

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, 21 March 2018

Time: 6.00 pm

Place: Shimkent Room - Daneshill House, Danestrete

Present: Councillors: M Downing (Chair), M Hurst (Vice-Chair), L Briscoe, J Brown, L Chester, J Fraser, L Harrington, J Lloyd and A McGuinness

Start / End Start Time: 6.00 pm
Time: End Time: 7.30 pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillors J Fraser and J Lloyd.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Environment & Economy Select Committee meeting of 16 January 2018 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2018-19

The Committee considered a report by the Council's Scrutiny Officer, which invited the Committee to agree its Scrutiny Work Programme for the 2018/2019 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. With regard to suggestions by residents, Members were informed that updates 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 pointed out that there would be opportunities for scrutiny and policy development related to town centre regeneration. It was indicated that ideally, Scrutiny Work plan should be aligned to reviews and policy development work of the Business Units so as to avoid duplication. Members were informed that traffic congestion within the town and on the approaches to the A1 would be addressed at Highways Liaison meetings (Paragraph 5.1.19 to the report referred). It was confirmed that the Public Toilets Scrutiny Review Report would be circulated to those Members who had not received it.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. 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 2018/2019:

- a) District Plan Regeneration as a discussion item with possibly Members of the Overview and Scrutiny and Planning and Development Committees (Paragraph 5.1.2 to the report referred)
- b) Monitoring of the Indoor Market Review (Paragraph 5.1.3 to the report referred – a partial review to be carried out around December 2018 and a full review to be done in 12 months)
- c) Review of Fairlands Valley Park Facilities linked to SLL (Paragraphs 5.1.4 and 5.1.20 to the report referred)
- d) Play area provision/outdoor space and sports provision (Paragraph 5.1.12 to the report referred)
- e) Neighbourhood Maintenance (Paragraph 5.1.21 to the report referred)

2. That the following issues be included in the Policy Development Work Programme for 2018/2019 (Paragraph 7.1.1 to the report referred):

- a) Waste exceptions for refuse collections
- b) Recycling
- c) Grounds Maintenance
- d) Parking Management
- e) BTC Contract Renewal
- f) Bus Interchange (subject to the delivery of Town Centre Regeneration)

3. That Tree Management be added to the list of policy development items (Paragraph 7.1.1 to the report referred)

4. That the Assistant Director (Stevenage Direct Services):

- a) provides an update on refurbishment of Middle Row and other public toilets (Paragraph 5.1.6 to the report referred)
- b) submits the review on Licence to Occupy procedures to the Committee for consideration (Paragraphs 5.1.10 and 5.1.11 to the report referred)
- c) submits the review on SBC Tree Management Strategy to the Committee for consideration (Paragraph 5.1.13 to the report referred)
- d) submits the review on Recycling and Waste and Recycling Contracts to the Committee for consideration (Paragraphs 5.1.14 and 5.1.15 to the report referred)

5. That the Assistant Director (Planning & Regulation):

- a) collates employment and employability data related to the Business Technology Centre and schedule a Members' briefing on the local economy (Paragraph 5.1.7 to the report referred)
- b) schedules a cycling strategy briefing for Members (Paragraph 5.1.9 to the

- report referred)
- c) schedules a Parking Management and Enforcement policy development session for Members (Paragraph 5.1.16 to the report referred)
- d) schedules a Neighbourhood Wardens briefing for Members (Paragraph 5.1.17 to the report referred)
- e) provides a Members Briefing Note detailing how SBC Business Units are addressing the zero carbon emission agenda (Paragraph 5.1.18 to the report referred)

4 **EXECUTIVE MEMBER RESPONSE TO INDOOR MARKET SCRUTINY REVIEW**

The Committee considered the response of the Executive Member for Resources to the Indoor Market Scrutiny Review. It was agreed that the success of the Indoor Market depended upon the Principal Recommendation. Members were informed that efforts were underway to find a cost effective market research option. It was stated that the Business Unit was in the process of bidding for a graduate who would amongst other issues be tasked with doing market research for the indoor market.

With regard to the short term recommendations, it was indicated that:

- Negotiations with retailers had not been successful and that restoring access to the market via retail outlets did not appear to be in the best interests of the retailers
- Plans were underway to improve the market building and enhance the market facades
- Focus was currently on ensuring consistency in opening times
- Nine free parking sessions would be available in 2018/19 and that indoor market traders would be consulted as part of the Council-wide parking strategy
- Town centre events were being connected to the indoor market whenever possible and this was a welcome development
- As part of the 2018/19 Business Plan, a tenancy strategy that seeks to identify attractive business sectors for new traders was being drafted
- SBC was considering other incentives in addition to the staggered rent that was currently on offer
- Officers were exploring alternative uses of void spaces such as offering indoor market stalls to community groups

Members were informed that with regard to:

- a) Long Term Recommendation 1- options for an alternative venue would be kept under consideration
- b) Long Term Recommendations 2 - incorporating the Indoor Market as part of the town centre regeneration was not a viable option given that it was likely to compromise town centre regeneration plans.
- c) Long Term Recommendations 3 - approaching an external provider would not be pursued

It was indicated that some market traders had expressed optimism as a result of the Park Place development.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. The Assistant Director (Direct Services) submit the Indoor Market tenancy strategy to the Committee for consideration
2. The E & E Select Committee carry out a partial review of the Indoor Market in the run up to Christmas 2018
3. A comprehensive review of the Indoor Market be carried out after 12 months (March 2019)

5 **HERTFORDSHIRE WASTE PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17**

The Assistant Director (Stevenage Direct Services) presented the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership Annual Report 2016/17 to the Committee. The report covered the following:

- Performance Summary
- Highlights 2016/17
- WasteAware in 2016/17
- Fly Tipping in Hertfordshire
- End Destinations – where do recycled materials go
- Update on 2017/18

Members raised questions regarding recycling rates and potential impact of Brexit on the municipal waste strategy.

It was clarified that recycling rates were not necessarily linked to the recycling regime. Stevenage's recycling and compositing rates were the lowest in the Partnership because the borough had a high stock of high rise properties and households of multiple occupancies. As a result of this, ownership of recycling was relatively low. Members were informed that research by the environment organisation WRAP had revealed a link between recycling capacity and frequency of waste collection.

Members were informed that there was no clarity on the potential impact of Brexit on environment legislation. It was revealed that arrangements for the end destination of waste had a significant impact on the recycling strategy. Members were informed that China had imposed restrictions on the importation of recycled waste and this was having an impact on revenues of some local authorities but not Stevenage.

It was agreed that emphasis should be placed on encouraging the reduction in waste generation, educating residents about recycling options and supporting government initiatives such as the drive to reduce wrapping on retail products. It was also noted that the Council would benefit from tapping into the expertise of the Environment Agency and similar organisations.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Report is noted.

6 **URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

None.

7 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Not required.

8 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR