

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS TAKEN PART I

MEETING: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 11 December 2013, 6pm, Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Stevenage, SG1 1HN

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors J Thomas (Chair), G Clark (Vice Chair), J Brown, M Cherney-Craw, J Hollywell, R Parker CC, S Speller and H Tessier.

THE AGENDA ITEMS REFERRED TO IN THIS SUMMARY OF DECISIONS MAY BE INSPECTED AT THE RECEPTION OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OFFICES, DANESHILL HOUSE.

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Hearn, P Stuart, B Underwood and S Walker. Councillor S Speller declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 8.	G Moody Ext 2203
2. MINUTES – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 11 NOVEMBER 2013	
It was RESOLVED that the Minutes from the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11 November 2013 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.	G Moody Ext 2203

3. 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 period of time left before the end of the call-in period on 18 December 2013, it be considered on this occasion.

Draft Rent Setting and HRA Budget

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 Committee was advised that the Executive had added two additional recommendations to those in the report. The new recommendations requested that the Rent Setting and HRA Budget report to the Executive in January include the effects of the rent increase on those tenants in receipt of benefits and that the Portfolio Holder for Housing be requested to write to Kris Hopkins MP, Minister for Housing about the impact of an increase in Right to Buys.

In reply to a question concerning the impact of Right to Buys on the Council's housing stock the Committee was advised that there were adverse effects on the business plan, the 'shape' of the property portfolio and the costs of managing the service. Additionally the high rate of Right to Buy sales would impact on the Council's ability to replace properties on a 1 for 1 basis as required by the Government.

In reply to a further question concerning the conversion of Council owned properties in the Town Centre to residential use the Committee was advised that a range of options were being considered to aid the Council meet its housing targets.

A Member commented that the increase in rents might encourage those tenants that could afford to do so to purchase their properties under Right to Buy.

C Fletcher
Ext 2933

Stevenage Borough Council Balanced Scorecard 2013/2014 Quarter 2

The Strategic Director (Planning and Regeneration) presented the Balanced Scorecard.

The Committee was advised that the Balanced Scorecard for Quarter 2 represented an overall improvement in performance from Quarter 1.

The Committee was further advised that despite the overall improvement in performance a small number of indicators had worsened. This was a result of an increase in demand for services that had been in excess of forecast. Improvement activities had been identified and actions were being implemented to redress the service shortfall.

Members then asked a number of detailed questions which were answered by the Strategic Director (Planning and Regeneration).

Concerns were expressed at the level of representation of Black and Ethnic Minority Groups in consultation events and it was suggested that the target could be reset in 2014/2015 following input from Members. It was noted that the launch of the on-line portal for consultation in 2014 should result in a broader spread of respondents.

Members also expressed concern at the inclusion of the Community Engagement: Community Development (LCB2) measure in the scorecard and requested that a full review of the measure be undertaken with Member input.

Urgent Part 1 Business - The Restructuring of the EADS Group (Astrium)

The Committee was advised that this item had been accepted as a late item for the Executive because of the potential impact on the employment situation in the town.

The Committee was further advised that the indications were that the Group's business plan suggested a

<p>commitment to its Stevenage business.</p> <p>A Member commented that the Council should look to strengthen links with major employers in the town in order to protect and support local businesses.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED that the following Part 1 Decisions of the Executive taken on 10 December 2013 be noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Rent Setting and HRA Budget • Stevenage Borough Council Balanced Scorecard 2013/2014 Quarter 2 • Urgent Part 1 Business - The Restructuring of the EADS Group (Astrium) 	
<p>4. URGENT PART 1 DECISIONS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</p>	
<p>None.</p>	
<p>5. URGENT PART I BUSINESS</p>	
<p>None</p>	
<p>6. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC</p>	
<p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <p>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 they involved the likely disclosure of exempt</p>	

<p>information as described in paragraphs 1-7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by SI2006 No. 88.</p> <p>2. That, having considered the reasons for the following report being in Part II, it be agreed that maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighed the public interest in disclosure.</p>	
<p>PART II</p>	
<p>7. PART II MINUTES – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 11 November 2013</p>	
<p>It was RESOLVED that the Part II Minutes from the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11 November 2013 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.</p>	<p>G Moody Ext 2203</p>
<p>8. PART II DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE</p>	
<p>This report had not been circulated to Members five clear days before the meeting. The Chair determined however that given the short period of time left before the end of the call-in period on 18 December 2013, it be considered on this occasion.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED that the following Part II Decision of the Executive taken on 10 December 2013 be noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Fund Asset Review 	
<p>9. URGENT PART II DECISIONS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</p>	
<p>None.</p>	
<p>10. URGENT PART II BUSINESS</p>	

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