

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MINUTES

Date: Wednesday 25 June 2008

Time: 7.00pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present:

Members Councillors:

Mick Patston, (Mayor), John Lloyd, CC, (Deputy Mayor), Sherma Batson, MBE, CC, Howard Burrell, Monika Cherney-Craw, Laurie Chester, Bob Clark, Dilys Clark, Graham Clark, Michael Downing, CC, James Fraser, Pam Gallagher, John Gardner, Liz Harrington, Richard Henry, Jacqueline Hollywell, Matthew Hurst, David Kissane, Carol Latif, Mrs Joan Lloyd, Lin Martin-Haugh, Marion Mason, Sue Myson, Margaret Notley, Robin Parker, CC, Ralph Raynor, Graham Snell, Simon Speller, Lilian Strange, Pam Stuart, Sharon Taylor, CC, Jeannette Thomas, Brian Underwood, Vickie Warwick and Ann Webb.

Start/End Time:

Start Time: 7.00pm

End Time: 9.15pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Dave Cullen, CC, Lis Knight, Jack Pickersgill, Reg Smith, MBE, DL, Ryan McQueen, Deputy Member of the Youth Parliament and Beth Campbell from the Youth Council.

2 MINUTES - WEDNESDAY 21 MAY, 2008

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meetings of Annual Council and of the Extraordinary Council held on Wednesday 21 May 2008, having been circulated, be taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Mayor as correct records.

3 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor advised Council of the recent sad death of Councillor Dave Cullen's wife and sent best wishes on behalf of the Council to Councillor Cullen and his family.

The Mayor then reported the good news that Councillor Sherma Batson had been awarded an MBE for services to Local Government and congratulated Councillor Batson on her achievement.

The Mayor asked that, if anyone had any news on the 'Borough of Stevenage' Locomotive plates, they could contact him to let him know of their whereabouts. A Member stated that he had been advised that the plates were now in private ownership.

Concerning the Main Debate, the Mayor then made a suggestion to Councillor Simon Speller, Executive Member for Economy, Enterprise and Transport that Stevenage Borough Council should consider the possibility of buying the Stevenage rail station.

At this juncture the Mayor left the meeting and the Deputy Mayor took the Chair.

4 MAIN DEBATE - 'ON THE MOVE - GETTING INTO GEAR' - STEVENAGE TRANSPORT 2020

The Council received a presentation from Nick Parry, Strategic Director, Stevenage Borough Council and Councillor Simon Speller, Executive Member for Economy, Enterprise and Transport regarding transport in and around Stevenage to the year 2020.

The presentation detailed how Stevenage would look in 2020, with 16,000 new homes, 9,000 new jobs, a New Town Centre, renewed Neighbourhood Centres and schools, a bigger hospital and new super surgery health centres. Transport issues faced as a result of the changes would centre around the A1(M), highway maintenance, commercial bus services, climate change and the reduction in the carbon footprint.

At this juncture, it was moved, seconded and RESOLVED that revised time limits for speakers for the main debate be approved; the mover and seconder of the Motion, together with the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition be allowed up to six minutes and everyone else up to three minutes.

Councillor Simon Speller opened the debate by moving a motion. The motion was seconded by Councillor John Gardner.

A full debate ensued.

Questions had been received on this matter from three members of the Public, Mrs K Watkins of Hertford Road, Stevenage, Mr Jim Brown, Cyclists' Touring Club, and Mr Tim Beesley, Stevenage Resident. The

questions were detailed in the Agenda and Supplementary Agenda. Responses were given to the questions by Councillor John Gardner, Executive Member for Environment and Regeneration which related to car parking charges and the plans for the West of Stevenage development. Councillor Speller responded to the question concerning new cycle routes and cycling in general in Stevenage. Supplementary questions were asked and also answered during the debate.

Other issues raised during the debate included:

- The affect of the West of Stevenage development and other areas of growth.
- Interconnectivity between growth areas.
- A1(M) widening.
- Provision of bus passes for 11 - 18 year olds.
- £2 million allocated by Herts County Council for road maintenance in Stevenage.
- Suggestions to improve the Gateway to Stevenage.
- How increased cycling and walking would improve health.

Councillor Michael Downing moved an amendment to the motion that was accepted by Councillor Speller as mover of the motion.

Upon being put to the vote, it was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the Council continues to pressurise Government to provide funding for investment in new transport infrastructure to support the levels of growth envisaged in Stevenage, including the widening of the A1(M) and major investment in Stevenage Rail Station so that it may continue and expand its role as an inner city station.
2. That the Council collaborates with local business and community organisations in working for the development of public transport to encourage a reduction in car usage and a review of their transport needs and methods.
3. That the Council prepares a green travel plan for its own employees and services.
4. That Herts County Council be urged to improve standards of maintenance on roads, cycle ways and footpaths in Stevenage.
5. That officers be requested to investigate the possibility of providing bus passes for 11 - 18 year olds

5 PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

None received.

6 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The questions that were detailed in the Agenda and Supplementary Agenda were considered as part of the Main Debate-Item 4

7 LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S UPDATE

The Deputy Mayor invited the Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Graham Clark, to raise a matter in accordance with Standing Order 11.

Councillor Clark asked where the Stevenage Tapestry was being stored now it was no longer on display. The Leader of the Council advised that the Tapestry would eventually be on display in the new Stevenage Discovery Centre, but until then she assured Councillor Clark that the greatest care would be taken with it while it was being stored.

8 NOTICE OF MOTIONS

None received.

9 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO COMMITTEE CHAIRS/PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

None received.

10 REFERENCE UP FROM THE BEDWELL AREA COMMITTEE FOR DECISION BY COUNCIL - NAME OF THE AREA COMMITTEE

A report was submitted which recommended a change of name for the Bedwell Area Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** that the name of the Area Committee be changed to the Bedwell and Pin Green Area Committee.

11 OFFICER REPORT - STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN 2008 TO 2013: MAKING A DIFFERENCE

A report was submitted considering the final draft of the Corporate Plan 2008 to 2013 – 'Making a Difference'.

It was **RESOLVED** that the final draft of the Corporate Plan 2008 to 2013 – 'Making a Difference' be approved.

12 OFFICER REPORT - COMPLETED SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE AND SCRUTINY TOPIC GROUP STUDIES DURING THE 2007/08 MUNICIPAL YEAR

A report was submitted on the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Overview Committee and the Scrutiny Topic Groups during the 2007/08 Municipal Year.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Overview Committee and the Scrutiny Topic Groups be noted.
2. That the way scrutiny was conducted at Stevenage Borough Council was deemed a success when compared with the "14 Steps to Scrutiny Success" as advocated by a leading scrutiny academic, Dr Stephanie Snape.

13 MATTERS REFERRED FROM AUDIT COMMITTEE - CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS - REVISED

The Council had before it an officer report considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 10 June 2008 entitled "Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations". The recommendations of the Audit Committee were detailed in the Agenda. The Deputy Mayor reported that as the changes referred to in the second recommendation on the order paper were included in the draft document circulated, this recommendation need not be considered.

It was **RESOLVED** that the revised Contract Standing Orders (Appendix A) and Financial Regulations (Appendix B) be approved.

14 MATTER REFERRED FROM AUDIT COMMITTEE 24 JUNE 2008 - STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2007/08 AND CAPITAL CONTROL SYSTEM DETERMINATIONS

The Council had before it an officer report considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 24 June 2008 entitled "Statement of Accounts 2007/08 and Capital Control Systems Determinations". The recommendations of the Audit Committee, 24 June 2008, were circulated around the Chamber together with a revised page for the covering report and for appendix A.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the 2007/08 Statement of Accounts as amended by the Audit Committee and Capital Financing Determinations be approved.
2. That carry forward requests relating to under spent budgets totalling £150,970 for 2008/09 be approved.
3. That £165,000 net transfer to reserves be approved.

Members expressed their thanks to Councillor Ralph Raynor and the Audit Committee Members and to the Head of Finance and her team for their work on this matter.

15 AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES - TUESDAY 10 JUNE 2008

Council had been circulated with the Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee, an advisory committee of the Council that had been held on Tuesday 10 June 2008.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Audit Committee held on 10 June 2008 be noted.

16 MATTER REFERRED FROM SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE – 16 JUNE 2008 – APPOINTMENT OF SCRUTINY TOPIC GROUP CHAIRS

The Deputy Mayor agreed to accept the following item as urgent for the reason detailed in the report. The report had not been circulated to members five clear days before the meeting, although it was available for public inspection as it had been published on the Scrutiny Overview Committee agenda.

Council considered the recommendations from the meeting of the Scrutiny Overview Committee held on 16 June 2008 concerning the appointment of Scrutiny Topic Group Chairs.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the following Councillors be appointed Scrutiny Topic Group Chairs for the 2008/09 Municipal Year.
2. Councillors Monika Cherney-Craw, Bob Clark, Michael Downing, Pam Gallagher, Liz Harrington.
3. That these appointments be backdated to the Annual Council Meeting on 21 May 2008.