

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

Date: Thursday 15 December 2016

Time: 6.00 p.m.

Place: Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

Present: Councillors L Martin-Haugh (Chair), P Bibby (Vice Chair),
J Brown, M Gardner, E Harrington, J Hollywell, C Latif, S Mead,
A Mitchell, R Parker CC, and P Stuart

Start / End Time Start Time: 6.00 p.m.
 End Time: 6.55 p.m.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Downing and C Saunders. There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 28 NOVEMBER 2016

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 28 November 2016 are approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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

The Committee was reminded that this was before them as a Budget and Policy Framework item and any comments made would be incorporated into the final report that the Executive would consider for recommendation to Council in January.

The Assistant Director (Finance) presented the report which provided an update on the draft 2017/2018 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget. She advised 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. At its meeting on 14 December, Executive had taken the view that this was not a policy it would want to see adopted in Stevenage.

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

4. PART 1 DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

This report had not been circulated to Members five clear days before the meeting nor had it been made available for public inspection. The Chair determined however that given the short time left before the end of the call-in period on 23 December 2016, it be considered on this occasion.

Executive Minutes – 22 November 2016

Environment & Economy Select Committee Minutes – 15 November 2016

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minutes – 28 November 2016

Housing Revenue Account Draft Budget Proposals 2017/18 and Rent Setting – dealt with as a Budget and Policy Framework item at item 3.

Council Tax Support Scheme –

The Assistant Director (Finance) presented a report proposing a local Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme for 2017/18.

The Committee noted that the Executive had agreed to recommend to Council both the adoption of the long term empty premium and the removal of the empty homes discount as well as the adoption of the Council Tax Support scheme for 2017/18.

The Assistant Director (Finance) agreed to clarify the position in respect of the single person discount, regarding the length of stay before someone staying on a temporary basis qualified as an adult resident in that property.

In response to a question, Members were advised that the adoption of the 50% premium on long term empty properties was the maximum premium that could be applied.

Community Data Safety Trends – Police Resourcing

The Anti-Social Behaviour Manager presented a report providing Members with an update concerning current community safety data trends and police resources in 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.

Members were pleased to note that in terms of staff resources the Police were currently at full strength in the Town.

Members asked if the crime statistics could be narrowed down to more specific areas. Officers agreed to liaise with the Police to see if this was something that could be done without highlighting individual incidents.

Officers also agreed to confirm to Members if the figures within the report reflected the number of incidents or the numbers of calls made to the call centre in response to incidents.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part I decisions of the Executive taken on 14 December 2016 are noted.

5. URGENT PART I DECISIONS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

None

6. URGENT PART I BUSINESS

None

7. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. Under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1-7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006.
2. Members having considered the reasons for the following reports being in Part II and determined that the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighed the public interest in disclosure.

8. PART II DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

This report had not been circulated to Members five clear days before the meeting. The Chair determined however that given the short time left before the end of the call-in period on 23 December 2016, it be considered on this occasion.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following Part II decisions of the Executive taken on 14 December 2016 are noted:

Part II Minutes – Tuesday 14 December 2016

Major Refurbishment Contract Procurement Options Appraisal (Investment) - The Committee considered a Part II report relating to the procurement of the Major Refurbishment Contract (otherwise known as the “Flat Block” contract). Officers advised that a further report on this issue would be submitted to Executive early in 2017.

Proposed Freehold Disposal - The Committee considered a Part II report that set out proposals for the disposal of the Council's freehold interest in a property.

9. URGENT PART II DECISIONS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

It was **RESOLVED** that the following Part II decision authorised by the Chair is noted:

- Proposed Freehold Disposal (had not appeared on the Forward Plan)

10. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None

Chair