

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE
MINUTES

Date: Monday 8 June 2015

Time: 18.00 hrs.

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

Present: Councillors: M Downing (Chair), M Hurst (Vice-Chair), L Briscoe, J Brown, J Fraser, J Mead and P Stuart.

Start/End Time Start Time: 6.00 p.m.
 Ended: 7.10 p.m.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors D Bainbridge, R Broom and A McGuinness.

There were no declarations of interests.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCES

Noted

3. TO APPOINT THE VICE CHAIR

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that Councillor M Hurst be appointed Vice Chair of the Environment & Economy Select Committee for the Municipal year 2015/16.

4. MINUTES – 24 MARCH 2015

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment & Economy Select Committee held on 24 March 2015 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. MEETING SCHEDULE FOR ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2015-16

The Scrutiny Officer informed Members of the various scrutiny items on the work programme and advised that the Committee had agreed to review the Business Technology Centre during the 2014/15 Municipal Year.

The Committee were informed that Members would be afforded the opportunity to contribute to development policy items such as the Energy and Sustainability Strategy

and Aspects of Recycling before its consideration by the Executive.

The Chair informed the Committee that depending on the effects of Hertfordshire County's withdrawal of bus subsidy on local services it might be necessary to add this item on the work programme for Members.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Scrutiny Work programme be noted.

6. DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENT – SCRUTINY REVIEW INTO THE BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY CENTRE

The Committee received a presentation about the Business Technology Centre (BTC) from the Regeneration Officer who provided a brief historical background to the establishment of BTC, its purpose and its management by WENTA. The officer highlighted areas of interest to Members such as SBC's present contractual agreement with WENTA, which ends in 2017 with a further option to extend for two more years, the Centre's future operations/undertakings, how to reinvest funds; the Centre's plans to attract future young talent and finally what should be the Centre's future focus from 2019.

The Regeneration Officer advised that a site visit had been offered as part of the review process to provide an opportunity for Members to interview present users. There was also the possibility of a Committee meeting being held at the BTC.

Members requested more information from officers on WENTA and BTC activities with the view to being able to establish if the centre was primarily an incubator or a managed work space. Also further information was requested on how the BTC compares with other incubator spaces in the region and a breakdown on the number of businesses that had joined and left the centre on a year by year basis. Member also requested information regarding the number of available office spaces in the town for small businesses.

In response to a Member's question, the Scrutiny Officer agreed to circulate to Members a previous scrutiny report undertaken in 2012 which involved the BTC on issues around inward investment opportunities and business support. Members agreed that the previous review be revisited and if possible invite the original witnesses to take part.

Members considered the draft scoping document and were invited to amend it to include issues that they would like to be addressed by the review and for Members to note relevant areas of interest which they are prepared to lead on in terms of their own research and when interviewing witnesses.

The Chair thanked the officers for their presentation.

It was **RESOLVED** that the draft scoping document be noted.

7. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS

None.

8. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Not Required

PART II

9. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None

CHAIR