

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

**Date: Wednesday 16 December 2015**

**Time: 6.00 p.m.**

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

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

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

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

There were no apologies for absence and no declarations of interest.

**2. MINUTES – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 16 NOVEMBER 2015**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 16 November 2015 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**3. DRAFT COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT (CTS) SCHEME 2016/2017**

The Committee was reminded that the report 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) introduced the report which provided an update of the Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme implemented from April 2015 and proposed a local CTS scheme for 2016/2017

In reply to a question concerning projected scheme surpluses the Committee was advised that this issue would be incorporated into the full review of the CTS Scheme scheduled for 2017/2018.

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

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

#### **4. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS 2-16/2017 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 2016/2017 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget and revised 2015/2016 budget position.

The Committee was advised that the Executive had discussed the potential risk to the HRA of the Governments recent announcements concerning initiatives such as 'pay to stay' and the sale of high value properties to meet the cost of Housing Association Right to Buys. It had been noted that it was currently not possible for the Council to fully take account of these and other Government Housing policy initiatives within our business model pending the Government finalising its proposals and moving them into statute.

The Committee was further advised that a full Equality Impact Assessment would be prepared to accompany the final report.

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

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

#### **5. 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 2015, it be considered on this occasion.

##### **Draft Council Tax Support Scheme 2016/2017**

Dealt with as a Budget and Policy Framework item at item 3.

##### **Housing Revenue Account Draft Budget 2016/2017 and Rent Setting**

Dealt with as a Budget and Policy Framework item at item 4.

##### **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Revised Stevenage Local Development Structure (LDS)**

The Head of Planning and Engineering presented the report which advised of changes to the planning system in relation to developer contributions since May 2013 and the findings of the updated evidence on development viability.

Members asked a number of questions about the relative benefits and technical

aspects of the CIL and Section 106 payments which were answered by the Officer.

### **Stevenage Borough Local Plan: Publication Consultation**

The Head of Planning and Engineering the report which provided an update on the progress of producing the new Stevenage Borough Local Plan and the findings of key evidence studies.

It was noted that the consultation exercise would be extended to properties in Great Ashby that fell within the boundary of North Herts District Council (NHDC). In reply to a question it was confirmed that a reciprocal arrangement would be implemented when NHDC consulted on its own Local Plan in June or July 2016.

Members asked a number of questions about the consultation process and requested that Officers considered an exhibition in the town centre to fully demonstrate the town-wide implications of the plan. The Officer undertook to evaluate this suggestion in conjunction with the other methods of consultation proposed.

Members then asked a number of detailed questions about Green Corridors and the planning process which were answered by the Officer.

### **Balanced Scorecard – Quarter Two.**

The Strategic Director (Community) presented the Balanced Scorecard for Quarter Two and advised the Committee that out of the 83 indicators 68 were green, 3 were yellow, 1 was amber and 11 were red. The performance at Quarter 2 was slightly down on that recorded in Quarter 1.

The Committee was further advised of the corrective measures that were being taken in relation to the Tenant Satisfaction, Community Safety and Customer Service Centre indicators.

In reply to a question concerning the use of a holding message for callers to the Customer Service Centre the Strategic Director (Community) undertook to investigate and to ask the Head of the Chief Executive's Unit to feedback to the Member concerned.

In reply to a further question concerning the previous use of the interactive board to present the scorecard the Committee was advised that this had been ceased for the 2015/16 financial year because, following discussion ahead of the Quarter 1 Balanced Scorecard presentation, it wasn't felt to be adding any value given that the key performance information was clearly highlighted within the report.

It was noted that a revised performance management process was under consideration as a replacement for the balanced scorecard. A Member suggested that officers give consideration to running any new process alongside the existing scorecard system during the transitional period.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following Part I decisions taken by the Executive at its

meeting on 15 December 2015 be noted:

- Minutes – 11 November
- Minutes – Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Revised Stevenage Local Development Structure (LDS)
- Stevenage Borough Local Plan: Publication Consultation
- Balanced Scorecard – Quarter Two
- Part II Minutes – 11 November
- Part II Minutes – Overview and Scrutiny Committee 16 November

**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**

Not required.

**9. PART II MINUTES – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 16 NOVEMBER 2015**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 16 November 2015 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**10. PART II DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE**

None.

**11. URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

**Chair**