

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

Date: Monday 23 June 2014

Time: 6.00 p.m.

Place: Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

Present: Councillors L Martin-Haugh (Chair), R Parker CC (Vice Chair)
L Bell, R Broom, J Brown, M Cherney-Crew, J Hollywell,
L Harrington, C Latif, P Stuart and S Walker.

Also Present: A member of the press.

Start / End Time Start Time: 6.00 p.m.
End Time: 7.03 p.m.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

An apology for absence was received from Councillor P Bibby.

There were no declarations of interest.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

It was **RESOLVED** that the Terms of Reference be noted.

3. MINUTES – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 20 MARCH 2014

In reply to a question concerning the management of enquiries through the Customer Service Centre the Committee was advised that a full report would be made to the next meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 20 March 2014 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. NEW HOMES BONUS

The Assistant Director Finance presented a draft report for comment and advised the Committee that the report would be presented in its final form to the July meeting of the Executive.

The Committee was further advised that from an allocation of £1,116,000 six projects had been selected, one of which, the refurbishment of the War Memorial, had not been outlined in the Leader's budget speech earlier in the year. The amount available

for two of the projects, Improvements to the Town Centre Walkway and the Town Centre Regeneration, had been bolstered by carry forward funds from the previous year.

In reply to a question concerning rough sleepers and beggars in the Town Centre Walkway the Strategic Director Community undertook to consider the issue and respond to Members outside of the meeting.

Members asked a number of questions concerning the potential outcomes from the meeting with Lord Heseltine and were advised that further details would be forwarded as they became available.

In response to a Member comment the Assistant Director Finance undertook to amend the wording of paragraph 4.4.1 of the report to highlight that it had been before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 June and not the Resources Development and Scrutiny Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted and that no comments be forwarded to the Executive.

5. PART 1 DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

The Committee had before it the agenda and reports from the meeting of the Executive held on 17 June together with the Notice of Decisions as published after the meeting.

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 25 June 2014, it be considered on this occasion.

Appointment of Executive Bodies

The appointments to the Executive Bodies were noted.

Town Centre Regeneration

A Member commented that paragraph 2.4 of the Executive report appeared to be incomplete. The Strategic Director Resources undertook to investigate and report back directly to the Member concerned.

Stevenage Borough Council Balanced Scorecard for Quarter Four 2013/2014.

The Strategic Director Resources presented the Council's Balanced Scorecard for Quarter Four and advised the Committee that with a score of 98.15 the overall result was slightly down on Quarter Three (score 99.12). There had also been an increase in the number of red indicators, up from 7 to 10.

Within regard to the indicators for Affordable Housing the Committee was advised

that although the overall supply of new affordable housing was out of the Council's control the in-house new build programme had been completed as expected.

A trend of decreasing supply of private rented accommodation had also been identified and a staffing restructure within the Council had been undertaken to help redress a number of issues faced by the Housing Services Team.

At previous meetings a number of targets had been identified for amendment or removal and the Strategic Director Resources reminded the Committee that the targets for fly-posting and BME involvement in consultation exercises would be reviewed for 2014/2015 whilst the measure for LCB allocation would be removed.

Concerns were expressed that the review of the BME measure could lead to its loss from the scorecard in its current format and the Strategic Director Resources undertook to inform the Committee in advance of the scope of the new indicator.

The Committee was advised that the Executive had raised concerns over the performance of the Customer Service Centre in relation to answering telephone calls and that a full report would be made to the next meetings of both the Executive and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Members suggested that the Council could use pre-select facilities for telephone enquiries and do more to promote the use of its on-line services to reduce the burden on the Contact Centre.

Urgent Part 1 Business

The Committee was advised of the award of Alderman to former councillor Brian Underwood.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following Part 1 Decisions of the Executive taken on 17 June 2014 be noted:

- Appointments to Executive Bodies
- Town Centre Regeneration
- Stevenage Borough Council Balanced Scorecard for Quarter 4
- Urgent Part 1 Business – Award of Alderman

6. URGENT PART 1 DECISIONS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

None.

7. URGENT PART I BUSINESS

None.

8. 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 items of business on the grounds that they 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 SI2006 No.88.

2. Members having considered the reasons for the following report being in Part II and determined that the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighed the public interest in disclosure.

9. PART II DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

None.

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

The Committee was advised of an Urgent Part II decision in respect of the award of an External Works Contract authorised by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee was further advised by the Strategic Director Community of the scope of the contract and of the reason for urgency.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Urgent Part II decision authorised by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

11. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.

Chair