

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES**

**Date: Tuesday 12 January 2016**

**Time: 6.00 p.m.**

**Place: Shimkent Room Stevenage**

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

**Start/End Time:** Start Time: 6.00 p.m.  
End Time: 7.15 p.m.

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

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor J Fraser.

There were no declarations of interests.

**2. MINUTES – 24 NOVEMBER 2015**

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

**3. BRIEFING ON FLY TIPPING, LITTERING & ENVIRONMENTAL LAW**

The Environmental Performance Manager gave a verbal briefing on Littering, Fly-tipping and Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) and the operations of the Environmental Enforcement Team.

The Head of Environmental Services stated that the only statutory requirement for the Council with regards to enviro-crimes was abandoned vehicles.

With regards to fixed penalty notices to deter enviro crimes such as litter and fly tipping, the Officer advised that government guidance specifies that it should be a last resort after all other means of addressing this nuisance had been fully exhausted. He informed Members that the Council would be increasing its awareness campaign and education to residents in the future.

In response to a question on Stevenage being identified as having the highest reported cases of fly-tipping in Hertfordshire, the Head of Environmental Services advised that this was due to each local authority defined littering and the method of recording. SBC presently counted each single black bag as fly tipping rather than littering. The Head of Environmental Services informed the meeting that SBC would,

on completing both its publicity campaign and education awareness programme to redefine the way it records littering and fly tipping in line with other authorities.

In response to concerns on whether the reduced service hours at the Household Waste Recycling Centre on Caxton Way had an impact on fly tipping, the Officer advised that there was no evidence of this at this moment, however this would be monitored over a further 18 months in order to establish if there was any correlation.

It was **RESOLVED** that the information provided from the briefing on fly-tipping, littering and environmental law be noted.

#### **4. REPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW OF THE BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY CENTRE**

The Scrutiny Officer explained to the Committee that one of the main contributors to the report, the former Interim Assistant Director for Regeneration was not present as he had left the employment of the Council.

The Scrutiny Officer highlighted a number of typographical errors in the report and which would be corrected in the final report to the Executive Member.

Members suggested some amendments to the recommendations in the draft report and requested a further 2 recommendations to include:

- (i) a breakdown of how long companies have been based at the BTC since Wenta took on the contract be provided to Members; and
- (ii) that the Executive Portfolio Holder be challenged to increase the amount of new businesses in incubation at the BTC.

The Scrutiny Officer informed Members that a summary of the proposed changes to the recommendations in the draft report would be circulated for further comments.

The Chair wished to thank the former Interim Assistant Director Regeneration, the Scrutiny Officer, the witnesses and Members on the Committee for their contributions during the BTC scrutiny review.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the findings of the review, contained within this report and the recommendations below be presented to the Economy, Enterprise and Transport Portfolio Holder and the Strategic Director (Environment) and that a response be provided from these and any other named officers and partners within two months of the publishing of this report;
2. That Officers in Regeneration and Economic Development be requested to carry out a feasibility study to identify the business case for a new town centre based workspace, perhaps targeted at Stevenage's Bio-Science support service businesses. The feasibility study should consider what could be achieved in Stevenage regarding stimulating business incubation in the town centre and explore suitable locations, perhaps at the regenerated transport hub;
3. That Officers establish what external funding streams are available (European

ERDF, LEP, HCC, SBC, Princes Trust, etc.) to support any new ventures such as business workspace/incubation in the town centre;

4. That Officers be requested to investigate Impact Hub and other similar social enterprises and community interest companies, to find out what interest there could be to work together to establish a social enterprise workspace in Stevenage.
5. That Officers and Members engaged in promoting Economic Development, in conjunction with Wenta/BTC, work closely with local education providers, including secondary schools, SET, North Herts College and the University of Hertfordshire, to encourage more collaborative working and stimulation of entrepreneurial ventures for young people.
6. That Officers, in preparing any contract extension or new contract for the management of the BTC, ensure that, as a requirement of the contract, adequate and meaningful collection of equalities and diversity data for incubation and workspace clients at the BTC be recorded in order that a profile of business supported at the BTC can be monitored.
7. That a breakdown of how long companies have been based at the BTC since Wenta took on the contract to manage the Centre and the Chells Industrial Workshops, be provided to Members.
8. That the Executive Portfolio Holder be challenged to increase the amount of incubation space made available and being actively used at the BTC.

**5. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

None.

**6. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Not required.

**7. URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

**Chair**