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ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE

Date: Thursday, 21 October 2021

Time: 6.00pm,

Location: Council Chamber

Contact: Lisa Jerome 01438 242203

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

AGENDA

PART 1

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. MINUTES - 4 OCTOBER 2021

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Environment and Economy Select Committee held on Monday 4 October 2021.

Pages 3 – 6

3. INTERVIEW WITH EXECUTIVE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ENVIRONMENT & REGENERATION - CLIMATE EMERGENCY REVIEW

Members are invited to interview Councillor John Gardner, Executive Portfolio Holder for Environment and Economy to scrutinise the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan for the relevant business units for this portfolio area.

4. UPDATED SCOPING DOCUMENT - CLIMATE EMERGENCY SCRUTINY REVIEW

To receive an updated scoping document detailing the additions and amendments that were suggested at and following the meeting on 4 October 2021.

Pages 7 – 12

5. DRAFT REPORT & RECOMMENDATION OF THE REVIEW INTO THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

To receive the draft report and recommendations of the Committee's review into the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the local economy and the Council's response.

Report to follow.

6. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS

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

7. 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.

8. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

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

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Monday, 4 October 2021

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present: Councillors: Michael Downing (Chair) (Chair), Adam Mitchell CC (Vice-Chair) (Vice Chair), Julie Ashley-Wren, Doug Bainbridge, Stephen Booth, Adrian Brown, Wendy Kerby, Maureen McKay, Sarah Mead and Simon Speller

Start / End Time: Start Time: 6.00pm
End Time: 7.19pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Claire Parris.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES -13 SEPTEMBER 2021

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 13 September 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The Chair advised that the report back on the Economic Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the local economy would be considered at the next meeting of this Committee on 21 October.

3 CLIMATE EMERGENCY - OFFICER PRESENTATION

The Assistant Director Planning and Regulation gave a presentation to the Committee on the Council's response to the Climate Emergency. He reminded Members that Stevenage had declared a Climate Change emergency and had targeted net zero carbon by 2030 with aspirations to reduce Council carbon emissions, support residents and businesses to reduce emissions and to consult and collaborate effectively.

Members were advised that the Council was working with Herts County Council and the Hertfordshire Sustainability and Climate Change Partnership (HSCCP) to maximise efforts across the County.

The Assistant Director reported on the 8 themes and high level actions adopted by the Council including People, Biodiversity, Transport, Energy and Water, Business, Homes, Construction and Regeneration, Waste and Recycling.

Members were pleased to note the progress achieved towards this target in the last year including:

- An action plan now in place for making improvements to grasslands, woodlands and pond clear ups resulting in a positive visual impact for the Town;
- 2 for 1 tree policy and the new St Nicholas Community Orchard; and
- The new bus interchange, bids for cycling networks and also electric bus bids working with Herts County Council as the Transport Authority.

In response to a number of questions the Assistant Director Planning and Regulation and the Assistant Director Stevenage Direct Services advised:

- The Annual Climate Change Report which would show the progress in terms of Borough wide emissions would be considered by the Executive and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee later this month.
- Following consultations with the Citizens Panel and Stakeholder groups such as Friends of the Earth, 1600 people had been approached through digital engagement platforms. Members were keen to ensure that young people were included as they could play a major role in this engagement. Members were advised that the membership of the Citizens Panel was currently being reviewed. Members agreed that it was essential that when people volunteered to be a part of the Panel that regular feedback was given to them on an individual basis as well as a generic approach to giving the feedback.
- The Assistant Director accepted that refurbishment of existing buildings was a recommended way forward but that Stevenage did not have many derelict buildings that could be refurbished. Many current developments were on surface car parks and dilapidated buildings which could not be regenerated.
- It was noted that the County Council was responsible to assist HCC schools to meet their target to become carbon neutral.
- In response to a question about the Lister Hospital, there were a number of current planning applications submitted for works to the Hospital. The Council would also engage with the Hospital through Stevenage Together to ascertain the climate change commitments.
- In relation to recycling, it was agreed that more could always be done. An Educational Support Officer was now in post working with schools to target younger people. Further Government plans were expected in early 2022 regarding what was expected of local authorities in relation to future recycling targets.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Assistant Director Planning and Regulation be thanked for his presentation.

4 **DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENT - CLIMATE EMERGENCY SCRUTINY REVIEW**

The Scrutiny Officer presented a Draft Scoping Document on the Climate Emergency Scrutiny Review for consideration by Members.

In relation to the Review, the following suggestions were made:

- External witnesses to be invited could include a representative from the Health Service, local residents with knowledge of the issues and a local expert;
- Possible benchmarking with other Local Authorities;
- It was agreed that an invitation to attend a future meeting should be sent to Hertfordshire for Enabling and Adapting for Resilience Together) HEART – a Hertfordshire based environmental community group;
- An invitation should also be sent to Councillor Phil Bibby, the Herts County Council Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Transport to attend a meeting.

In relation to the allocation of Lead Members on specific issues, the Chair asked for volunteers to undertake their own desktop and fact finding research. Councillors volunteered as follows:

- Cllr Kerby – the link between sustainability and small local businesses;
- Cllr Mead – communications put out by other Local Authorities;
- Cllr Ashley-Wren – the work being undertaken by schools;
- Cllr Speller – consultation and collaboration, looking at the visuals on climate change.

Other suggestions included contacting graduates at Herts University undertaking study in this area.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Scrutiny Officer amend the Draft Scoping Document with the suggestions listed above.

5 **URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

None.

6 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Not required.

7 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR

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**Updated following
04 10 21 meeting**

Template Scoping Document

<u>Environment & Economy Select Committee</u>	
<u>Scrutiny Review Title:</u>	Climate Emergency Scrutiny Review
<u>Background issues</u> to review – rationale for scrutinising this issue:	When Members considered their work programme for the 2021-22 Municipal Year at its meeting in June 2021 it was agreed that the review into the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan and the impact of the Climate Emergency on Council services, Executive Portfolio Holder's Business Unit's future plans
Is this issue covered by Corporate Plans?	Yes, the Council has signed up to a Climate Emergency and has an agreed associated Climate Emergency Action Plan.
<u>Focus of the review:</u> (State what the review focus will be)	<p><u>Initially the review will consider how the Council is delivering against the agreed Climate Emergency Action Plan and will interview each Executive Portfolio Holder who will be supported by the relevant Strategic Director/Assistant Director to see how their own individual plans are progressing?</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How are the public engaged in this project?• Establish how the funding to support measures are being implemented to mainstream this work?• Compare with other local authorities of a similar size and demographic to see how the plans look?• Establish what equalities and diversity measures will be considered for this project?• What does the Council need to do that it currently isn't doing that will help mainstream a climate emergency approach to its day-to-day practises?• What should Council's be doing to lead on Climate Change? - <i>Cllr David Renard, Environment spokesperson for the LGA, said: "The climate challenge really does impact every aspect of our lives and subsequently, every aspect of our local authorities."</i>

	<p><i>“Councils are working hard towards net-zero carbon emissions. Waste collections are getting increasingly more efficient and recycling rates over the past decade show that people really do care. We’ve also seen council investment in flood defences, electric vehicle infrastructure and parks and green spaces, which create cleaner air in our communities and thriving habitats for wildlife.</i></p> <p><i>“There is still a long way to go in our work to protect our planet, but councils will continue to lead local efforts to become more environmentally conscious.”</i></p> <p>Aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the review can help establish if the Council is on course to meet its own targets within the Climate Emergency Action Plan? If it is in line with the sectors standards as set by central government? and is it offering a tangible lead role for local residents, local businesses and the voluntary sector?
<p><u>Timing issues:</u> Are there any timing constraints to when the review can be carried out?</p>	<p>This work is likely to take some months to complete and could roll into the following Municipal Year.</p>
<p>The Committee will meet on (provide <u>dates</u> if known):</p>	<p>Dates: Day/Month/Time/Venue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair and Vice-Chair and AD Planning and Regulation meet together in September to establish the review scope • 4 October 2021 – Presentation from Officers on the delivery of the Climate Emergency Action Plan and agree the scoping document • Series of interviews with the Executive Portfolio Holders to examine their Business Units plans and how the Climate Emergency is affecting those plans, beginning in 2021/22 and will likely run into 2022/23 Municipal Year. The first meeting interviewing Executive Portfolio Holders will take place on Thursday 21 October with Councillor John Gardner Exec Portfolio Holder for Environment & Regeneration. • Early recommendations and outline draft report to Select Committee in 2022 • Final recommendations & report – 2022
<p><u>SBC Leads</u> (list the Executive Portfolio Holders and SD’s Heads of Service who should appear as witnesses):</p>	<p><i>Officers have suggested the following people:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>All Executive Portfolio Holders</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All SD's & Assistant Directors • Other officers to be identified
Any other witnesses (external persons/critical friend)?:	<p>To be identified by the Committee at the scoping meeting. Possible options identified by officers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A "Critical Friend" Co-optee to the review – a leading local Climate Change expert <i>Friends of the Earth or HEART (Hertfordshire for Enabling and Adapting for Resilience Together) to fulfil this role?</i> • Herts Sustainability Panel Chair – Cllr Graham McAndrew East Herts District Council • HCC Executive Portfolio Holder for Transport – Cllr Phil Bibby • A representative of NHS Lister Hospital • University of Hertfordshire – Professor Lubo Jankovic – Professor of Advanced Building Design/Director of Zero Carbon Lab (School of Creative Arts) • Youth Mayor/ Youth Council for comment from younger people (including Chair of the Youth Council) • Local Business Community – SME's, Large Employers • Environmental Groups – The Chair has suggested inviting HEART Community Group (Hertfordshire for Enabling and Adapting for Resilience Together) a Hertfordshire based environmental community group of Hertfordshire residents "who believe that we are facing existential threats brought about by climate change and other associated predicaments"
<p>Allocation of lead Members on specific individual issues/questions:</p> <p>Any other Questions Members wish to cover:</p>	<p>To be identified by the Committee at the scoping meeting.</p> <p>Members will undertake their own desktop and fact finding research and ask questions on the following areas (list the issues to address during the interviews):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Wendy Kerby – the link between sustainability and small local businesses; • Cllr Sarah Mead – communications put out by other Local Authorities; • Cllr Julie Ashley-Wren – the work being undertaken by schools; • Cllr Simon Speller – consultation and collaboration, looking at the visuals on climate change (possibly as part of a sub group looking at this if there is interest from other Members to join this?).

<u>Site visits and evidence gathering in the Community</u>	<i>To be identified.</i>
<u>Equalities and Diversity issues:</u> The review will consider what the relevant equalities and diversity issues are regarding the Scrutiny subject that is being scrutinised	<p>The review should address equalities and diversity issues directly in the review.</p> <p><u>Equalities & Diversity Issues</u> – Are there any E&D issues to consider in this review? –</p> <p>The review should consider what equality and diversity issues there are in delivering on the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan actions?</p>
<u>Constraints</u> (Issues that have been highlighted at the scoping stage but are too broad/detailed to be covered by the review):	<i>To be identified by the Committee at the scoping meeting 4 October 2021</i> (These issues can be captured and dealt with via other means – Briefings/email/officer action etc)
<u>Background Documents/data</u> that can be provided to the review	<p><i>As identified by the Committee at the draft scoping meeting 4 October 2021:</i></p> <p>Evidence requested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBC Climate Emergency Action Plan • The Council's Climate Emergency Declaration – 12 June 2019 - https://democracy.stevenage.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=150&MId=4387&Ver=4 • SBC Climate Change Strategy September 2020 - https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/about-the-council/climate-change-strategy/climate-change-strategy-september-2020.pdf • Climate Change Citizens Panel Report https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/about-the-council/climate-change-strategy/climate-change-citizens-panel-report-executive-summary.pdf • Question at Council in July 2021 re Climate Change - https://democracy.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/s28963/Public%20-%20Questions.pdf • Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership - http://www.hccsp.org.uk/ • Local Government Association - https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/councils-spearheading-national-climate-change-effort • Links to Central Government Policy Documents Ministry of Housing, Communities and

	<p>Local Government (MHCLG) – “Local government, climate change and the environment” – “This collection brings together information for local councils on climate change and the environment. https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-government-climate-change-and-the-environment</p>
<p><u>Agreed Milestones and review sign off</u> -To be agreed by Members and officers</p>	<p><i>Formal response from Executive Portfolio Holder (Executives have a Statutory requirement to respond to Scrutiny review recommendations two months after receiving a final report and recommendations of a review: Date Executive Portfolio responses are expected (dependent on the final report & executive portfolio response template publishing date): DD MM YY</i></p> <p>Date for monitoring implementation of recommendations – final sign off (typically one year from completion of the review): DD MM YY (Close to this date the Select Committee will receive a report at a Committee meeting to agree the final sign off of the review recommendations)</p>

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