

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, 17 August 2021

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present: Councillors: Lin Martin-Haugh (Chair), Philip Bibby CC (Vice-Chair), Myla Arceno, Michael Downing, Alex Farquharson, Chris Howells, Wendy Kerby, Andy McGuinness, Sarah Mead, Robin Parker CC, Claire Parris, Loraine Rossati and Simon Speller.

Start / End Start Time: 6.00pm
Time: End Time: 9.04pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Adrian Brown.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES - 22 JULY 2021

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Committee meeting held on Wednesday 22 July 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 11 August 2021.

2. Minutes of the Executive – 14 July 2021

Noted.

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

Members were pleased to note that Officers would be introducing an action tracker for Executive decisions

4. Covid-19 update

The Chief Executive advised that an update on the latest Covid-19 position had been given at the Executive meeting held on Wednesday 11 August 2021. He agreed to send the written update to all Overview and Scrutiny Members following the meeting.

In response to a question, Officers confirmed that work was underway to ensure that consideration was being given to those SBC staff members who had been assigned to Covid-19 related duties and were now returning to their substantive roles to support efforts to address high Customer demand within some SBC services.

5. Transformation

The Strategic Director (CF) advised that the programme was a core element of the new Making Your Money Count FTFC Programme. The Transformation programme would apply across all Council services. Members made the following comments:

- The programme was very high level and would be more useful for Members when further details were available. Officers confirmed that Members would receive further detail during the next stage of the process and that the report was focussed upon consideration of the transformation principles which would be used to inform future activity;
- A briefing for the Opposition Groups was welcomed which would be arranged by the Strategic Director (CF) and the Assistant Director Digital and Transformation;
- In relation to paperless working, half of the Committee Members were supportive of the move to paperless and would be willing to start as soon as possible other Members however, were more cautious. The Assistant Director (Digital and Transformation) confirmed that the current offer to Members in terms of IT equipment was a laptop plus any additional items (keyboard/screen etc). Members would also be receiving ongoing training from a specialist Mod.Gov trainer to ensure the transition was as smooth as possible;
- Concern was expressed by a Member regarding the possible loss of the Council's Print Room Service;
- In response to a question regarding the proposed amount of savings as a result of the programme, Officers advised that this was a high level assessment and the detail would be outlined at a future date;
- Officers confirmed that other Local Authorities who were recognised to be exemplars of good practice in this area had been visited to help inform the nature and scope of our activities;
- One Member suggested that significant savings could be achieved across the County through joining up the waste and recycling activities;
- All Members across the Council should be engaged in the transformation programme.

6. 4th Quarter Revenue Monitoring Report 2020/21 – General Fund and Housing Revenue Account

The Committee noted that audit of the 2019/20 accounts should shortly be completed. The Strategic Director (CF) also reported that the external auditor had confirmed that they would not be carrying out the audit until November 2021 which

was a concern as SBC Finance staff would have started work on the 2022/23 Budget by then.

In response to a question, the Strategic Director (CF) agreed to provide information to Councillor Parker regarding the Council's investment relationship with Goldman Sachs International.

Officers also gave Members an explanation of the Redman review which was referred to in the paper.

7. 2020/21 Capital Expenditure Outturn

Noted.

8. Urgent Part I Business – Potential County Deal

The Chief Executive advised the Committee that the Executive had backed HCC's proposal to submit an early County Deal Expression of Interest but with the proviso that SBC would not be supportive of any proposal that promoted or resulted in significant Local Government Reform for Hertfordshire.

In response to a question, the Chief Executive advised that he believed Hertfordshire was in a strong position to be recognised as an exemplar 2 tier County area. This along with the fact we have a successful Growth Board already in place which now meets as a formal committee will hopefully support our collective efforts to secure a positive County Deal. He did not feel it would be helpful at this stage to speculate as to whether the terms of any County Deal may result in the Government asking for a Combined Authority/Mayoral model to be implemented across Hertfordshire.

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

None.

5 URGENT PART I BUSINESS

None.

6 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 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.

7 **PART II DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE**

The Committee considered the Part II Decisions of the Executive held on 11 August 2021.

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

None.

9 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR