

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL****ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE****MINUTES****Date: Tuesday 7 July 2015****Time: 6.00 p.m.****Place: Business Technology Centre, Bessemer Drive, Stevenage**

**Present** Councillors: M Downing (Chair), M Hurst (Vice-Chair), D Bainbridge, L Briscoe, R Broom, J Brown, J Mead and P Stuart.

**Start/End Time** Start Time: 6.00 p.m.  
Ended: 6.30 p.m.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors J Fraser and A McGuinness.

There were no declarations of interest.

**2. MINUTES – 24 JUNE 2015**

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

**3. FEEDBACK FROM BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY CENTRE (BTC) VISIT**

Prior to the meeting members of the Committee visited the Centre and met with Peter Cabon and Spencer Tagg of WENTA.

As a result of the visit and the discussions with Peter Cabon and Spencer Tagg Members identified the following as potential topics for further research / questioning at the witness interviews:

- The status of the Centre's Green Travel Plan
- Funding issues and potential tensions between the social purpose of the centre and the Council's commercialisation agenda
- The role of the Centre in providing support and opportunities for young people in the town and schools liaison
- Opportunities for the use of the revenue raised by the Centre.

It was **RESOLVED** that the potential topics as listed above are noted.

#### **4. NEXT STEPS**

The Scrutiny Officer advised the Committee of the next steps in the review process and of the timetable as detailed in the agenda.

Following discussion of the types of question to be asked of the witnesses the Scrutiny Officer undertook to collate Members' questions and then circulate to witnesses in advance of the next meeting of the Committee scheduled for Monday 7 September. To facilitate this process Members were requested to advise the Scrutiny Officer by the end of July of any questions they wished to ask.

It was agreed that clients from both the Incubator and the Centre should be called as witnesses should it prove possible to do so. The Scrutiny Officer undertook to finalise the list of witnesses and, once agreed with the Chair, issue invites to the next meeting.

In response to a Member request for a benchmarking visit to a similar facility, the Regeneration Officer advised the Committee of the existence of an affordable workspace hub in the London Borough of Lambeth. The Committee agreed that a visit to the hub could be of benefit in the review and the Regeneration Officer undertook to liaise with the Scrutiny Officer to arrange a visit prior to the next meeting.

The Scrutiny Officer then advised the Committee that a date for the meeting to consider the final report and recommendations would be identified and circulated to Members.

It was **RESOLVED** that the timetable as detailed in the agenda is noted.

#### **5. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

None.

#### **6. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Not required.

#### **7. URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.