

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Date: Tuesday 15 November 2016

Time: 6:00 pm

Place: Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

Present: Members: M Downing (Chair), M Hurst (Vice-Chair),
R Broom, J Brown, L Chester, J Fraser,
E Harrington and A McGuinness.

In Attendance:

Start/End Time: Start Time: 6:00 pm
End Time: 7.15 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Bainbridge and P Stuart.

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES – 31 OCTOBER 2016

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Economy Select Committee held on 31 October 2016 are approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. GREEN TRAVEL ACTION PLAN

The Engineering Services Manager presented an update to the Council's Green Travel Plan.

The following issues were raised:

- A number of the actions within the Green Travel Plan had not been progressed in relation to promotional campaigns. Members were advised, however, that a new Communications Officer had now been employed by the Council and it was hoped that progress could be made in these areas particularly making use of electronic messaging opportunities within the Council.
- The Government's Cycle to Work Scheme had proven to be successful with 20 members of staff acquiring bikes worth £11,725, saving £1,618 in employers' national insurance contributions through the scheme. It was suggested that this scheme could also be used to offer cycle equipment to staff who use bikes for travel on Council business.
- The access into Daneshill House from the courtyard to facilitate

easy access from the cycle parking had now been made available to staff.

- Officers were looking into the possibility of the Council providing cycle training for staff possibly in partnership with the bikeability scheme.
- In relation to bus/rail operators a number of discounts were now available to officers including 10% off Centrebus and Great Northern Railway season ticket prices through membership of SmartGoStevenage. Officers also advised that the Council had joined the separate Arriva Employer Travel Club giving 20% off bus season ticket prices. Officers agreed to circulate a link to Members showing the various offers available to staff via SmartGoStevenage. The officer also agreed to investigate if these offers were being communicated to new starters through the Human Resources Department.
- The Council had signed up to a car share group – FAXI (Friends' Taxi) which would enable staff to register their interest in car sharing with colleagues making similar journeys. FAXI were awaiting data from HR in order to register staff to the scheme and start the communication work on the benefits of using a lift-share scheme. Officers agreed to send a copy of the FAXI report to Members received from Northamptonshire County Council on the scheme.
- Members were keen that the Council should make a connection to Bike Week in June each year particularly following the success of the Pearl Izumi Women's cycle event in Stevenage.
- Approval had been received for covered cycle racks in the courtyard at Daneshill House which subject to budget availability should be installed in the near future.
- Members asked that copies of the Stevenage Cycling Map should be put in all Members' pigeon holes. Officers also agreed to investigate any cycle route apps that may be available for smart phone/tablet use.
- In terms of pool bikes, officers were concerned that the booking system currently managed by reception staff, for the bikes would no longer be able to be managed following the reception area refurbishment at Daneshill House which was shortly to begin. Members' views were that the booking system should still be managed from reception as this was the most practical area to do it from.
- Officers advised that they were working with the County Council to deliver improvements to enhance the cycle network in the town. This included surfacing and signing for parts of the network.
- Officers reported on the E-Car Club which the Council had recently signed up to. Staff would have access to a number of electric cars for use during the day for work purposes. Details of the scheme would be publicised as soon as the e-cars were available for use.

- The annual staff travel survey was currently out with staff. Members agreed that subject to next year's work programme, a further review of the plan should be undertaken in early 2018 once the results of next year's travel survey had been received.

The Committee thanked the officer and his colleagues for their work on this issue.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That officers should look at greater use of electronic messaging to promote the Green Travel Plan.
2. That management of the booking of the pool bike should remain if possible within the reception area of Daneshill House.
3. That there should be more corporate commitment to the implementation of the actions within the Green Travel Plan

4. MAINTENANCE OF UNDERPASSES

The Chair and the Engineering Services Manager reported that they had been out on a site visit with County Council officers to view a number of underpasses in the Town. The response from the County Council was that their criteria for cleaning underpass lighting was needs based and on an ad hoc basis. It was driven by external reporting and affordability for the Council.

In terms of the maintenance/replacement of faulty lights, HCC Highways now rely on the public, Members and District officers who carry out the cleansing to report it. Because of budget pressures HCC have moved away from a routine inspection regime and now rely on the public/Members/District officers to tell them where there are faults. When HCC Highways receive this information they instruct their contractor to fix it.

It was **RESOLVED** that the update be noted and that the matter be taken up with the Stevenage Members of the County Council to pursue with the HCC Executive Member for Highways.

5. REVIEW OF ALLOTMENTS

The draft recommendations of the Committee review into allotments were circulated. The Chair advised that Recommendation 7 relating to concessions would have to be withdrawn due to the Council having made a policy decision on all concessions that they would need to be the same for every service offered across the town.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That subject to the withdrawal of recommendation 7 relating to

concessions, the recommendations be agreed.

2. That in relation to recommendation 6, maps be provided for publicly available toilets in the area and that reference to gender be removed.

6. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.

CHAIR