

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Date: Tuesday, 14 December 2021

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

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

Start / End Time: Start Time: 06:00 pm
End Time: 07:42 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 Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday 24 November 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 PART I DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

2. Minutes of the Executive – 20 October 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 8 December 2021. He provided the following key update to the Committee:

- He informed Members that it was unlikely to have the Mobile Vaccination Unit that was promised for the Bedwell Ward before the Christmas. However, officers would chase up the progress in the New Year.

- Officers would also seek to incorporate local data on the update of booster vaccinations amongst those who are eligible.
- Officers to publish a briefing note regarding the Covid 19 Omicron variant on the Council's Website.

In response to a question from a Member, the Strategic Director (RP) advised Members that the Council's Business Continuity Team would continue to monitor staff sickness and would encourage working from home for those who are able to.

5 & 6. Towns Fund Business Case – Station Gateway and Construction of A New Station North Multi-Storey Car Park and Cycle Hub As Part Of A Sustainable Transport Interchange

The Executive considered a report in respect of the Towns Fund Business Case of Station Gateway. The Station Gateway project incorporated the delivery of Multi Storey Car Park and cycle hub, which would be linked to the bus, railway and wider sustainable transport interchange. The project had received the support of the Stevenage Development Board and also included funding for longer-term master-planning of the area

The Council allocated £6.5M funds, of which £6M related to the construction of new Multi-Storey Car Park (MSCP) and £0.5M of which be reserved for the feasibility and masterplanning works as part of the first phase of works in the Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area.

The following key updates were provided during the presentation:

- The MSCP would include disabled parking, electric vehicle charging and accessibility would be key consideration of the project.
- There would be 622 spaces, including 30 Blue Badge spaces.
- Provision of up to 25% EV charging bays with an EV infrastructure provided for 50% of the MSCP capacity to be enabled for future EV charging requirements.
- The project would also deliver a secure bicycle hub for approximately 80 bikes and 3 accessible bikes.
- The building would have metal cladding design providing natural ventilation.

In response to a question from a Member, the Assistant Director for Housing and Investment advised that on many occasion the station car parks were full, and that there was a need for a new car park, and it would be safe for anyone to use it including shoppers and commuters. The Assistant Director also confirmed the work on the design of the car park, that it would be subject to consultation through the planning application process, and would be considered by the Planning and Development Committee in due course.

It was **RESOLVED:**

- That the Towns Fund Business Case be noted.
- That the construction of a new MSCP and Cycle hub as part of the sustainable transport interchange be noted.

7. Corporate Performance – Quarter 2 2021/22

The Chief Executive provided a presentation in relation to the Corporate Performance Quarter 2 2021/22 to Executive meeting on 8 December 2021. The Strategic Director (RP) highlighted the following issues that were raised in the Executive meeting:

- The Future Town Future Council performance was highlighted.
- The Council's focus on the Temporary and Emergency Accommodation, Voids/Repairs, and Customer Services service areas.
- A number of comments were made at the Executive including commends on the Dunn Close garage Scheme. Officers were asked to ensure that security were enhanced and the temporary lighting around the hoarding bounding this site was adjusted to be at a higher level than the existing levels.
- Officers were asked to publish details of the Garage improvement programme on the Council's website.
- Executive requested to ensure that engagement with Ward Councillors took place regarding local arts projects in their area.
- In relation to the Climate Change, it was confirmed that a new refreshed Climate Change Citizens' Panel would be established in the near future post consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration and the Leader.

Overview and Scrutiny Members made the following comments:

- Concern was expressed regarding the way the communications with the original Climate Change Citizen's Panel had been conducted and needed to be improved for the next iteration. In addition, concern was expressed about the current engagement with young people on this issue, the Council needing to be more proactive about working with young people on climate change
- A Member requested that the list in the Appendix to the report be made clearer, and to provide the unit of measurement for different indicators.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Corporate Performance Quarter 2 2021/22 be noted.

8. Council Tax Base 2022/23

The Executive approved the Council Tax Base for 2022/23. The Strategic Director (CF) advised Members that it was a requirement by law to set the Tax Base and inform the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Hertfordshire County Council of their share of the Council Tax.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council Tax Base 2022/23 be noted.

9. Housing Revenue Account (HRA): Draft HRA Budget 2022/23; HRA Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 - 2025/26; and HRA Business Plan Review 2021

The Executive considered a report on the Draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2022/23; the HRA Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 – 2025/26; and HRA Business Plan Review 2021.

The Strategic Director (CF) advised Members that the rent policy was set up by the government, which was CPI+1% increase in 2022/23. The CPI inflation increase was based on the September index which was 3.1%, this meant the increase for 2022/23 for the Council's housing stock was 4.1%.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA): Draft HRA Budget 2022/23; HRA Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 - 2025/26; and HRA Business Plan Review 2021 be noted.

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 MINUTES - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

7. Part II minutes – Overview and Scrutiny Committee

8 **PART II DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE**

8. Part II Decisions of the Executive.

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

None.

10 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR