

**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**MINUTES**

**Date: Monday 19 October 2015**

**Time: 6.00 p.m.**

**Place: Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage**

Present: Councillors L Martin-Haugh (Chair), P Bibby, L Briscoe, J Brown, M Downing, M Gardner, L Harrington, M Hurst, C Latif, R Parker CC and P Stuart

Start / End Time      Start Time: 6.00 p.m.  
                                 End Time: 7.50 p.m.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Bell and S Mead.

There were no declarations of interest.

**2. MINUTES – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 22 SEPTEMBER 2015**

The Head of Service (Chief Executive's Unit) updated the Committee on the following outstanding actions from the previous meeting:

- In order to protect the confidentiality of the evidence used to support the introduction of a PSPO covering the Oval, the Town Centre and The Hyde had been shared with the Chair, the Vice Chair and Councillor J Brown at a separate meeting.
- The Stevenage Responsible Authorities Group (RAG) was due to meet on 26 October to consider the consultation strategy for the proposed PSPO zones.
- The enforcement of PSPOs would be discussed at the meeting of RAG.

Members were advised to contact the Head of Service (Chief Executive's Unit) if they wished to view hard copies of the evidence used to support the introduction of PSPOs.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 22 September 2015 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**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 time left before the end of the call-in period on 21 October 2015, it be considered on this occasion.

## **FUTURE TOWN, FUTURE COUNCIL**

The Chief Executive introduced the report and advised the Committee of his view of the way forward for the Town and the Council for the next five years. The report identified nine project strands which covered the key external and internal challenges the Council needed to address in order to deliver local resident, business and Member ambitions.

The Committee was further advised that a follow up report would be presented to the Executive later in the year which would outline the key measurable outcomes for each project strand against which Members could hold officers to account along with an assessment of and request for the related resources to support delivery.

In reply to a question about the timescale for the proposal the Committee was advised that a five-year time span was the period deemed as necessary to allow for meaningful actions to be shown against the key strands of the plan

Members then asked a number of detailed questions about the Revenue Support Grant and the Council's desire for financial security which were answered by the Officer.

A Member enquired if it would be possible to include a measure related to Health and Wellbeing to help address key local issues including the need to improve levels of physical activity. The Chief Executive undertook to consider this request but noted that a significant amount of work was being undertaken in this area through close partnership working arrangements with HCC and as a result of locally targeted financial support secured from the Director of Public Health. As such whilst there is a clear need to improve performance locally across a number of key indicators the Council already has clear plans and activities in place, working in conjunction with partner agencies, which it is hoped will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of local people.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following Part 1 decisions taken by the Executive at its meeting on 13 October 2015 be noted:

- Minutes – 21 September 2015
- Minutes – Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees
- Future Town, Future Council

## **4. MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS SCRUTINY REVIEW**

The Scrutiny Officer presented the Scoping Document for the Media and Communications review.

In reply to a question about the scope of the review concerning rapid responses and appropriate methods of communication the Committee was advised that those topics

would be addressed through the examination of a number of case studies through the review.

In response to a request for Councillors to take lead roles in questioning topics Councillor M Gardner agreed to take the lead role for Equality and Diversity issues.

Potential 'critical friends' and witness were discussed and it was suggested that a representative from the Local Government Association could be a 'critical friend' and that representatives from local media could be called as witnesses.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the Scrutiny Officer be requested to approach a representative from the Local Government Association to act as a 'critical friend' for the review.
2. That the Scrutiny Officer be requested to approach representatives from local media (press or radio) to be witnesses for the review.
3. That the scoping document be noted.

**5. URGENT PART 1 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 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.

**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 21 October 2015, it be considered on this occasion.

## **Hertfordshire Building Control**

Members asked a number of detailed questions about the report which were answered by the Officer.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following Part II decision taken by the Executive at its meeting on 13 October 2015 be noted:

- Hertfordshire Building Control

### **9. URGENT PART II BUSINESS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

None.

### **10. URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

## **Chair**