

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, 17 March 2021

Time: 6.00 pm

Place: Virtual (Via Zoom)

Present: Councillors: Lin Martin-Haugh (Chair), Philip Bibby CC (Vice-Chair), Sandra Barr, Laurie Chester, Michael Downing, Michelle Gardner, Andy McGuinness, John Mead, Sarah Mead, Adam Mitchell CC, Robin Parker CC, Claire Parris and Simon Speller.

Start / End Start Time: 6.00 pm
Time: End Time: 7.58 pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no apologies for absence.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Committee meeting held on Wednesday 17 February 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 PART I DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

The Committee noted the minutes of the Executive meeting held on Wednesday 10 February 2021.

2. Minutes of the Executive – 10 February 2021

Noted.

3. Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees.

Noted.

4. Covid-19 update

The Strategic Director (RP) advised that he provided an update on the latest Covid-19 position at the Executive meeting held on Wednesday 10 March 2021, and a detailed update was also provided to Coronavirus Executive Committee meeting held on Friday 26 February 2021. He advised Members that the vaccination figures were now available by age group.

The Council was closely monitoring Covid-19 cases rate and would re-open the Play Areas as soon as safe to do so. A decision which would be based on a sufficiently low case rate regarding transmission of the virus.

The Strategic Director (RP) to provide further information on Test and Trace Support Payments in the next Coronavirus Executive Committee.

In response to a question from a Member, the Strategic Director (RP) advised Members that the Council's Environmental Health Team was in regular contact with major retailers to improve safe shopping environment for residence. Covid-19 Marshalls were also working closing with the Police to monitor compliance across the Town.

The Committee noted the update.

5. The Impact of Development on Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document: Adoption

In response to a question from a Member, the Principal Planning Officer advised Members that the consultation on draft impact of Development on Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SDP) was held between 30 November 2020 and 25 January 2021, meeting the requirement stipulated for SDP consultation in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) and England Regulation 2012.

The Community Safety Manager presented the Community Safety Strategy for 2021- 2024. She reported that this was the second time the Strategy considered by the Committee. She advised Members about the additional recommendation made by the Executive about hate crime and to promote equality in the community.

6. Developer contribution Supplementary Planning Document: Adoption

The Planning Policy Manager presented the report.

In response to a question from a Member, the Principal Planning Officer advised Members that the Council liaised closely with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) on the Developer Contribution guide. If there is a need to seek contribution towards infrastructure, HCC would use this guide to consider appropriate contribution.

The Committee noted the report.

7. Housing First Approach – Stevenage Borough Council

The Assistant Director for Housing and Investment provided a report on Council's Housing First approach to accommodate rough sleepers, and options for implementing the Housing First approach for the 2021/22 financial year. She reported that the Housing First Approach had been outlined in reports to Executive in July 2020 and in December 2020, as a response on Covid-19 pandemic to rough sleepers in the Borough.

The Committee noted the report.

8. Community Safety Strategy 2021-2024

The Community Safety Manager presented the Community Safety Strategy for 2021- 2024. She reported that this was the second time the Strategy was being considered by the Committee. She advised Members about the additional recommendation made by the Executive about hate crime and promoting equality in the community.

9. Corporate Performance – Quarter Three 2020-21

The Strategic Director (TP) advised Members on Corporate Performance for Quarter three 2021-22. He informed Members about the challenges the Council faced by Covid-19 pandemic, which had direct impact on the performance in third quarter.

The Executive requested steps to be taken in order to enhance the Council's website, which would include further functionality and easy navigation.

The Committee noted the report.

10. 3rd Quarter Capital Monitoring Report – General Fund and Housing Revenue Account 2020/21

The Strategic Director for Housing and Estate presented the report for the 3rd Quarter Capital Monitoring – General Fund and Housing Revenue Account 2020/21. She advised Members on the level of losses experienced by the Council increased in the 3rd Quarter.

The Committee noted the report.

11. 3rd Quarter Capital Monitoring Report – General Fund and Housing Revenue Account 2020/21

The Strategic Director for Housing and Estate advised Members on General Fund and Housing Revenue Account for 2020/21. She informed Members that the growth bid submitted for the vehicles after the Council budget was approved. She would ensure that overall growth information be included in the process for budget in the future.

The Committee noted the report.

4 URGENT PART I DECISIONS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Town Deal

The Strategic Director (TP) advised Members on the Town Deal funding of £37.5Million by the government following the Town investment Plan submitted in

October 2020 by the Stevenage Development Board. The proposal was submitted for £50Million for ten projects. The Government allocated £37.5Million with additional conditions to satisfy to secure drawdown of the funding for three of the projects. There were no projects rejected. Business cases would need to be made in the next 12 months to enable the drawdown of the funding earmarked by the government. Members praised the worked done by the Council for securing the funding.

5 **REVIEW OF SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS**

The Scrutiny Officer presented the report on Review of Scrutiny arrangements and advised Members on the significant changes brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic in scrutiny arrangements, including the way Members currently meet and their use of hybrid meetings. He explained that a further review also provided the opportunity for Members to look at how scrutiny meetings could run in the future, post Covid-19.

Members noted the report with the following amendments:

- On paragraph 2.5.1, the typo should be corrected to “*incorporate fewer, SMART recommendations*”.
- Under Paragraph 2.3.1, the following fourth bullet point should be added.
 - *Where it had become necessary to broaden scrutiny (within reason), Scrutiny Members should ask additional questions.*

The

Committee agreed on a scoping document to review the Council’s Scrutiny arrangements in September 2021.

6 **URGENT PART I BUSINESS**

None.

7 **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 involved 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 considered the reasons for the following reports being in Part II and determined that the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighed the public interest in disclosure.

8 **PART II MINUTES - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

None.

9 **PART II DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE**

14. Framework for the Supply of Agency Workers

The Committed noted the report with additional recommendations proposed during the debate in the Executive meeting.

15. SG1 Acceleration

The Committee noted the updated on the SG1 project.

16. Appointment of Principal Contractor at Dunn Close

The Committee noted the appointment of Principal Contractor for the Dunn Close development scheme.

10 **URGENT PART II DECISIONS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

None.

11 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR