

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, 12 February 2020

Time: 2.00pm

Place: Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Danestrete

Present: Councillors: Sharon Taylor OBE CC (Chair), Mrs Joan Lloyd (Vice-Chair), Lloyd Briscoe, Rob Broom, John Gardner, Richard Henry, Jackie Hollywell and Jeannette Thomas.

Start / End Start Time: 2.00pm

Time: End Time: 4.26pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no apologies for absence.

There were no declarations on interest.

2 MINUTES - 22 JANUARY 2020

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 22 January 2020 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

3 MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND SELECT COMMITTEES

In respect of the Minutes of the meeting of the Community Select Committee held on 8 January 2020, which continued its scrutiny review into sports and leisure provision, the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People & Leisure advised that he was working with officers to provide a response to the Committee's recommendations, as well as involving the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health & Older People in addressing the health and wellbeing issues raised.

The recommendations also referred to the "Locality Reviews". The Chair asked officers to re-name these as "Local Asset Reviews".

In relation to the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 28 January 2020, the Strategic Director (TP) advised that the Executive's decision regarding the Kenilworth Scheme had been called-in by three Members of the Committee.

In respect of the comments made by the Committee regarding the relationship between footfall and car parking income, the Leader asked the Portfolio Holder for Resources to ensure that the Leader's Financial Security Group (LSFG) considered this matter in more detail as part of its work on the 2021/22 budget setting process.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the following meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees be noted –

Community Select Committee – 8 January 2020
Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 14 January 2020

4 PARKING PROVISION AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT: PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Transport presented a report in respect of the proposed Parking Provision and Sustainable Transport Supplementary Planning Document (SPD): Public Consultation.

The Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Transport advised that, following adoption, the SPD would become a material consideration for all planning applications. The Stevenage Local Plan committed the Council to regularly review the Parking Provision SPD to ensure it was in conformity with up to date policy. Since 2012, policy changes had included the publication of the SBC Mobility Strategy (2016); the adoption of Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 4 (2018) and the SBC Transport Strategy (2019); and SBC's declaration of a Climate Emergency. An overarching theme of recent policy was to promote a modal shift in transportation away from the dominance of private-use motor vehicles towards sustainable modes of transport.

The Executive noted that the draft Parking Provision and Sustainable Transport SPD sought to amend the adopted Parking Provision SPD in a number of ways, most significantly by: remapping the "Accessibility Zones" where reduced levels of parking provision were encouraged to avoid facilitating an ever-increasing use of vehicles in areas with access to public transport and services; requiring provision of active and passive Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure; increasing cycle parking requirements so they were in line with the SBC Cycling Strategy recommendations; and providing support and considerations that must be taken into account when promoting certain major schemes included in the Transport Strategy.

In response to Members' questions, the Assistant Director (Planning & Regulatory) commented:

- There would be a requirement on new developments for the installation of underground cabling in readiness for electric vehicle charging points. The installation of the above ground charging points would take place in consultation with the County Council; and
- 20% of new communal parking spaces would contain electric vehicle charging points.

Members stressed the importance of lobbying the Government for appropriate resources to fund the installation of electric vehicle charging points.

In view of local issues raised by Members in respect of disabled parking, Officers were requested provide clarity in the Supplementary Planning Document on

enforceable disabled parking pays and informal disabled parking bays,.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the content of the draft Parking Provision and Sustainable Transport Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) be noted.
2. That delegated powers be granted to the Assistant Director: Planning and Regulation, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Transport, to make minor amendments as are necessary in the final preparation of the draft SPD prior to its consultation.
3. That the draft Parking Provision and Sustainable Transport SPD be published for consultation from 18 February 2020 to 22 March 2020.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

5 STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

The Portfolio Holder for Environment & Regeneration introduced a report in respect of an update on the Stevenage Climate Change Strategy.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment & Regeneration advised that Climate Change had reached a point where immediate action must be undertaken. With its declaration of a climate emergency in June 2019, Stevenage Borough Council was committed to tackling this head on. SBC had a holistic vision which focused on cutting its own emissions to net zero and supporting businesses and residents to do the same by 2030.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment & Regeneration stated that the Emerging Climate Change Strategy document (Appendix A) and consultation would act as a starting point for the development of a resident-led, co-produced Climate Change Strategy for Stevenage. The Council would act as a community leader and facilitate local people and businesses during the decarbonisation process. Through consultation with academics and climate change organisations the Council had taken a first-step to consult with residents and businesses. This was a vital strategic task which would consider the role the Council must play as a facilitator for change and advocate for radical transformation of the transport and energy systems, as well as having a robust plan for reducing emission from the Council's own land, buildings, fleet and assets.

The Executive acknowledged that it was critical that the carbon footprint and wider environmental impacts of all new developments in the town were now considered through planning, and that residents were informed and empowered to be able to make the meaningful lifestyle changes required for Stevenage to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

The Assistant Director (Planning & Regulatory) referred to the documents appended

to the report, namely the Draft Climate Change Strategy, the Draft Climate Change Charter, the Draft Community Pledges, and a brief Equalities Impact Assessment.

The Executive was informed that internal engagement would continue with all Council Business Units on Climate Change initiatives. Initial public engagement, through social media, had resulted in 1,400 responses, twice the number received on the Stevenage Local Plan consultation.

The Chief Executive reported that the Hertfordshire Leaders' Meeting had agreed to the establishment of a Countywide Climate Change Group, in order to share best practice across the county and to consider high level county wide interventions. He commended the Local Government Association Climate Change Hub to Members as a useful source of information. He stated that the County Council's Climate Change Strategy was expected to be published in March/April 2020, and it was important that key issues in that Strategy were reflected in SBC's emerging Strategy.

The Leader asked the Strategic Directors to move the Climate Change agenda forward at a greater pace than hitherto. To this end, she saw the following four strands of work to be crucial:

- the climate change actions that could be carried out by the SBC (including housing, planning, energy, estates, transport and regeneration);
- the influencing of partners and businesses in climate change matters;
- the lobbying of the Government for powers to drive forward the Climate Change agenda, along with appropriate additional funding; and
- the community engagement with residents, including consultation and education, and involving as wide a cross-section of residents as possible.

The Leader noted that there were only a small number of "quick win" examples in the documentation. She therefore proposed an additional recommendation requesting a report to be submitted to the next Climate Change Working Group providing a comprehensive "quick wins" programme of projects for the next 12 months.

Members were given an assurance that the Climate Change Strategy consultation process would include young people, youth groups and local schools.

The Leader requested that an item be added to the agenda for the next Climate Change Working Group meeting on how the equalities impact of climate change could be assessed and how some of the potential negative impacts contained in the Equalities Impact Assessment could be mitigated.

Officers were asked to ensure that all future Executive reports contained a Climate Change Implications section.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the content of the draft Climate Change Strategy, Charter and Community Pledges be noted.

2. That the Climate Change Strategy, Charter and Pledges be published for consultation from 18 February 2020 for five weeks.
3. That delegated powers be granted to the Assistant Director: Planning and Regulation, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration, to make minor amendments as are necessary in the final preparation of the draft documents prior to consultation.
4. That a report to be submitted to the next Climate Change Working Group providing a comprehensive “quick wins” programme of projects for the next 12 months.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report; and 4. To quicken the pace of work on Climate Change.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

6 LICENSING ACT 2003 - REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

The Portfolio Holder for Communities, Community Safety & Equalities presented a report in respect of the Licensing Act 2003: Statement of Licensing Principles/Policy.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities, Community Safety & Equalities advised that local authorities were required to publish a Statement of Principles in accordance with section 5 of the Licensing Act 2003. The Statement would set out the general approach the Council would take when carrying out its regulatory role under the Act and promoting the licensing objectives. The Policy sought to strike a balance between the interests of licence holders, applicants and residents in the promotion of the licensing objectives defined by the Act. It outlined the licensing authority's expectations of licence holders, as well as its obligations under the Act. The Statement was designed to offer appropriate protection for residents and a streamlined approach to regulation that eased unnecessary burdens on businesses.

The Executive was informed that a number of additions and amendments to the existing Statement of Policy were consulted upon, reflecting the update in the Guidance published in accordance with Section 182 of the Act. There were no changes to the intent or direction of the Policy, which detailed how the Council would seek to regulate licensable alcohol and entertainment activities and provide a framework for consistent decision making.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities, Community Safety & Equalities stated that the draft Statement of Policy was considered by the Council's General Purposes Committee at its meeting held on 30 January 2020. The Executive was asked to agree the proposed Stevenage Borough Council Licensing Act Statement of Principles 2020-2025 and to recommend it to the Council for adoption.

The Senior Environmental Health and Licensing Manager advised Members of the content of the deliberations of the General Purposed Committee regarding the Policy.

The Executive noted that the fees relating to activities connected to the Licensing

Act 2003 were statutory, but had not been reviewed since 2005. The Local Government Association were continuing to lobby the Government for a review of the fees or allowing Local Authorities to set their own fees. For SBC, fee income in 2018/19 had been £78,000, against the cost of running the service of £91,000.

In respect of the recycling of empty bottles by licensees, the Senior Environmental Health & Licensing Manager was asked to investigate whether the Licensing Authority could impose conditions requiring such recycling on new licences. If not, he was further asked to lobby the Government requesting that licensing authorities were granted such powers.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the proposed Stevenage Borough Council Licensing Act 2003 Statement of Licensing Policy 2020-2025 (attached at Appendix A to the report) be agreed
2. That the Council be recommended to adopt the Stevenage Borough Council draft Licensing Act 2003 Statement of Licensing Policy 2020-2025 to the Council (attached at Appendix A to the report).

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

7 HOUSEHOLD WASTE MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Portfolio Holder for Environment & Regeneration introduced a report in respect of a proposed Household Waste Policy.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment & Regeneration stated that the Policy Objectives were geared towards improved recycling rates; contributing to the council's wider environmental objectives around climate change; future proofing the service with regard to the Government's emerging Resources and Waste Strategy; and contributing to the Council's financial security programme.

A summary of the changes to current practice were:

- Smaller bins would be issued as standard for residual waste (180L instead of 240L), as new bins were ordered;
- Charges would be introduced for replacement residual waste bins (approved as part of the financial securities programme);
- The qualifying criteria for larger bins would be increased;
- Bins reported as missed, but recorded as not presented for collection, would not be collected until the next scheduled collection day;
- Missed bins reported before noon would be collected on the same day; and
- Two additional sacks of residual side waste would be collected after Christmas instead of 3.

The Waste Operations Manager confirmed that the Council currently had no written policy document for Waste Management. The core service would remain unaltered, although the changes outlined by the Portfolio Holder were aimed at reducing waste

and increasing recycling. A new operations management IT system was due to go live from the end of March 2020. This would integrate with the new Customer Relationship Management system being implemented by the Council, and would increase the amount of information available to Customer Service Centre advisors and in turn residents. With real time information it would reduce avoidable contact and allow residents to self-serve.

Members supported the Leader's proposal for two additional recommendations requiring a waste strategy to be brought back to the Executive within 12 months setting out how the Council would achieve a recycling rate of 65% by 2035, in line with the Government's emerging Resources and Waste Strategy; and a reflection in the Policy that SBC remained committed to delivering waste management services in-house through a direct labour operation.

In considering the Policy, the following comments and suggested amendments were raised:

- Paragraph 2.8 should be amended to state that empty tetra paks should be placed in the blue recycling box;
- Clearer labelling should be provided on the various recycling receptacles;
- Further work should be carried out with the Community Centres, to encourage them to maximise their recycling;
- No plastic cutlery or crockery should be used at any future Mayoral/Civic functions; and
- Recycling receptacles should be provided for use by all Play Centres in the Borough.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the draft Household Waste Management Policy, attached as Appendix A to the report, be approved.
2. That authority to amend the policy be delegated to the Strategic Director (RP), after consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration.
3. That a waste strategy to be brought back to the Executive within 12 months setting out how the Council would achieve a recycling rate of 65% by 2035, in line with the Government's emerging Resources and Waste Strategy.
4. That SBC remains committed to delivering waste management services in-house through a direct labour operation and this approach will be reflected in the policy and strategy.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report; and 3. To develop a strategy to improve recycling rates; and 4. To re-affirm a commitment to in-house delivery of the service.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

8 FINAL GENERAL FUND AND COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2020/2021

The Portfolio Holder for Resources presented a report in respect of the Final General Fund and Council Tax Setting for 2020/21.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources advised that the Financial Security options were estimated to now total £847,000, which includes the additional £53,000 of commercial income which was reported in January 2020. The growth pressures in the report totalled £653,000, which included the additional stock survey growth, less an assumption that allotment charges were brought in half way through 2020/21, at a saving to the tax payer of £11,000.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources reported that the Government's final finance settlement had been received and totalled £2.67Million.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources stated that the Non-Domestic Rate (NDR) gains reported at £1.105Million in the draft budget were estimated to be £35,000 higher. This still has to be realised and the recommendation was to increase General Fund balances by that amount, which was likely to be a one off if all gains were reset.

The Executive was informed that the General Fund budget 2020/21 net spend has reduced by £66,600, but that this includes additional Section 31 grants which mean more grant and less NDR so neutral (£300,000) - if this was excluded then the increase in General Fund spend would be £233,000, which included a one off contribution to Capital for 2020/21 of £250,000.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources explained that the budget also included the homeless award of £406,000, which had been transferred to a ring fence reserve until needed. There was also a further £117,000 awarded for rough sleeper. However there was an on-going pressure of £65,000 beyond 2020/21 which may impact on future savings targets.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources commented that the 2019/20 budget had increased by £14,000, largely as a result of pressure in the garage service.

The Executive noted that the net draw on balances for 2020/21 was £349,000, which included the additional one off £250,000 contribution to capital. General Fund balances were estimated to be £3.5Million by 1 March 2024, which is £423,000 lower than reported to the January 2020 Executive meeting, although the General Fund still was projected to make a contribution to balances in 2022/23 of £65,000.

In response to a Member's question regarding progress on the national review of Business Rates, the Leader commented that this may be included in a Government statement on Local Government finances to be given on 11 March 2020.

The Leader asked Officers to investigate the following matters:

- Council Garages – in view of below target income projected for 2019/20, enhanced advertising/marketing of the service be undertaken, and the introduction of innovations such as choice based lettings for garages, be

implemented as soon as possible; and

- Stevenage Leisure Limited (SLL) – conduct a review of the existing contract with SLL and identify potential benefits for Stevenage residents and taxpayers.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following proposals be recommended to Council on 26 February 2020:

1. That the 2019/20 revised net expenditure on the General Fund of £9,678,680 be approved.
2. That a draft General Fund Budget for 2020/21 of £9,069,830 be proposed for consultation purposes, with a contribution from balances of £349,030 and a Band D Council Tax of £215.57 (assuming a 2.37% increase).
3. That the updated position on the General Fund and the Risk Assessment of General Fund balances, be approved.
4. That a minimum level of General Fund reserves of £2,920,935, in line with the 2020/21 risk assessment of balances be approved.
5. That the contingency sum of £400,000, within which the Executive can approve supplementary estimates, be approved for 2020/21 (unchanged from 2019/20).
6. That the 2020/21 proposed Financial Security Options of £846,964 and including fees and charges of £117,490 be included in the final budget.
7. That 2020/21 business rate gains totalling £1.14Million above the baseline need be allocated as set out in Paragraph 4.6.7 of the report.
8. That the 2020/21 Council Tax Support scheme be approved, as set out in Section 4.8 of the report.
9. That New Homes Bonus of £30,380 be transferred to the reserve to fund future potential shortfalls in funding (Paragraph 4.4.4 refers).
10. That the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

9 FINAL CAPITAL STRATEGY 2019/20 - 2024/25

The Portfolio Holder for Resources introduced a report in respect of the final Capital Strategy for 2019/20 – 2024/25.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources advised that the General Fund Capital Strategy had been revised to total £82.296M over the period.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources explained that capital bids scoring more than an average 1.5 out of 2 remained unchanged from the draft Capital Strategy. Bids scoring less than an average of 1.5 and not included in the programme now totalled £5.4Million, slightly reduced from the £5.7Million reported at the January 2020 Executive meeting. The total of 2020/21 low scoring bids was £486,000, of which £300,000 related to the golf course. A deferred works budget of £200,000 has been included in the Capital Strategy for 2020/21 to fund works that became unavoidable.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources commented that the bids that were not scored because they required further reviews or business cases totalled £4.2Million for the Strategy period. The largest area of spend across the Strategy period was Community Centres (£2.3Million) which should be addressed by the Locality (Local Asset) Reviews. The section on Locality (Local Asset) Reviews had been updated to set a target of capital receipts of £1Million.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources stated that the capital resourcing of the programme now totalled £85.5Million with an overall surplus of £3.3Million, which was a million higher as a result of the impact of the Kenilworth scheme.

Members were informed that the bus station position remained unchanged in the report, but the operational boundary for borrowing in the Treasury Management Strategy had been increased to allow for any temporary borrowing. The report also stated that there would be a need for more savings/potential reduction in services/putting on hold the capital programme should the GD3 monies not be released. The section on investment in commercial property had also been updated.

In respect of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme, the Portfolio Holder for Resources advised that this was now projected to be £243Million for 2019/20-2024/25 (against £231.79Million in the draft Strategy). This had increased to reflect the changes to the Kenilworth scheme reported at the January 2020 Executive meeting.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources explained that the funding for the HRA capital programme had been adjusted for the Kenilworth scheme and also for an additional £262,000 of Section 106 affordable homes contributions. However, for the period 2019/20-2024/25 borrowing represents 37% of the overall funding, with 36% being funded from the Major Repairs Reserve. The table set out in Paragraph 4.13.2 of the report showed that HRA balances reduced to minimum levels in the middle part of the HRA Business Plan which meant that higher level of balances were required in the early years to fund future borrowing costs and the capital programme.

The Leader commented that the National Audit Office (NAO) had publically criticised local authorities for their level of investment in commercial property. She considered that such activity had been necessitated by the continual reduction in local government funding, and advised that the District Councils Network would be sending a robust reply to the NAO on this matter.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following proposals be recommended to Council on 26 February 2020:

1. That the final 2020/21 General Fund Capital Programme, as summarised in the report, be approved.
2. That the final 2020/21 HRA Capital Programme, as summarised in the report, be approved.
3. That the updated forecast of resources, as summarised in the report, be approved.
4. That the Council's investment strategy for non-treasury assets, as set out in Section 3.2 of the report, be approved.
5. That the approach to resourcing the General Fund capital programme, as outlined in the report, be approved.
6. That the actions required to ensure the General Fund programme is funded, as outlined in Paragraphs 4.9.3-4.9.9 of the report, be noted.
7. That the approach and progress on Locality Reviews and the target to realise receipts for 2020/21 be noted.
8. That the growth bids now included in the Capital Strategy be approved.
9. That the return of Right to Buy one for one receipts, as outlined in Section 4.14 of the report, be noted.
10. That the 2020/21 de-minimis expenditure limit (Section 4.15 of the report) be approved.
11. That the 2020/21 contingency allowance (Section 4.16 of the report) be approved.
12. That the work undertaken by Leader's Financial Security Group (LFSG) on behalf of the Executive in reviewing and challenging the General Fund Capital Strategy be noted.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

10 ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY INCLUDING PRUDENTIAL CODE INDICATORS 2020/21

The Portfolio Holder for Resources presented a report in respect of the Annual Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21, including Prudential Code Indicators.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources advised that, as at 31 December 2019, cash balances were £63Million, and were projected to be £50.7Million by the end of the year. The projection included nearly £20Million of restricted use receipts and provisions. The Capital Strategy also showed that Housing Revenue Account (HRA) reserves needed to be held to fund the middle part of the HRA Business Plan and

the pie chart at Paragraph 4.3.7 of the report showed an analysis of the cash holdings. In addition, the cash balances were predicated on the realisation of savings targets for both the HRA and the General Fund.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources stated that there had been no breaches of Treasury Management counter party limits during 2019/20. It was recommended that the counterpart limits be changed to allow up to £20Million (rather than £10Million) for loans over 12 months. This would be when balances were forecast over £30Million and would improve the investment interest rate achieved for the Council.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources further stated that the operational boundary or the limit to which the Council would normally borrow had been increased to allow for borrowing for the bus station (if required) and an amount had been included should there be a timing issue on land sales. The boundary also included the Queensway finance lease as, in accounting terms, this counted as borrowing.

The Executive noted that Council's treasury advisors had projected a base rate increase to 1% in March 2021 (however, since the Bank of England projections they were now projecting the 0.255 increase to 1% in June 2021).

The Executive further noted that the average HRA borrowing rate for existing loans was 3.38%, the majority of relating to the self-financing deal, when the loans had to be taken at a specific point in time.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following recommendations be made to Council on 26 February 2020:

1. That the Treasury Management Strategy (attached at Appendix A to the report) be approved.
2. That the draft prudential indicators for 2020/21 (attached at Appendix C to the report) be approved.
3. That the minimum revenue provision policy (attached at Appendix B to the report) be approved.
4. That an increase to the maximum level of long term (invested for longer than 12 months) investments from £10Million to £20Million when cash balances are higher than £30Million be approved.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

11 URGENT PART I BUSINESS

(1) Town Fund

The Chief Executive provided an update on the Town Fund. He advised that the Town Fund Board had met for the first time on 31 January 2020, and had

involved a wide representation from partners and local businesses. Going forward, the Secretary of State had asked for Town Fund and Growth Deal 3 (GD3) matters to be merged into one Development Board. Accordingly, Officers would take steps to work with the Government and local partners to implement new Terms of Reference for a Development Board.

The Chief Executive stated that recruitment for an Independent Chair of the Board was being led by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and managed by PENNA, representatives from HCC, the Herts Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and Government would support the interview process in due course. The aim was to conclude this process ahead of the next Board meeting, which was due to take place on a date to be agreed in March 2020. It was hoped that once the Board had met the GD3 funding would be released which would in part be used to fund the bus station re-location scheme. Options for inclusion as part of the Town Fund Investment Plan would also be worked up ahead of the March 2020 Development Board meeting.

(2) Storm Ciara

The Strategic Director (RP) provided an update on the impact of Storm Ciara on SBC services and Stevenage residents.

The Strategic Director advised that, during the early part of the week following the Storm, the Customer Service Centre had received 400 calls regarding repairs and 233 regarding other damage (eg. fencing). These were being worked through by officers. Environmental Services had received calls regarding refuse bins / refuse being blown away. 36 calls had been received in relation to damaged and fallen trees and these had been made safe and cleared.

The Strategic Director reported that the Waste Transfer Station had experienced a backlog of waste for landfill, and that this backlog was in the process of being resolved.

With the expected arrival of Storm Dennis during the next weekend (15/16 February 2020), the Executive asked the Strategic Director to ensure that housing officers were liaising with homeless hostels and social providers to deal with rough sleepers in the predicted inclement weather. It was agreed that a media release be prepared regarding sleeping rough in inclement weather.

In terms of the outcome of the effect of Storm Ciara on SBC services and Stevenage residents, the Strategic Director was asked to provide statistics to all Members and a media release on the matter (possibly combining it with further statistics following Storm Dennis).

(3) Coronavirus

The Strategic Director (RP) provided the latest news on the impact of the Coronavirus outbreak and plans for containment should it spread.

The Strategic Director advised that Public Health England had issued a range of advice to public bodies regarding the outbreak. The World Health Organisation had also declared it a public health emergency of international concern. The risk in the UK had been raised from low to moderate, enabling the Government to plan for possible major eventualities, including a pandemic.

The Strategic Director stated that the Government would be publishing Regulations designed to reduce further transmission. Public Health England had conducted over 1,350 tests on individuals, which had resulted in 8 being positive for the virus. Public Health bodies and local authorities would be notified if more cases came to light, and all health practitioners had received advice regarding the virus.

The Strategic Director explained that, within Hertfordshire, the Local Resilience Forum was monitoring the situation closely, and had a number of triggers in place should there be an escalation of the virus.

The Strategic Director would be sharing the Public Health England advice with all staff, and the SBC Pandemic Business Continuity Plan was in the process of being updated. NHS posters on the virus would be displayed in all Council buildings and community centres.

The Strategic Director undertook to provide all Members with regular updates on the outbreak.

(4) Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse (SADA)

The Leader was delighted to report that SADA had recently signed a 12 month contract with East Hertfordshire District Council to provide their Domestic Abuse services. She congratulated the Community Safety Manager and her Team on this achievement.

12 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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 involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in Paragraphs 1 to 7 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by SI 2006 No. 88.
2. That, having considered the reasons for the following items being in Part II, it be determined that maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighed the public interest in disclosure.

13 PART II MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 22 JANUARY 2020

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 22 January 2020 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

14 DEBT WRITE OFFS GREATER THAN £10,000

The Executive considered a Part II report seeking approval to the writing off of Housing Benefit overpayment debts deemed irrecoverable and unpaid business rates liabilities which were properly due to the Council of more than £10,000.

It was **RESOLVED** that the recommendation contained in the report be approved.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

15 URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.

CHAIR