



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: Thursday, 5 April 2018
Time: 6.00 pm
Location: Shimkent Room - Daneshill House, Danestrete
Contact: Colin Sweeney on 01438 242706

Members: Councillors: L Martin-Haugh (Chair), P Bibby CC (Vice-Chair), J Brown, H Burrell, M Downing, A Farquharson, J Fraser, ME Gardner, L Harrington, C Latif, J Lloyd, S Mead, A Mitchell CC and R Parker CC

AGENDA

PART 1

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any apologies for absence or declarations of interest by Members.

2. MINUTES - 8 MARCH 2018 AND 19 MARCH 2018

To approve as a correct record and for signing by the Chair, the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on:

- (a) Thursday 8 March 2018; and
- (b) Monday 19 March 2018

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3. PART 1 DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

To consider the following Part 1 decisions of the Executive taken on 4 April 2018.

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2.	Minutes of the Executive of 13 March 2018	3
3.	Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Select Committees	11
4.	New Homes Bonus	19
5.	Community Safety Strategy	35

**PLEASE BRING YOUR AGENDA AND REPORTS FOR THE EXECUTIVE MEETING
HELD ON 4 APRIL 2018**

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

NEW HOMES BONUS 2018/2019

At the last meeting of the Committee, the Chair agreed to waive the right to call-in with regard to New Homes Bonus money (£90,000) being allocated to the Stevenage Cycling Festival (incorporating the Tour Series)..

5. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS

To consider any Part 1 business accepted by the Chair as urgent.

6. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

To consider the following motions –

1. That 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 involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1 – 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

2. That Members consider the reasons for the following reports being in Part II and determine whether or not maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

7. PART II DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

To consider the following Part II decisions of the Executive taken on 4 April 2018:

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8. Part II Minutes – Executive – 13 March 2018 P1.

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

None.

9. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

To consider and Part II business accepted by the Chair as urgent.

NOTE: Links to Part 1 Background Documents are shown on the last page of the individual report, where this is not the case they may be viewed by using the following link to agendas for Overview and Scrutiny meetings and then opening the agenda for Thursday, 5 April 2018 – <http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/have-your-say/council-meetings/161153/>

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Thursday, 8 March 2018

Time: 6.00 pm

Place: Shimkent Room - Daneshill House, Danestrete

Present: Councillors: L Martin-Haugh (Chair), J Brown, M Downing, A Farquharson, M Gardner, J Lloyd, A Mitchell CC and R Parker CC

Start / End Time: Start Time: 6.00 pm
End Time: 7.35 pm

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Bibby, H Burrell, L Harrington and S Mead.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 **MINUTES - 8 FEBRUARY AND 19 FEBRUARY 2018**

The Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 8 February had been circulated to Members and were tabled at the meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday 8 February and Monday 19 February are approved as correct records and signed by the Chair.

3 **MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS REVIEW**

The Scrutiny Officer presented a report which requested that Members consider the further recommendations to be incorporated into an action plan for communications for the Council.

Members were of the view that consultation with young people should not be restricted to Stevenage Youth Council who although did very good work for the Town did not represent all young people in Stevenage. Officers agreed to look at improving the level of youth engagement.

In response to a comment, Officers agreed that the Council Website did need to be improved and that resources had been allocated to deliver a new website during 2018/19.

Officers also agreed to look at the wording of the recommendations to ensure they were clear and understandable prior to submission to the Portfolio Holder for this area.

It was **RESOLVED:**

That the further recommendations that Members wished to add to those that the LGA Peer Team had made be incorporated into an action plan as follows:

1. That the Council explores how best to better engage residents in developing its communications;
2. That the Stevenage Youth Council be invited to own a strand of the place brand and to promote this amongst the Town's young people.
3. That officers consider with the Leader as part of the resulting Communications Action Plan the community engagement response, and where did the Council want to be on the (Arnstein) ladder of participation?
4. That there be a priority for informed rapid response to incidents and breaking news over planned 'ribbon cutting' events, etc., when necessary.
5. That the associated Communications Action Plan also include reference to the issues that Members had previously highlighted as part of their review as areas of development, including:
 - The importance of intelligence to pre-empt issues and proactively engage with local press.
 - The benefit of positive news, especially with regard to any developing issues which might be of concern to Stevenage residents.
 - The need to build and maintain relationships with local media agencies.
 - The need for Members to exercise caution when using social media such as Twitter or Facebook but that training be provided to them to help build confidence.
 - The need to strengthen 'out of hours' coverage especially for social media comments.

4 **COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME**

The Assistant Director (Finance and Estates) and the Head of Revenue and Benefits (Shared Service) gave a presentation to Members on the Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2019/20.

Members were advised that the administrative cost of Council Tax support was paid for by Stevenage Borough Council, with a small grant from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government. The gradual transfer of claims onto Universal Credit would result in a potential increase in administration costs for the Council partly due to the increase in the frequency and volume of changes that would need processing because of the monthly reassessments.

Officers advised that they would be looking at developing an income band scheme that was both affordable and equitable and would minimise any unintentional circumstances. To do this would require extensive data modelling and full

consultation with local taxpayers, HCC and the Police. Additional software costs would also be incurred and resulting increased workloads would need to be addressed by additional staff resources.

Members agreed the need for the scheme and the importance of modelling it to meet the needs of Stevenage residents. In response to a question, Officers confirmed that the proposal did not affect pensioners who were protected from the changes.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the presentation be noted; and
2. That the Assistant Director (Finance and Estates) and the Head of Revenue and Benefits (Shared Service) come back to a future meeting of the Committee when further information is available.

5 **URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

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 the report would be considered and call-in would be waived due to the requirement to submit a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TRRO) in sufficient time and to sign the contract with the Tour promoters to secure the event, which could not wait until the next scheduled meeting on 19 March 2018.

The Leisure Services Manager presented the report and asked for Members comments prior to submission to the Executive meeting on 13 March 2018. Officers apologised for the late circulation of the report.

Members raised the following points in relation to the event:

- Was any of the money being targeted to improving the use of the cycleway network?
- More of the High Street businesses should be encouraged to join in this year;
- It was unclear how the event helped to improve the neighbourhood areas;
- The public toilets must be open during the event.

Officers advised that the cycleways were the responsibility of the County Council but that there was ongoing dialogue between SBC and HCC regarding the cycleways.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the allocation of £90,000 from the 2018/19 New Homes Bonus allocation would be subject to approval by the Executive for the implementation and delivery of the following scheme :
 - Scheme 4- Stevenage Cycling Festival incorporating the Tour Series £90,000

2. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's comments on the New Homes Bonus Scheme 4 - Stevenage Cycling Festival incorporating the Tour Series £90,000, would be reported to the Executive on 13 March 2018.
3. That Members note the achievement of the 2017/18 Stevenage Cycle Festival.

6 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Not required.

7 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

Date: Monday, 19 March 2018

Time: 6.00 pm

Place: Shimkent Room - Daneshill House, Danestrete

Present: Councillors: L Martin-Haugh (Chair), P Bibby (Vice-Chair), J Brown, H Burrell, M Downing, A Farquharson, J Fraser, M Gardner, L Harrington, S Mead, A Mitchell CC and R Parker CC

Start / End Time: Start Time: 6.00 pm
End Time: 8.03 pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no apologies for absence or declarations of interest received by Members.

2 PART 1 DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

The Committee considered a report, which 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 22 March 2018, it could be considered on this occasion.

(i) Minutes of the Executive of 14 February 2018

(ii) Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees

(iii) Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency (HHIA)

The Council's Assistant Director of Planning and Regulatory Services introduced the report, which asked the Executive to consider whether the Council should join the Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency (HHIA).

(iv) Stevenage Cultural Strategy (A 10 Year Strategy for Arts and Heritage)

The Council's Strategic Director introduced the report, which outlined the finalisation of a Cultural Strategy for the Town and summarised a number of cultural ambitions over the next 10 years in order for Stevenage to become a destination creative town. He advised the Committee that the Strategy had been well received by the Executive and that the recommendations had been agreed accordingly.

(v) 3rd Quarter Monitoring Report – General Fund and Housing Revenue

The Committee considered a report, which stated that the Council undertakes a review of all revenue and associated budgets on a quarterly basis and that the report represented the 3rd quarter monitoring report for 2017/18. The report also updated Members on the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) projected 2017/18 net expenditure and sought the Council's approval for the revisions to the 2017/18 revenue budgets. In addition, the report sought to update Members on the General Fund and HRA savings and growth items approved for 2017/18; the Council's reserves and balances available to support revenue expenditure and to seek approval for revisions to the allocated reserves and any financial security savings that contributed to the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account savings target.

(vi) 3rd Quarter Monitoring Capital Programme – General Fund and Housing Revenue Account

The Committee considered a report, which provided Members with an update on the Council's 2017/18 and 2018/19 Capital Programme and seek approval for the revisions to the General Fund capital programme. The report also updated Members on capital resources available to fund the capital programmes.

It was drawn to the attention of the Committee, a £269k underspend in the 2017/18 General Fund Capital Programme.

(vii) Draft Community Safety Strategy

The Council's Leisure Services Manager introduced the report, which outlined the emerging priorities of the SoSafe partnership for the next three years, which was considered by the Responsible Authorities Group (RAG) at its meeting on 5 February 2018.

The Council's Leisure Services Manager also confirmed that the report would be considered by the Executive in April and by the full Council in July 2018.

(viii) Housing Allocations Policy Review 2018

The Committee considered a report, which advised Members of the consultation outcomes and subsequent recommendations of the Allocations Policy Review.

(ix) Retrofitting Fire Suppressant Sprinkler Systems to Residential Tower Blocks – Programme Proposal (See also Part II Report)

The Council's Fire Safety Surveyor introduced the report, which sought the Executive's approval for the Council to commence a programme of retrofitting Fire Suppressant Sprinkler Systems to all of the Council's seven high rise flat blocks, including two sheltered schemes as these works would provide additional fire safety measures to the Council's residential high rise flat blocks. The budget for these works was not covered in the HRA business plan.

It was noted that the Council had met with representatives from the Department for Communities and Local Government, the outcome of which confirmed that the Council's high rise flat blocks were safe already and the proposals to fit sprinklers were deemed as additional safety measures.

(x) Corporate Performance for Quarter Three 2017/2018

The Council's Assistant Director of Corporate Services and Transformation introduced the report, which highlighted the Council's performance across key priorities and themes for quarter three 2017/18.

He advised Members that the Chief Executive had ran through the key highlights with the Executive and, in particular, the regeneration of the town Centre (SG1) and the appointment of MACE as contractor; the reduction in agency staff employed by the Council; the Council's Play Service, which had been listed for a LGC award; Customer Service Centre performance and sickness absence.

The Assistant Director advised Members that the Executive had endorsed how the Council was moving forward in these areas and that where key staff would be leaving the Council resilience was in place to cover this.

It was **RESOLVED** that the decisions on the following Part I items be noted:

- **Minutes of the Executive of 14 February 2018**
- **Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees.**
- **Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency (HHIA)**
- **Stevenage Cultural Strategy**
- **3rd Quarter Monitoring Report General Fund and Housing Revenue**
- **3rd Quarter Monitoring Capital Programme – General Fund and Housing Revenue Account**
- **Draft Community Safety Strategy 2018-2021**
- **Housing Allocations Policy Review 2018**
- **Retrofitting Fire Suppressant Sprinkler Systems to Residential Tower Blocks – Programme Proposal (See also Part II Report)**
 - **Corporate Performance for Quarter Three 2017/2018**

3 NEW HOMES BONUS 2018/19

The Committee considered a report, which sought the Committee's comments on a range of schemes and initiatives to be funded from the 2018/19 New Homes Bonus

Allocation.

A revised chart, which appeared at Paragraph 4.2.1 to the report, was circulated.

It was reported that the report was a follow-up to the New Homes Bonus proposals announced by the Leader of the Council in February 2018. As these formed part of the Budget but had not, to date, been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, they were before Members this evening in order that the Committee's comments could be reported back to the Executive on 4 April 2018 and thereby allow the projects to commence in April 2018. It was reaffirmed that there would be a further opportunity for the Committee to consider the matter once it had been presented to the Executive.

Nine New Homes Bonus proposals had been identified and announced for implementation as part of the Leader of the Council's Budget Speech at Council on 28 February 2018, as follows:

Scheme 1 – Neighbourhood Wardens

Scheme 2 – Stevenage Day

Scheme 3 – Acknowledging the end of World War 1

Scheme 4 – Stevenage Cycling Festival incorporating the Tour Series

Scheme 5 – Imagine Stevenage – Mobilising our Cultural Offer

Scheme 6 – Supporting Town Centre Events

Scheme 7 – Participatory Budgets

Scheme 8 – Recognising Suffragette Movement

Scheme 9 – Electric Charging Points

Members raised a number of questions in respect of the above, together with Appendix A to the report, which were addressed by officers.

It was **RESOLVED** that the allocation of £260,600 from the 2018/19 New Homes Bonus allocation be approved for the implementation and delivery of the nine schemes listed above as detailed in the report.

4 **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19**

The Council's Scrutiny Officer introduced the report, which sought the Committee's agreement to the Work Programme for the Select Committee for the Municipal Year 2018/2019 and to consider the issues raised by the Communities and Local Government Parliamentary Select Committee' paper "Effectiveness of Local Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committees."

Members raised points and questions in respect of the following, which were answered by officers.:

1. Receiving papers on time.
2. Opposition Members chairing overview and scrutiny committees
3. Executive appointment of chairs of overview and scrutiny committees

4. Identifying compliant social landlords and how the Council could work with them.
5. The Committee coming to a view on the issues raised in the above paper.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following be added to the Committee's Work Plan for 2018/2019:

1. A Special Meeting of the Committee be convened, to which all Members of the Council were to be invited, on scrutiny and how this worked for the Council and that there be a Scrutiny of the Scrutiny function at SBC
2. The issue of sickness and sickness management be considered at the end of the monitoring period for this year.
3. The Committee contribute to the development of the Council's new Website.
4. In addition to the above, it was noted that the Committee would also undertake programmed policy development work.

5 **URGENT PART 1 DECISIONS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

At the last meeting of the Committee, the Chair agreed to waive the right to call-in with regard to New Homes Bonus money (£90,000) being allocated to the Stevenage Cycling Festival (incorporating the Tour Series)..

6 **URGENT PART I BUSINESS**

None.

7 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That, 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 SI 2006 No. 88.
2. That, having considered the reasons for the following items being in Part II, it be determined that maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

8 **PART II DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE**

Financial Implications – Retrofitting Fire Suppressant Sprinkler Systems to Residential Tower Blocks – Programme Proposal Part 2

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II decision taken by the Executive at its meeting held on 13 March 2018, be noted.

9 **URGENT PART II DECISIONS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR OF OVERVIEW
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

None.

10 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR