence/data can they provide?	Meeting interview/ evidence received date: Link to Committee meeting where evidence/interview was undertaken:	Meeting scheduled for date: If complete sign off in table:	Action & date required
Impact on self employed	Self Employed	Mena reach out to BTC to request an interviewee volunteer	Invite written responses through Mena's contacts	Interview not yet taken place	Scheduled for 13 September 2021	SW liaising with Mena Caldbeck re approaching witness for written response/ interview for September 2021 meeting. ✓
Impact on SMEs	Small, Medium Sized Enterprises	Mena reach out to BTC to request an interviewee volunteer	Invite written responses through Mena's contacts	Interview not yet taken place	Scheduled for 13 September 2021	SW liaising with Mena Caldbeck re approaching witness for written response/ interview for September 2021 meeting. ✓
Impact on larger	Large	Mena reach out to	Invite written	Interview not yet taken place	Scheduled for	SW liaising with

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companies Page 14	Stevenage based companies	larger companies to request interviewee volunteers	responses through Mena's contacts		13 September 2021	Mena Caldbeck re approaching witness for written response/ interview for September 2021 meeting. ✓
Impact on different Sectors		No interviewee required.	National Data & KPIs Regional LEP data – redundancies DWP -Work & Pensions data Local numbers affected by Debenhams & Arcadia Group store closures in Stevenage.	Evidence supplied to 13 January 2021 meeting - Link	Complete Business Relationship Manager, Mena Caldbeck provided evidence - Complete Jan 2021	

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Impact on Young People	Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •SBC Cllrs Speller, Mitchell, McKay & Barr to form sub-group to look at impact on YP – joined by the Chair of E&E Cllr Michael Downing •External witness – Helen Spenser STEMPOINT East (formerly SETPOINT Hertfordshire) •External witness – Alleyne's Academy Head teacher, Mark Lewis •External witness - North Herts College Principal Kit Davies 	<p>Sub Group to provide written input</p> <p>Princes Trust – Impact on YP (office in Luton) Mena to approach</p>	22 June 2021 - Link	Complete - Member Sub-group carried out their own research over 6 meetings and provided a report and recommendations for the review to the E&E at the 22 June 2021 meeting	Send a copy of the report to all contributors, explaining the Committee route and process

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Page 16		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •External witness Judith Sutton, HCC YCH •SBC Cllr Sandra Barr to look at the impact on non-vocational /non STEM Young People & approach Head Teachers at Brandles and Larwood Schools 				
Generation Stevenage / Skills:	Young People	Chairman Stevenage Development Board, Adrian Hawkins and Hertfordshire LEP Operations Director, Norman Jennings to provide a few	Update to September 2021 meeting on how the event went plus data/press release and any future plans?	13 September 2021		SW to make renewed contact with Adrian Hawkins & Norman Jennings

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<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 1</p>		paragraphs on Generation Stevenage/Skills				
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 1</p> JOSP – YP targeted Kickstart Scheme (6 month job placements for 16 – 24 year olds)	Young People	Take up of the Kickstart scheme	Mena to provide data	Aiming for September 2021		SW to check with the Business Relationship Manager, Mena Caldbeck if the information is now available?
Impact on Women	Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Cllr Rossati lead on looking at impact on women •Gareth Wall is able to assist with data and the points raised by Cllr Rossati 	Gareth Wall to provide data	Gareth provided data to 13 January meeting - Link 05 July 2021 updated data - Parliamentary Women & Equalities Committee report & recommendations	Update 13 September 2021	SW to check with the Gareth Wall if any update information is available?

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Page 18				Feb 2021 - Link		
Impact on BAME	BAME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •No lead Member yet identified • Gareth Wall is able to assist with data 	Gareth Wall to provide data	13 January 2021 - Link	Update 13 September 2021	SW to check with the Gareth Wall if any update information is available?
Impact on lower Socio Economic background	Lower Socio Economic background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •No lead Member yet identified •Possibly Gareth Wall is able to assist with data again? 	Gareth Wall to provide data (Touches on issues Cllr Mitchell was raising re people struggling with rents, mortgage arrears, CT payments, reduced wages or long term wage suppression)	13 January 2021 - Link	Update 13 September 2021	SW to check with the Gareth Wall if any update information is available?

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Impact on Private Investment (Planning & Development activity)	All residents/ workforce/ businesses	Private investment / market: Zayd and the DM team can give a flavour of the current balance of planning applications coming through ; Ash could too in terms of market interest in housing developments (part of the economy)	Data from James Chettleburgh on trends Update on Old Town shops & businesses as well as TC Regeneration. Old Town Business Group – Mena has contact Budgens to Old Town Plus Independent Retailer	13 January 2021 - Link	Update 13 September 2021	SW to check with the James Chettleburgh & Ash Ahmed if any update information is available?
Impact on Town Investment Plan	All residents/	Annie Piper / Chris Barnes (or Adam W,	Data from Chris Barnes	13 January 2021 – Link	Update 13 September	SW to check with the Chris Barnes if any

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Page 20	workforce/ businesses	as he has been in the team!) can provide. This gives a medium to long-term stimulus to the economy. A huge effort and vital for the longer-term, connected with the town centre regeneration work			2021	update information is available?
Impact on Recovery Plan	All residents/ workforce/ businesses		As well as the online recovery plan, we also have a four page short summary we can share with the Committee	13 January 2021 - Link	Complete	
What is being offered as on the ground support	All residents/ workforce/	I would suggest via Adam and Mena, we get a bit of	Links in the agenda to HOP and short summary	13 January 2021 - Link	Complete	

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Page 21	businesses	information about what HOP (Herts Opportunities Portal) does. Ultimately, this is meant to give the on the ground support across the county, that I think some of the Members are eager to see so it is worth checking to see what the offer is and then helping inform on whether there is a further gap				
Job Centre Plus (JCP)		SBC -Through Mena – who is doing some work on an Economic Taskforce – I'd	Mena to provide data		13 September 2021	SW to check with the Business Relationship Manager, Mena

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Page 22		suggest some focus on what the current market is like, number of advertisements, the Kickstart scheme etc.				Caldbeck if the information is now available?
Grants	All Businesses	SBC - Through Clare F we can get a grant tracker. Fundamentally the R&B have been pulling up trees to set up whole new schemes to support businesses to stay alive	Updated Tracker information from Clare Fletcher.	13 January 2021 – Link	Update 13 September 2021	SW to check with the Clare Fletcher if any update information is available?
External research:		Stephen, worth reading material from bodies such as Centre for Cities on	SW to provide summary of data available – UK Unemployment Rate	13 January 2021 – Link	Complete	

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		the effects and phasing recovery	Dec 2020			
CIB (Construction Industry Training Board) / Stevenage Works		SBC - Through Chris Barnes we can point to things we're put in place / are putting in place	Training and Apprenticeships available – bridging the gap	13 January 2021 – Link	Complete	
Cooperative Economy Charter:		SBC Paul Cheeseman (Communities) to provide the summary scope / action plan of planned work	Paul Cheeseman to provide data	13 January 2021 - Link	Complete	
Lloyd Briscoe Exec Portfolio Holder Econ, Enterprise &		SBC	To respond to questions on what the Council and its partners are doing to	13 January 2021 – Link & Minutes	Update on questions – 13 September 2021	SW to approach Cllr Briscoe for an update on the questions /responses given

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Transport			support those effected.			
The Leader			To respond to questions on what the Council and its partners are doing to support those effected.	13 January 2021 – Link & Minutes	Update on questions – 13 September 2021	SW to approach the Leader for an update on the questions /responses given