

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE
MINUTES

Date: Wednesday 14 December 2016

Time: 14.00 hrs.

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

Present: Councillors S Taylor OBE CC (Chair), J Gardner (Vice-Chair), S Batson MBE DL CC, Mrs J Lloyd, R Henry CC, R Raynor, S Speller and J Thomas

Start/End Time: Start Time: 14.00 hrs.
End Time: 15.35 hrs.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no apologies for absence or declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES – EXECUTIVE – 22 NOVEMBER 2016

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2016 are approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

3. MINUTES – OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND SELECT COMMITTEES

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the following meetings are noted -

- A. Environment & Economy Select Committee – 15 November 2016
- B. Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 28 November 2016

4. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS 2017/18 AND RENT SETTING

The Executive considered a report that set out draft proposals on the HRA budgets and rent setting for 2017/18, to be considered by Council on 31 January 2017.

It was reported that Government had indicated that implementation of the 'pay-to-stay' proposals whereby higher-earning social housing tenants would have to pay more in rent, would be optional for authorities. The Executive was of the view that this was not a policy it would want to see adopted in Stevenage.

The Local Government Finance Settlement was to be announced on Thursday, 15 December 2016. It was understood that income from the New Homes Bonus initiative would reduce. Whilst this would affect the ability of the Council to fund one off schemes this authority had been cautious in not integrating all this funding within the General Fund Budget as some authorities had done.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That HRA dwelling rents not subject to the 1% rent reduction (currently Low Start Shared Ownership LSSO's) be increased, week commencing 3 April 2017 by 2% i.e. £2.13 per week which has been calculated using the existing rent formula, CPI +1% in line with the 2016 Rent and Service Charge Policy approved at the November Executive.
2. That it is noted that HRA dwelling rents (other than those outlined in 2.1) are subject to the 1% rent reduction from week commencing 3 April 2017 or £0.97 and £1.70 per week for social and affordable rents respectively, as outlined in the Government's Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016.
3. That approval is given to the draft 2017/18 HRA budget as set out in Appendix A of the report. This may be subject to change as a result of consultation and the finalisation of recharges from the General Fund.
4. That the proposed fees and charges are approved as shown in Appendix B of the report.
5. That the final HRA rent setting budget for 2017/18 be presented to the Executive on the 24 January 2017 and then Council on 31 January 2017.
6. That key partners and other stakeholders be consulted and views fed back into the 2017/18 budget setting process.
7. That Council will not adopt the Government's Pay to Stay a policy whereby higher-earning social housing tenants would have to pay more in rent.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report and 7. To make clear the Council's position on this initiative.

Other Options Considered: As contained in the report.

5. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

The Executive considered a report that set out proposals for a local Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme for 2017/18

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That Council be recommended to approve the 2017/18 Council Tax Support Scheme proposed within this report.

2. That Council be recommended to approve the removal of empty homes discounts and the introduction of the long term empty premium from April 2017.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report.

Other Options Considered: As contained in the report.

6. COMMUNITY SAFETY DATA TRENDS – POLICE RESOURCING

The Executive considered a report that provided an update concerning current community safety data trends and police resources within Stevenage.

It was noted that there had been a full discussion on crime and policing resources at the Council meeting on 7 December where the Police & Crime Commissioner was present.

It is hoped that the work completed by the Council will help inform future County wide reviews of Police resourcing with a view to improving performance across the key crime types.

Regarding the bids that had been submitted for Community Safety Funding there was a particular focus on youth and early intervention. The Chair was of the view that each of the initiatives should be given stand-alone project names.

Additionally, as a number of the schemes were focussing on young people, it was appropriate that all funding for the individual projects supported by the PCC, the Council, the Fire and Rescue Service etc., should be identified and where possible utilised to seek to increase the potential for positive outcomes to be achieved, and as a means of attracting more funding. This was considered to be of particular importance as services for young people was a County Council responsibility and the funding from that authority was not targeted into these necessary initiatives.

It was noted that a dedicated PCSO was to be appointed for the Lister Hospital. Given the level of policing resources that were required to support some patients this matter should be referred to the Stevenage Together Partnership with a specific invitation being sent to local health agencies.

With reference to the regular Policing Priorities meetings held it was considered that detailed crime data should be submitted and presented at these sessions in order that Members and the Police could make more informed decisions regarding priorities within the individual areas.

The Executive praised the work of the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Unit.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the community safety data trends identified in this report and action being taken to seek to address key concerns are noted.
2. That a further, year-end report be received outlining the work that the Responsible Authorities Group has undertaken to seek to reduce crime in Stevenage in July 2017.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report

Other Options Considered: As contained in the report.

7. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS

None

8. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1-7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by SI 2006 No. 88.
2. That having considered the reasons for the following items being in Part II it be determined that maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

9. PART II MINUTES – TUESDAY 22 NOVEMBER 2016

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II section of the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2016 are approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

10. MAJOR REFURBISHMENT CONTRACT PROCUREMENT OPTIONS APPRAISAL (INVESTMENT)

The Executive considered a Part II report that sought approval to commence procurement of the Major Refurbishment Contract (otherwise known as the “Flat Block” contract).

It was **RESOLVED** that the recommendations in the report are approved with an additional decision that Officers engage with the Portfolio Holders for

Housing, Health & Older People and Neighbourhoods and Co-operative Council concerning consultation proposals linked to this procurement.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report and to ensure that individual consultations in were not undertaken in isolation.

Other Options Considered: As contained in the report.

11. PROPOSED FREEHOLD DISPOSAL

The Executive consider a Part II report that set out proposals for the disposal of the Council's freehold interest in a property.

It was RESOLVED that the recommendation in the report is approved.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report

Other Options Considered: As contained in the report.

12. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None

Chair