

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL**COUNCIL
MINUTES****Date: Wednesday 6 October 2010****Time: 7.00 p.m.****Place: Council Chamber**

Present: The Mayor (Councillor M Downing), the Deputy Mayor (Councillor C Latif), Councillors S Batson MBE DL, P Bibby CC, H Burrell, M Cherney-Craw, L Chester, D Clark, G Clark, R Clark, D Cullen, J Fraser CC, J Gardner, M Hearn, R Henry, J Hollywell, C Hurst, M Hurst CC, B Jackson, D Kissane, J Lloyd CC, Mrs J Lloyd, L Martin-Haugh, J Mead, M Notley, R Parker CC, M Patson, J Pickersgill, R Raynor, G Snell, S Speller, L Strange, P Stuart, S Taylor CC, B Underwood, V Warwick, A Webb and M Yarnold-Forrester.

In Attendance: Carol Thompson (Hertfordshire CC)
Marion Birch (Age UK Hertfordshire)

Start/End Time: Start Time: 7.00pm
End Time: 9.45pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

An apology for absence had been received on behalf of Councillor L Harrington.

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES –COUNCIL – WEDNESDAY 14 JULY 2010

Councillor G Clark, the Leader of the Opposition, informed Council that under Item 7 he had asked “Does the Leader now regret her expensive ‘policy differences’ with our ex Chief Executive, particularly as he appears to have accurately predicted the need for management de-layering as a key source of savings?”. He considered that this question should be included in the minutes to ensure the correct reporting of the matter he raised. He also considered that the Leader of the Council had not responded to the question.

Councillor S Taylor, the Leader of the Council, replied that she had responded to the question and advised that the Council had saved in excess of £6 million in efficiency savings within the last 3 years.

It was **RESOLVED** that subject to the inclusion of the detail of the question asked by the Leader of the Opposition at Item 7 the Minutes of the meeting of Annual Council held on Wednesday 14 July 2010 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

3. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor informed the Council that during the summer he had attended the funeral of Dr Karen Woo who had been tragically killed in Afghanistan.

Councillor S Taylor, the Leader of the Council, advised that Karen had been a talented Doctor and an inspiration to others, and that she had spoken with Karen's family regarding a suitable memorial.

The Council then stood in one minute's silence in remembrance of Dr Karen Woo.

The Mayor expressed his best wishes to Councillor S Speller who was undertaking a cycle ride to raise funds for Macmillan Nurses.

The Mayor informed the Council that the Kadoma Link Association had recently held its Annual General Meeting. He paid tribute to the members who had kept the organisation going throughout the unrest in Zimbabwe, particularly Les Ransley and Pat Akhurst who had recently retired from the Committee.

The Mayor presented the Michael Downing Cup to the Chief Executive whose team had been victorious in the Mayors Cricket Challenge.

4. MAIN DEBATE – 'YOUNG AT HEART'

Councillor S Batson introduced the main debate and invited Carol Thompson from Hertfordshire County Council to make her presentation.

Carol Thompson informed the Council of five cross county events taking place in October and November to collect the opinions of key stakeholders in redefining the role of public services and how they could work together more innovatively and flexibly in order to optimise the use of the resources available.

She indicated that as budgets came under pressure and with finite resources there was a need to focus on the services provided to ensure there was fair access for all and the services were what people needed and wanted.

Councillor Taylor noted that there was no stakeholder event planned in Stevenage and offered assistance if a local meeting could be facilitated.

Councillor Batson thanked Carol for her presentation and then invited Marion Birch from Age UK Hertfordshire to make a second presentation.

Marion Birch identified a number of issues and concerns:

- Nearly 20% of the UK population are of retirement age
- There are nearly 200,000 pensioners in Hertfordshire
- In Stevenage there are 11,500 people over 65, 400 people over 90
- There was a need for future planning for an ageing population :
 - Employment to match the needs of the over 50's
 - Housing to help people remain in their own homes
 - Health and Social Care to promote active ageing
 - Transport and Mobility was important for quality of life
 - Social Capital – scope for older people to contribute
- Ill Health and disability was not inevitable

Councillor Batson thanked Marion for her presentation.

Councillor S Batson then opened the debate by moving a motion which was seconded by Councillor J Hollywell. A full debate then ensued with input from the public gallery. The main points raised by Councillors and members of the public included:

- If people were to remain in their own homes then the waiting list times for adaptations needed to be reduced.
- There was a danger of looking at the demographics and seeing older people as a problem.
- It was not acceptable to have a two tier service where extra services had to be paid for.
- There was a need to work together on the transition from hospital to home to ensure people are only hospitalised when they need to be.
- There would be difficult budget decisions to be made in the coming weeks and there needed to be a priority for older people.
- Older people needed a decent pension to be able to live with dignity.
- The forms required to be completed for benefits were difficult to understand and time consuming.
- There were lots of activities for older people but they were not well publicised.
- There were concerns that the 3rd Sector may not have the resilience to cover services put at risk by pending budget cuts.
- There was a danger of segmenting society, we needed a cohesive and equal society where everyone benefited and everyone contributed.

Councillor Batson thanked the contributors and observed that there was a clear message that everyone needed to work together, to involve older people and to value them.

The Motion was then put to the vote and it was **RESOLVED**:

That this Council believes that the health and wellbeing of older people in Stevenage is one of our key priorities and we will continue to shape our services to meet their needs and requirements. We will ensure that older people are consulted on issues that affect them in the future and will continue to value their contributions to our community.

5. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

None.

6. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

A question had been received from Ms C Saint Leitner of Silam Road, Stevenage, concerning elderly people using wheelie bins. The full question was detailed in the agenda. The questioner made a statement in relation to the question and responses were given by the Executive Member for Environment and Regeneration, Council J Gardener who advised he would provide a full written response to Mr Saint-Leitner.

The Mayor noted that good quality black sacks were available to purchase from the Council at Cavendish Road and requested that the possibility of them being available from Daneshill House be investigated.

7. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S UPDATE

The Mayor called upon the Leader of the Opposition, Councillor G Clark, to raise one matter relevant to the Borough.

Councillor G Clark, Leader of the Opposition, asked for clarification of details of the £25,145 subsidy towards the publication of the History of Stevenage book and requested further details on three issues:

- i) Number of the print run
- ii) Sales to date
- iii) Outlets currently stocking the publication

The Leader of the Council, Councillor S Taylor CC informed the Leader of the Opposition that the book had been commissioned 4 years ago from the funding in place for the Town's 60th Anniversary Celebrations and that there would be no further funding. Answers to his remaining questions would be by written response.

Leader of the Council, Councillor S Taylor CC, updated the Council on Space Week which was a global event that had its UK launch in Stevenage and helped to make young people aware of the high tech businesses in Stevenage.

The Leader also welcomed members of Take Part Pathfinder in the public gallery.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Councillor P Webb, updated the Council on the contingency arrangements put in place since Connaught went into administration.

The Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People, Culture, Sport and Leisure, Councillor H Burrell, updated the Council on the Hertfordshire Sports Partnerships Awards, the Children's Play Schemes that had taken place during the summer and requested that a letter of congratulations be forwarded to Ian Poulter on the success of the European Ryder Cup team.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration, Councillor J Gardner, updated the Council on the Old Town Parking Scheme and stated that the Informal Old Town Parking Group was to be reconvened to work with Officers to consider practical and affordable options that could alleviate any identified issues.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Joan Lloyd informed the Council on changes to the Revenue and Benefits IT system that had improved performance. The Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities, Councillor R Henry, updated the Council on the consultation on the Policing Bill. Of particular concern was future funding for PCSO's.

In response to a Member's question the Leader informed the Council that there were no outstanding funds due to Connaught and the Council had not been affected financially.

8. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

The Mayor referred Council to the Motion within the order of business.

Councillor Taylor moved the Motion and outlined the problems and indignity faced by cancer patients travelling to hospitals outside of Stevenage at a time when their illness or treatment had already made them feel weak and unwell.

The Leader then called on Councillor Sherma Batson to second the motion.

Councillor Batson emphasised how stressful cancer treatment could be and for all Members to give this motion their support.

A full debate ensued and the Motion was then put to the vote.

It was **RESOLVED**:

That this Council -

- i) Strongly supports the campaign to build a radiotherapy unit at the Lister Hospital in Stevenage.
- ii) Welcomes the progress that has been made at the Lister in recent years and the significantly better results and outcomes that this has achieved, particularly in the treatment of cancer but believes that a radiotherapy unit was the next step to ensuring patients receive the treatment they need close to home.
- iii) Calls upon the Minister for Health to consider the funding of a radiotherapy unit at Stevenage as an urgent priority for the benefit of the residents of North and East Hertfordshire.

9. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO COMMITTEE CHAIRS/PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

None.

10. MATTER REFERRED FROM EXECUTIVE - TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW 2009/2010

The Council had before it a copy of the officer report which had been considered by the Executive on 28 July 2010, that outlined proposals for the 2009/10 Treasury Management activity compared to the 2009/10 Treasury Management Strategy.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the 2009/10 Treasury Management Review be approved.

11. MATTER REFERRED FROM EXECUTIVE – NEW EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS

The Council had before it a copy of the officer report which had been considered by the Executive on 22 September 2010 that outlined proposals for new Executive arrangements to be introduced in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

It was noted that in the report para. 3.15.5 should read "*Implementation of the new Executive arrangement on 3rd day after Council elections in 2011*"

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED**:

1. That Council note the statutory requirements of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 ('the Act') to alter the current Executive Arrangements.
2. That Council note that the Government was proposing further amendments to Executive Arrangements and the Act but that these will not be enacted in time to change the statutory requirements which are set out in this report
3. That Council authorise public consultation as set out in 3.7 of the report to inform on its choice of new Executive Arrangements.
4. That Council authorise a further report to the Executive on the responses to the consultation exercise.
5. That Council to convene an Extraordinary meeting in December 2010 to consider a further report setting out the results of the consultation and options for the new form of Executive arrangements to begin in May 2011.

12. MATTER REFERRED FROM THE AUDIT COMMITTEE – REVISIONS TO FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Council had before it a copy of the officer report which had been considered by the Audit Committee on 6 September 2010, concerning revisions to the Constitution in relation to Financial Regulations.

The Chief Executive advised Members that linked to the revised Financial Regulations was an Officer Code of Conduct that would be coming to the Council meeting in December. This would update provisions relating to Officer Declarations and Gifts and Hospitality. In the meantime it should be noted that the specific provisions detailed in the previous financial regulations and staff handbook would apply.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Financial Regulations be approved.

13. MATTER REFERRED FROM THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – ADOPTION OF BYELAWS FOR ACUPUNCTURE, TATTOOING, SEMI-PERMANENT SKIN COLOURING, COSMETIC PIERCING AND ELECTROLYSIS

The Council had before it a copy of the officer report which had been considered by the General Purposes Committee on 9 September 2010, concerning the updated Department of Health model byelaws for acupuncture, tattooing, electrolysis, cosmetic piercing and semi-permanent skin colouring.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Council adopt the attached byelaws and authorise:

- i) The affixing of the common seal to the attached byelaws; and
- ii) The Head of Environmental Health and Licensing to carry out the necessary procedure and apply to the Secretary of State for confirmation of the new byelaws.

14. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE – 28 JUNE 2010

Council was asked to approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Statement of Accounts Committee held on 28 June 2010 as there was not another meeting of that Committee scheduled for this Municipal Year.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources, Councillor Joan Lloyd informed the Council that at the time of the Statement of Accounts meeting there had been an outstanding issue relating to the Hertfordshire County Council Pension Fund Audit. This had now been finalised and we had received an unqualified opinion on the Council's Financial Statement and accounts.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Statement of Accounts Audit Committee held on 14 June 2010 be approved.

15. AUDIT COMMITTEE – MINUTES 28 JUNE, 22 JULY AND 6 SEPTEMBER 2010

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Audit Committee held on 28 June, 22 July and the draft minutes of 6 September 2010 be noted.

16. URGENT KEY DECISION TAKEN BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - FREE SWIMMING.

The Leader informed Council that 2800 free swims had taken place in August.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

Mayor