

**ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE  
MINUTES**

Date: Monday, 12 November 2018

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Shimkent Room - Daneshill House, Danestrete

**Present:** Councillors: Michael Downing (Chair), Matthew Hurst (Vice Chair), Lloyd Briscoe, Jim Brown, David Cullen, James Fraser, Lizzy Kelly, Andy McGuinness, Adam Mitchell CC and Sarah-Jane Potter

**Start / End** Start Time: 6.00pm

**Time:** End Time: 7.50pm

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor Simon Speller.

Councillor Dave Cullen declared an interest in item 3 – Licence to Occupy as a holder of a Licence to Cultivate.

Councillors Matthew Hurst and Adam Mitchell also declared interests in item 3 as members of an organisation with a Grant to Occupy.

**2 MINUTES - 18 OCTOBER 2018**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Environment and Economy Select Committee held on 18 October be approved subject to the following amendments:

- Page 6 – 1<sup>st</sup> bullet point be amended to read “Unlike previous arrangements, the new timetable had a repeating pattern that made it easier for passengers”
- Page 7 – in relation to the Hertford Loop the words “at the station” at the end of the first paragraph be deleted.

**3 LICENCE TO OCCUPY**

Craig Miller, Assistant Director Stevenage Direct Services gave a presentation to the Committee on the process of applying for a Licence to Occupy which allows the licensee to maintain council owned amenity land without any proprietary rights to the land.

Officers advised that the main issues regarding the process were the unresponsive and bureaucratic procedures which were not resident focussed with no dedicated Council contact point.

The Committee was pleased to note the proposals for the review and improvement of the process which would dramatically reduce the time for licence applications and

had given officers the opportunity for the whole process to be delivered electronically. The Committee was supportive of the Assistant Director's plans to consult with interested parties on the proposals.

In response to a question, Officers confirmed that there was no charge for a Licence to Occupy but that an admin charge of approximately £60 was charged by Herts County Council in respect of a Licence to Cultivate.

Officers also advised that applicants would be invited into the Council for a meeting to work out the exact details of an application rather than delaying an application by the use of letters or emails. In response to a question, Officers advised that applications received were for a 5 year licence, the Council would also require the land to be kept maintained at an agreed standard and would also require the applicant to purchase appropriate public liability insurance.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- (i) That support be given to the Assistant Director Stevenage Direct Services to start the consultation process on the proposals to review the Licence to Occupy process.
- (ii) That a progress report be brought back to the Committee by the Assistant Director once the new process is in place.

#### 4 **URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

None.

#### 5 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

It was **RESOLVED**:

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 involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1 to 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by SI 2006 No. 88.

2. That having considered the reasons for the following item being in Part II, it be determined that maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighed the public interest in disclosure.

#### 6 **STEVENAGE DIRECT SERVICES BUSINESS REVIEW**

The Assistant Director Stevenage Direct Services gave a presentation to the Committee setting out his proposals for the Stevenage Direct Services Business Unit Review.

The Committee were supportive of the proposals put forward by the Assistant Director and it was **RESOLVED** that

1. the presentation be noted; and
2. the Assistant Director come back to a future meeting of the Committee with an update on the progress of the review.

7 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

**CHAIR**