

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE
MINUTES

Date: Wednesday 12 March 2014

Time: 6.00 p.m.

Place: Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Stevenage SG1 1HN

Present: Councillors: J Hollywell (Chair), J Brown, J Mead, R Parker CC and P Stuart.

Start/End Time: Start Time: 18.00 hrs.
Ended: 18.35 hrs.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Bibby and B Underwood.

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES – 6 JANUARY 2014

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment & Economy Select Committee held on 6 January 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2014-2015

The Constitutional Services Manager introduced the report the purpose of which was to approve a workplan for the coming year. The report detailed suggestions for scrutiny studies that had been received from Members and Community Groups that were in the remit of this Committee.

Concerning the suggestions for areas of studies shown at section 5.1 of the report Members outlined the merits of the individual topics.

The majority of Members favoured a study on the Council's Tree and Hedge Policy as this was a matter that was frequently raised by constituents and was often complicated where individual trees had Tree Preservation Orders on them.

During discussions on the suggestion of a study of Highway Cleansing, a Member raised the issue of cleansing children's play areas as it was not uncommon to find broken glass and other dangerous detritus discarded. Officers indicated that they could provide the Committee with a briefing on the cleaning arrangements for these areas.

Members' attention was drawn to those suggestions that had come forward but for various reasons it was considered not appropriate for the study to be undertaken (section 5.3 of the report). A Member commented that whilst he agreed that it was probably too soon to undertake a full scale study on the Green Travel Plan, a report back or update presentation would be useful.

Concerning matters relating to the Town's Economy, the Committee was conscious that two major studies had been undertaken by Scrutiny Members in recent years i.e. Inward Investment Opportunities & Business Support and Training & Employment Opportunities for Young People and it would be useful to undertake some follow-up on the recommendations that came out of this work.

The Strategic Director (Environment) informed the Committee that no policy development work had been identified at this time, however Members were aware that the 2014/2015 Budget agreed by Council had included funds to pump prime or facilitate schemes for the regeneration of the Town Centre and therefore there may be some policy development work on this matter to bring before the Committee. Additionally, work on the Borough Local Plan (that replaces the Local Development Plan) was on-going and this would be coming before the Committee although no timescale could be given.

The Scrutiny Officer explained to the Members that when each of the Select Committees and the Overview & Scrutiny Committee had finalised the content of their workplan he would publish a timetable for the studies and other work identified for each Committee.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That feedback from the Scrutiny Evaluation Questionnaire completed by Members be noted.
2. That having considered the suggestions put forward by individual Members and Community Groups that are within the remit of this Committee, the subject matter of its Scrutiny Study for 2014/2015 be the Council's Tree and Hedge Policy and in addition officers be requested to provide a briefing on the cleansing of children's play areas and the implementation of the Green Travel Plan.
3. That the Committee endorses the comments made in relation to those suggestions put forward for Scrutiny that for various reasons would not be appropriate at this time, as shown in section 5.3 and that those Community Groups/Members who have put forward these ideas be informed accordingly.
4. That the monitoring and review of recommendations from previous studies on Inward Investment Opportunities & Business Support and Training & Employment Opportunities for Young People, as shown at section 6.2 of the report, be included in the workplan.
5. That it be noted that whilst no Policy Development work has been identified for the Committee at this time, the Committee may, in the future, be asked to consider schemes relating to the Town Centre Regeneration and the Borough Local Plan.

6. That the Chair writes to all those Groups and individuals who have put forward suggestions for study within the Committee's remit thanking them for their interest and that they be sent details of the agreed workplan and opportunities to take part in the scrutiny work to be undertaken

4. URGENT PART I BUSINESS

None.

5. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Not required.

PART II

6. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.

CHAIR