STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Date: Thursday 21 June 2012
Time: 18.00 hrs.
Place: Kadoma Room, Daneshill House, Stevenage SG1 1HN

Present: Councillors: J Thomas (Chair), R Parker CC (Vice Chair),
M Cherney-Craw, G Clark and J Pickersgill.

Start/End Time: Start Time: 6.00 p.m.
End Time: 6.45 p.m.

PART I

1.   APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Speller and Underwood.

There were no declarations of interest.

2.   TERMS OF REFERENCE

It was **RESOLVED** that the Terms of Reference of the Committee, as approved by Council at its Annual meeting on 23 May 2012, be noted.

3.   MINUTES – 29 MARCH 2012

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held 29 March 2012 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4.   ANNUAL REPORT – MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The Strategic Director (Resources) presented the draft Annual Report and advised the Committee that the report would be presented to the Executive and then Council in July.

The Committee was then invited to comment and question the draft report.

The Strategic Director (Resources) undertook to feedback the following suggestions and comments regarding the content and style of the report to the report's authors:

Suggestions:
Page2, increase the font size of the four headings, consider not using the triangular format and amend the wording of the second bullet point for ease of understanding.
Page 10, amend the wording of the final bullet point under 'What did we do this year?' to reflect the fact that free car parking was trialled for a three-month period.
Page 11, amend the wording of the first bullet points under 'What we did this year' and 'What do we aim to do next year?' to reflect the current situation regarding the redevelopment of the Town Centre.
Page 12, replace the picture of the 'hands' with one of the Archer Road redevelopment, replace the picture of the polar bear with one not dissected by strong shadows and replace the picture of the Hyde with one showing the new signage. Additionally it was suggested that the order of the paragraphs in the second column of text be amended so that the one referring to the Neighbourhood Centres be moved to the top, directly under the picture of the Hyde, and the one referring to Archer Road drop to the bottom of the list.
Page 18, swap the positions of the second and third bullet points in the second column of text 'Smokebusting success!'

Comments:
The report was clearer and more concise than in previous years
The report painted a rosy picture, was too nice, and did not feature missed objectives.

The Strategic Director (Resources) undertook to feedback on the following questions asked by the Committee:
What was the exact role of the Council in the co-location of Marriotts and Lonsdale schools and the building and part refurbishment of Nobel School?
Were the number of Smokebusters referrals referred to on page 18 all Stevenage residents?

Members asked a number of other detailed questions about the report which were dealt with by the Officer.

It was **RESOLVED** that given the comments made by the Committee the draft Annual Report be amended accordingly and be recommended to Executive for recommendation to Council.

5.   **URGENT KEY DECISION TAKEN BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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

6. **URGENT PART I BUSINESS**

The Strategic Director (Resources) advised the Committee that a meeting between the Leader, Resources Portfolio Holder, Housing Portfolio Holder and Council Officers had taken place to discuss the Council Tax Relief Scheme.

The Committee was further advised that there would be a need for consultation to include the public and affected groups. It was expected that the consultation would be for a three-month period and that the new scheme should be in place for April 2013.

A meeting of the Resources Development and Scrutiny Committee was being arranged and the Leader, Resources Portfolio Holder and Housing Portfolio Holder would be invited to attend.

Chair