

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**SPECIAL MEETING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Date: Monday 4 April 2016

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 Hurst, S Mead, R Parker CC and P Stuart.

Start / End Time Start Time: 6.00 p.m.
 End Time: 7.45 p.m.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

An apology for absence was received from Councillors M Gardner, L Harrington and C Latif.

There were no declarations of interest.

2. NEW HOMES BONUS

The Committee was advised that the report, containing the spend proposals for the New Homes Bonus as detailed by the Leader at the Council meeting on 24 February, was to be considered as part of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework. Key comments on the proposals would be reported to the meeting of the Executive scheduled for 5 April 2016.

The Committee received an introduction for each of the nine spend proposals from the lead officer for the project:

1: Stevenage New Town 70th Birthday Celebrations and Events Programme

The Committee was advised that of the £40,000 proposed budget £35,000 would be used for the promotion of Council run / sponsored events whilst the balance of £5,000 would be available for community groups via the Local Community Budget process.

In reply to a question it was confirmed that payments to community groups made via the LCB process would be subject to bids meeting predetermined criteria and it was suggested that any event receiving funding in this way should use the Council's branding in recognition of the financial support provided.

In reply to a request the Head of Leisure, Community & Children's Services undertook to circulate a brochure detailing the events planned for the Town's 70th Anniversary celebrations.

2: No More Project (continuation)

A Member suggested that Hertfordshire County Council Public Health team be approached about the potential for them to support fund the 'No More Project'. The Head of Housing Management undertook to follow up this suggestion.

3: Pearl Izumi Town Centre Cycle Tour Event

The Committee was advised that the Council would look to recover an element of the cost of the event through third party sponsorship and advertising at key sites around the route. It was confirmed that this approach was permissible following discussions with the event organisers.

In reply to a question concerning the financial benefits to the Council as a result of SBC hosting a stage finish of the Women's Cycle Tour of Britain in 2015, the Head of Leisure, Community & Children's Services provided details from an Economic Impact Assessment that was carried out by an independent third party agency following the event.

In response to a request the Head of Leisure, Community & Children's Services undertook to circulate a copy of the assessment to Members of the Committee.

In reply to a further question it was confirmed that the route of the event would be confined to the Old Town. The Officer outlined the measures put in place to mitigate the impact on local residents including steps taken more recently re the timing of the event to assist local schools noting that the event would be held during the examinations period.

4: Old Town Play Area Enhancement

In reply to a question the Committee was advised that young people would be consulted prior to the installation of any new equipment.

5: Neighbourhood Warden Posts

The Committee was presented with an outline of the expected roles and responsibilities of the proposed posts and it was confirmed that the initial appointments would be on a fixed term contract.

In reply to a question the Committee was advised that the posts would not seek to duplicate the roles of the Police Community Support Officers.

The Committee expressed the view that the post holders should be issued with a uniform to make them recognisable to the public.

6: Town Wide Shrub Rejuvenation Project

The Committee was advised that the rejuvenation project would follow a targeted approach to maximise the impact of the work.

In response to a question about prioritising shrub bed works and neighbourhood project investment at Ward level, it was noted that a means for effectively achieving this ambition was currently under consideration. Ultimately though the aim was to ensure that all Wards received investment over time.

7: Homelessness Prevention Initiative 'Next Steps'

In reply to a question the Committee was advised of the measures currently undertaken by the Council to prevent homelessness.

8: SBC Apprenticeship Programme (extension of 2015/16 initiative)

In reply to a question the Committee was advised that SBC apprentices were paid at rates above the nationally recognised rates for apprentices.

9: Capital Work Improvements with Neighbourhoods

The Committee was advised that consultation would be undertaken with parents and children prior to the refurbishment of the play areas. The Committee suggested that schools close to play areas be included in the consultation exercise.

In response to comments concerning the funding to be made available for the refurbishment of play areas the Head of Environmental Services undertook to provide Members of the Committee with example details and costings of play equipment in advance of the Committee's meeting on 6 April.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report is noted and the following comments be passed to the Executive:

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee welcomes the proposals put forward under the New Homes Bonus Scheme.
2. Organisers of events sponsored by LCB monies for the Town's 70th Anniversary celebrations should be encouraged to advertise the event as being supported by the Council.
3. Sponsorship of the Pearl Izumi Cycle Event should be linked with other health initiatives in the Town if possible.
4. Further mitigation of the impact of the Pearl Izumi Cycle Event should be considered as the event is scheduled for a school day during the examination period and the Committee would not wish for the event to have a detrimental

effect on those students sitting examinations on that day.

5. The Neighbourhood Wardens be issued with a uniform to ensure they are recognisable to the public.

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

None

4. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Not required.

5. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.

Chair