

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL
MINUTES

Date: Wednesday 16 July 2014

Time: 7.00 pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present:

The Mayor, S Batson MBE DL CC and
Councillors D Bainbridge, L Bell, L Briscoe,
R Broom, J Brown, H Burrell, M Cherney-Craw,
L Chester, E Connolly, D Cullen, J Gardner,
M Gardner, L Harrington, R Henry CC, J Hollywell,
PD Kissane, C Latif, Mrs J Lloyd, J Lloyd CC,
A McGuinness, M McKay, J Mead, M Notley,
R Parker CC, R Raynor, C Saunders, S Speller,
P Stuart, S Taylor OBE CC, H Tessier, J Thomas
and S Walker

Also present:

David Lloyd, Herts Police and Crime Commissioner,
David Gibson, Assistant Police and Crime
Commissioner,
Chief Inspector Richard Harbon
S Field (Youth Mayor) and Joseph Barnes (Youth
Council)

Start/End Time:

Start Time: 7.00 p.m.

End Time: 9.15p.m.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Bibby,
G Clark, L Martin-Haugh, G Snell, V Warwick, A Webb and Mr N Parry,
Chief Executive.

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES – ANNUAL COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY 10 JUNE 2014

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Annual
Council held on Wednesday 10 June 2014 be approved as a correct
record and signed by the Mayor.

3. MINUTES – SPECIAL COUNCIL - WEDNESDAY 10 JUNE 2014

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Special
Council held on Wednesday 10 June 2014 be approved as a correct
record and signed by the Mayor subject to including the name of

Councillor R Parker CC in the list of those who spoke in support of the Motion conferring the title Honorary Alderman on Brian Underwood.

4. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATION

The Mayor informed Council that since the last meeting she had undertaken over 57 mayoral engagements which included visiting nursery, primary and secondary schools, the scouts and community centres and a visit to Ingelheim. The Mayor informed the meeting that on 16 June 2014, both she and Councillor Taylor had the privilege of visiting Brian Underwood and presenting him with a certificate conferring on him the honour of Honorary Alderman. He had accepted the award with his usual sense of modesty and it was much appreciated.

The Mayor indicated that she had started planning fundraising events with her nominated charities and fund raising partners and would be keeping Members updated.

The Mayor informed the meeting that she was looking forward to visiting the various Service Delivery Units to meet the Council Staff.

Finally, she took the opportunity to remind Members of the Parade of the Royal Anglian Regiment to be held on 24 July.

5. MAIN DEBATE – POLICING PRIORITIES FOR STEVENAGE

The Mayor introduced David Lloyd, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Hertfordshire.

David Lloyd informed the Council that in his role he recognised the importance of partnership working and noted the structures in place especially within Stevenage.

The PCC welcomed the cross party support with regards to policing in Hertfordshire and Stevenage in particular, and stated that there was the need to publicise police matters in a positive way. The PCC acknowledged that although crime reduction was the key priority for the Constabulary, Herts County Council and Stevenage Borough Council, he felt that some focus should be directed to the victims of crime and the commissioning of services to support them.

He stated that all victims should be able to access support services easily and noted that although a multi-agency approach would be required to support victims, support services needed to be enhanced especially for vulnerable people.

He acknowledged the work provided by Pod53 Project for young people in Stevenage and was delighted that the project is being supported with funds from the PCC's Budget.

The PCC informed the meeting that he regarded tackling domestic abuse as a high priority and welcomed the fact that victims were now coming forward to report incidents. He applauded SBC's efforts in recognising the seriousness of domestic abuse by employing a dedicated officer and producing an Action Plan to address the crime. He hoped that other districts in the County adopted similar initiatives in due course. The PCC agreed that a strategy would be required to address this issue but most importantly it was necessary to avoid duplication of support services by the various agencies so as to ensure that the funds and resources go further and were used effectively.

The PCC highlighted two initiatives, Restorative Justice and Community Remedy which he would be promoting. Restorative Justice would involve facilitating meetings between victims of crime and offenders, an opportunity to allow the offender reflect on their actions and possibly lead to some form of rehabilitation for the offender and the beginning of a healing process for the victims. Community Remedy would allow victims of anti-social behaviour to have a say on issues affecting them in their neighbourhood. He added that he was formally running a public consultation exercise to get the views of those in the community.

Finally the PCC thanked SBC for its continued collaboration with his office, the Constabulary and other agencies.

In proposing the Motion Councillor R Henry CC expressed the Council's appreciation to Hertfordshire Constabulary for policing safely a number of recent events such as the English Defence League march through the town centre and Stevenage Day which were both incident free. Councillor Henry reiterated the PCC's comments regarding the successful partnership between SBC and its community safety partners and noted especially Pod53 with regard to the rehabilitation of young offenders.

Councillor S Walker in seconding the motion thanked the Police for their excellent service but was particularly concerned that using the preferred 101 telephone service when trying to contact the Police was very challenging.

A full debate ensued with both Councillors and members of the public taking part. Points raised included:

- The 'No More Project' was of immense benefit to both the individuals involved in the programme and their neighbourhood.
- The quick response of the Police to areas of town where street begging was reported and their subsequent follow up in terms of care for the vulnerable was commendable.

- The valued service given by Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs).
- Emergency Support Services to be enhanced for victims fleeing domestic abuse situations.
- Neighbourhood Watch should be strengthened.
- The Victim Support Services had been notably good.
- Police should consider setting up speed traps to monitor speeding along Mobbsbury Way, Chells Way and Fairlands Way following residents' complaints.
- Police areas to be split into smaller areas with Police organising and chairing resident meetings.
- Need to improve the support for repeat offenders.
- Hate crime victims should include disabled people suffering physical and mental illness.
- 'Miniature' crimes such as graffiti, or acts of vandalism on vehicles should always be reported to the Police.
- The disruptive effect of alcoholism on communities.
- Victims of Domestic abuse included men who find it difficult to come forward to report such incidents.
- The visibility of PCSOs on streets and neighbourhoods went a long way in reassuring residents about crime related issues.
- Reporting of positive news in the press regularly to counterbalance the negative news.
- SBC and partners involved in programmes to raise awareness about issues around domestic abuse.
- The PCC's support of SBC's Domestic Abuse Coordinator working in collaboration with NSPCC to deliver the DART (Domestic Abuse: Recovering Together) Programme.

In reply to issues raised during the debate, the PCC acknowledged the role played by the Police during the EDL March in Stevenage. With regard to shortcomings of the 101 telephone service, the PCC acknowledged there were some on-going issues to be resolved and noted that the Police should be encouraging the use of social media such as e.g. Twitter to communicate with the public.

In response to a complaint about the relationship between neighbourhood watch and the Police, the PCC welcomed community activism and indicated that Chief Inspector Harbon would be looking into the issue raised.

With regard to 'miniature' crimes, the PCC agreed that these types of crimes should not be disregarded by victims as they affected people and communities and should always be reported.

In response to concerns about alcoholism, the PCC agreed that better support services should be provided but more importantly it was essential for more education to be provided on changing behaviours and lifestyles.

The Mayor thanked David Lloyd, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the contributors to the debate.

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

"That this Council values the Community Safety Partnership and the focus it has on neighbourhood policing. We welcome the support of the Police & Crime Commissioner with regards to key Crime/ASB reduction initiatives within Stevenage, including our efforts to tackle domestic violence, and request that this be continued to help the SoSafe Community Safety Partnership address the local challenges faced".

6. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

None

7. QUESTIONS FROM THE YOUTH COUNCIL

None

8. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC.

None was received.

A member of the public indicated that he wanted to raise a question. He was advised that, as Council had not received any notice of the question, it could not be considered. He was informed that the question could be put in writing and would be directed to the Chief Executive for a response.

9. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S UPDATE

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition enquired about the implications for Stevenage and other neighbouring districts of the decision taken not to proceed with the waste incinerator project in Hatfield.

In response Councillor Taylor advised that its full effect could not be easily assessed at this moment but considering the essence of the project was to improve recycling in general and prevent the use of landfill sites, HCC would have to reconsider its options. She indicated that Councillor John Gardner would provide a comprehensive written response.

Council received updates about the following:

- Single Status project completed and its full implementation commenced from 1 July 2014.

- Award received by the Learning and Development Team on behalf SBC as a good employer in recognition of its promotion of Apprenticeships.
- Funding received from Sports England - £250,000 for a three year period; projects will be sited around the Bedwell area commencing in September.
- Sonisphere, a musical event, thanks to the Police and SBC staff, very few complaints received from Stevenage residents about noise pollution.
- National Play Day on 6 August 2014
- On-going HCC consultation with regard to Children's Centre proposals.
- Stevenage Borough Council successful in securing £14 million award for the town centre regeneration from Hertfordshire LEP.
- East Coast Mainline Authorities Consortium would be launching its Business Manifesto on Thursday 17 July.
- Stevenage Branding - A series of lamp post banners to promote the wide diversity of business, to be sited along Gunnels Wood Road.
- The decision to return to nine grass cuts across the town from six.
- Inaugural Housing Management Board met on 19 June and a successful Tenancy Fraud Week has resulted in leads to potential tenancy fraud.
- Members requested their thanks to the Police, the Head of Leisure, Community & Childrens Services, Aidan Sanderson and his team including Geoff Caine be recorded, for all the organisation involving the EDL march through the town and Stevenage Day .

In response to a Member's question on the Council's level of involvement with the town centre regeneration programme, the Leader advised that the Council was working in partnership with both private and public bodies through the vehicle 'Stevenage Development Partnership' to take the programme forward.

On the issue of widening the A1 (M), the Leader indicated that although this issue has not been included in the LEP document, there was wide support amongst the various districts that this project should be funded by the Government.

With regard to HCC proposals to cut subsidies on bus services in Hertfordshire, Members agreed to send a strong response to HCC's consultation since it would have an adverse impact on local users of buses.

10. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

None

11. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO COMMITTEE CHAIRS/PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

None

12. ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT

Council considered a report detailing the work undertaken by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees during the year 2013/2014.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the work undertaken by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees during 2013/2014 be noted.

13. AUDIT COMMITTEE – 24 MARCH 2014

The Council had before it the minutes from the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 24 March 2014.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the minutes from the Audit Committee meeting held on 24 March 2014 be noted.

14. INFORMATION REPORT – URGENT DECISION TAKEN BY STRATEGIC DIRECTOR (COMMUNITY)

The Council considered a report concerning a Key Decision taken by the Strategic Director (Community)

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

Mayor