

Daneshill House
Danestrete
Stevenage
Hertfordshire

11 October 2022

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, 19 October 2022 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. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

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

3. MINUTES - 20 JULY 2022 AND 15 SEPTEMBER 2022

To approve as correct records the attached Minutes of the Council meeting held on 20 July 2022, and of the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 15 September 2022, for signature by the Mayor.

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4. COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS

None received.

5. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

None received.

6. QUESTIONS FROM THE YOUTH COUNCIL

None received.

7. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Written answers to the questions below will be published on a supplementary agenda.

(A) Question from Mr Jim Borchers

“Stevenage Borough Council has a duty to encourage the use of sustainable travel rather than car usage in the Town. For this to be done residents need to have confidence that the network of cycle paths and footpaths around the town are being looked after and kept clear of hazards.

In June 2022 there were areas of the Cycleway network that still had leaves on them that fell in the Autumn of 2021, these areas had obviously not been swept in over six months.

On a recent occasion I had an email 10 days after reporting glass on the cycleway, letting me know that “This case has been closed because it will be resolved soon by the already planned programme of works” – case reference RIC448883495

As I understand it the system in Stevenage for maintaining the footpath and cycle path network involves mechanically sweeping the cycle paths every 8 weeks, litter picked once per week, and reports of problems like glass being resolved within 48 hours.

I also understand that it is policy to start to clear fallen leaves from the network from 1st November unless they are reported. I understand that there is a map showing the locations of persistent leaf fall that the Council uses to manage its work on clearing leaves.

Many residents and visitors to Stevenage use the FixMyStreet system to inform local authorities of problems. A benefit of the FixMyStreet system is that users can see other reported problems (unlike the Stevenage Borough Council system). My understanding is that Stevenage Borough Council does not subscribe to FixMyStreet.

From the examples I have given there is clearly a mismatch between what is supposed to happen and what does.

Can you give details of what plans Stevenage Borough Council has to improve the reporting and resolution of problems on the footways and cycleways so that less people are discouraged from using them?”

(B) Question from Mr Paul Dawson

“The United Nations and World Health Organisation both mandate the setting of a maximum 30km/h (20mph) speed limit wherever vulnerable road users mix in a frequent and planned manner with motor vehicles, except where strong evidence exists that higher speeds are safe.

St Albans District Council, Watford Borough Council and 11 other Parish and Town Councils across the county have already passed motions in favour of wide area 20mph speed limits in Hertfordshire. In addition, North Herts District Council and Royston Town Council, representing two of the three Hertfordshire Sustainable Travel Towns of Letchworth and Royston, have also passed 20mph motions.

Stevenage remains the only Sustainable Travel Town in Hertfordshire that has not passed a similar motion. Will Stevenage Borough Council, therefore, follow the lead taken elsewhere and propose a motion in favour of the implementation of a wide area 20mph speed limit on urban and residential roads in Stevenage and across Hertfordshire where pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users mix with motor vehicles?"

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 motion has been received for consideration:

Bus Services Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding

To be moved by Councillor Phil Bibby CC and seconded by Councillor Graham Lawrence CC.

"That Council notes that Hertfordshire County Council is at the last stage in its bid for Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding, which is to be targeted at improving bus services and punctuality, thereby encouraging increased patronage.

In the expectation that the bid will be successful and, given Stevenage's inclusion in the Sustainable Travel Towns initiative, it is proposed that the Council works closely with the County Council to implement the BSIP as far as it relates to Stevenage, which will require commitment to and support for appropriate bus priority schemes, yet to be agreed."

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 Bret Facey

'Do you believe that SBC offers sufficient information about properties (such as their amenities and layout) to residents bidding for Council properties, to allow them to make an appropriate bid for a property which meets their needs?'

(B) Question from Councillor Adam Mitchell

'Do you think the current SBC approach to Police Priority setting is still fit for purpose?'

(C) Question from Councillor Julie Ashley-Wren

'Since the changes to the carriageway of Lytton Way earlier this year, there continue to be many complaints and reports about regular, long traffic jams for vehicles exiting from the Town Centre onto Lytton Way. Acknowledging that HCC is the Highway authority, nevertheless this issue is causing huge inconvenience to Stevenage shoppers and should be of concern to SBC. What actions (with HCC) are SBC taking to put right this apparently erroneous new traffic flow design?'

(D) Question from Councillor Stephen Booth

'What method does the Council use to track and monitor absenteeism amongst its employees?'

How does absenteeism compare with surrounding authorities?'

(E) Question from Councillor Andy McGuinness

'What steps are the Council taking, in conjunction with the Highway authority HCC, to ensure that the proposed redesigning of Lytton Way (Station Gateway Area Action Plan) will not result in a clogged up town?'

(F) Question from Councillor Robin Parker CC

'Following the partial collapse of Swingate House earlier this year, several reports were due from a number of sources (e.g. SBC, HSE, the demolition contractor and maybe others) on the causes and blame for the incident – which could have so easily proved fatal.'

Have any of these reports yet been received and, if not, when do we anticipate them? Will they be made public?'

(G) Question from Graham Snell

‘Has working WiFi yet been installed in the new Bus Interchange, so that passengers can receive real time information on bus services? If not, when will it be installed?’

(H) Question from Councillor Tom Wren

‘Not only did the SBC housing development at Tabor Close result in trees being felled without permission but, although the dwellings were complete months ago, the houses (as of October 2022) are still not occupied because – we are told – a short length of highway was not complete. What exactly was the problem with allowing occupation? And why is it taking so long to resolve the issue, thereby leaving 13 badly needed Council housing units standing empty for many months?’

(I) Question from Councillor Alex Farquharson

‘Is SBC satisfied that our grass cutting program is thorough enough?’

12. ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY REVIEW OF 2021/22 INCLUDING PRUDENTIAL CODE

The report circulated at Item 12 was considered by the Executive on 14 September 2022 when the following recommendation to Council was agreed:

“That the 2021/22 Annual Treasury Management Review be recommended to Council for approval”.

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13. ELECTIONS ACT 2022

To update Members on the progress of the Elections Act 2022, that received Royal Assent on 28 April 2022.

[REPORT TO FOLLOW]

14. AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES

To note the Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 7 September 2022.

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