

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 3 February 2015

Time: 6.00 p.m.

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

Present: Councillors: J Hollywell (Chair), D Bainbridge, L Bell, L Briscoe, J Brown
E Connolly, C Saunders, G Snell and P Stuart.

Start/End Time: Start Time: 6.00 p.m.
Ended: 6.35 p.m.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillor P Bibby and there were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES – 7 JANUARY 2015

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment & Economy Select Committee held on 7 January 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. UPDATE ON EXECUTIVE RESPONSE TO INWARD INVESTMENT & BUSINESS SUPPORT REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

The Head of Planning, Regeneration & Transport provided the Committee with the Portfolio Holder's response to the Committee's recommendation following its review on inward investment & business support.

Members were informed that since the review in 2012, most of the recommendations had been implemented.

Officers had met with 60 members of the Federation of Small Businesses regarding the Government's policy on business rates, and the revised information on business rates had now been published on the Council website.

Members were informed that Council had employed 11 apprentices and following a recent recruitment exercise 5 more apprentices were about to take up posts. On the issue of supporting local businesses with regards to procurement for goods and

services, the Committee were advised that the Council facilitated a 'meet the buyer' day annually, however the Council would continue to explore ways to support local businesses without breaching UK and EU legislation on procurement issues.

Members were advised that using the services of the Business Technology Centre 'My Incubator' to support the indoor market traders was challenging for a number of reasons and that BTC had visited and offered support but had received no response.

With regards to the disused Kodak building, Members were advised that the building had now been demolished and had recently been granted planning permission for commercial use.

In response to a suggestion about using locally skilled workforce in Stevenage, Members were advised that through the Job & Skills Fair, over 260 opportunities had been created.

The Committee discussed a previous recommendation relating to a matter that was raised in the original review regarding the sustainability of Council building programmes and the methods used in schemes like Decent Homes. It was noted that the Officers response had incorrectly linked it to the possibility of incorporating it into the next local plan. The Head of Planning, Regeneration & Transport stated that this was incorrect and invited Councillor Brown to email him the specific issues he had regarding Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) ratings to which he would respond.

In response to a question, the Head of Planning, Regeneration & Transport offered to provide Members with a comprehensive briefing on all the activity that was taking place to support inward investment in Stevenage.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

4. URGENT PART I BUSINESS

The Scrutiny Officer informed Committee that he had circulated a draft report and recommendations on the review of the maintenance of tree, hedge & shrub beds for Member input or comments.

He also advised that the Head of Planning, Regeneration & Transport would update the Committee before its next meeting on 24 February 2015 on the Executive Members' response to the review into Training and Employment Opportunities for Young People and any actions resulting from the Committee's meeting in December 2014.

5. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Not required.

6. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.

CHAIR