

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

Date: Wednesday 17 December 2014

Time: 6.00 p.m.

Place: Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

Present: Councillors L Martin-Haugh (Chair), L Bell, P Bibby, J Brown, M Cherney-Craw, M Gardner, J Hollywell, L Harrington, and P Stuart.

Start / End Time Start Time: 6.00 p.m.
 End Time: 7.55 p.m.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Broom and R Parker CC.

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 24 NOVEMBER 2014

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 24 November 2014 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS 2015/2016 AND RENT SETTING

The Assistant Director (Finance) presented the Housing Revenue Account Draft Budget Proposals 201/2016 and Rent Setting report which was put before the Committee in accordance with the provisions of the Budget and Policy Framework rules of the Council's Constitution.

The Committee did not wish for any additional comments to be incorporated into the final report.

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

4. DRAFT COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2015/2016

The Assistant Director (Finance) presented Draft Council Tax Support Scheme Proposals 2015/2016 which was put before the Committee in accordance with the provisions of the Budget and Policy Framework rules of the Council's Constitution.

The Committee was advised that the Executive had requested Officers to draw up a range of options to be considered as part of the Final scheme for 2015/16 as a result of the reported scheme surplus. Those options would be presented to the January meeting of the Executive.

The Committee expressed concern that the timescale for a meaningful consultation would have been tight had significant changes been made to the scheme.

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

5. PART 1 DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

The Committee had before it the agenda and reports from the meeting of the Executive held on 16 December together with the Notice of Decisions as published after the meeting.

The Notice of Decisions 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 24 December 2014, it be considered on this occasion.

Items 4 and 6 on the Notice of Decisions were considered by the Committee as items 3 and 4 above.

Minutes – Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Strategic Director (Resources) updated the Committee on the issues raised regarding the Hertford Road Play Area.

Balanced Scorecard – Quarter Two

The Strategic Director (Resources) presented the Balanced Scorecard for Quarter Two.

The Committee was advised that there had been a downturn in performance since Quarter One and that there were now twelve red indicators.

The Committee was advised that the lack of permanent social housing was a significant factor in the measure relating to the number of families living in temporary accommodation, however the Committee was reassured that the Council had not resorted to the use of bed and breakfast accommodation.

With respect to the two anti-fraud measures the Committee was advised that as a result of the Government's decision to create a nation-wide anti-fraud service for Housing Benefit Fraud two members of staff had left and the resultant vacancies remained unfilled. There was also a proposal to create an anti-fraud service, for investigations into other types of fraud not covered by the national service, to be aligned to the Shared Internal Audit Service and recruitment was unlikely to begin until the new system had been established.

The Committee was advised that a shift to on-line and alternative telephony solutions

were under consideration to relieve the pressure on the Customer Contact Centre that had resulted in the failure of the abandoned call measure.

Concerns were expressed about the roll-out of the thin client hosted desk-top for Members and the Strategic Director (Resources) suggested that should the ICT User Satisfaction Indicator remain at red for quarter three then the Committee could call for a Scrutiny into the subject should they choose to do so.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following Part I decisions of the Executive taken on 16 December 2014 be noted:

- Minutes – 18 November
- Minutes – Overview and Scrutiny and Select Committees
- Balanced Scorecard – Quarter 2
- Urgent Part I Business – Congratulations to Lewis Hamilton and Land Sales Receipt.

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 reports 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 MINUTES – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 24 NOVEMBER 2014

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II Minutes from the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 24 November 2014 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

10. 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 period of time left before the end of the call-in period on 24 December 2014, it be considered on this occasion.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following Part II decisions taken by the Executive at its meeting on 16 December 2014 be noted:

- Part II Minutes – 18 November
- Part II Minutes – Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Voluntary Sector Funding 2015/2016
- FRIENDSLIFE – Women’s Tour Finish Event
- Council House Building Programme

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

None.

12. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.

Chair