

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS – (PART I – FOR PUBLICATION)

Meeting:	Council
Date:	Wednesday, 25 July 2018
Place:	Council Chamber
Members Present:	Councillors: All Councillors with the exception of those listed at item 1 below.

1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
	<p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Cullen, M Gardner, G Lawrence, L. Martin-Haugh and G. Snell.</p> <p>Councillor S-J Potter made a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in respect of Items 4 – Main Debate and 9 – Notice of Motions, as she worked for Virgin Trains and was a Member of TSSA (the railway union) and her husband worked for Govia Thameslink Railways.</p>	
2	MINUTES - ANNUAL COUNCIL - 23 MAY 2018	
	<p>It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Council meeting of 23 May 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor, subject to the correction of a typographical error in Item 2 – Minutes – second paragraph, third line, which should read “Mayor” instead of “Councillor Pam Stuart”.</p>	
3	MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS	
	<p>The Mayor announced that sadly Rev Michael Banks, a former Director of Leisure Services and Chief Executive of the Council had passed away earlier this month. The Mayor was sure that all Members that knew him would wish to join her in sending condolences to his family.</p> <p>At the Mayor’s request, the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Community Safety and Equalities was delighted to inform the Council that the Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) Forum were announced National Winners from Community Action</p>	

at the Tenant Participation Advisory Awards held on 12 July 2018. The Mayor presented the Award to Team Members Sarah Pateman and Tania Stokes.

The Mayor informed the meeting that since the last meeting, the Mayoral Team had attended 48 engagements, and she referred to a number of highlights, including the Town Twinning visit to Autun, Stevenage Day, the Cycle Race and a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace.

The Mayor reminded Members that she would be holding her first Charities fund raising event, a Garden Party in the Stevenage Scout Hut Garden in The Poplars on Sunday, 2 September 2018. She hoped as many Members as possible would be able to attend.

The Mayor wished to highlight the work of her three chosen Charities. The Council received presentations from Michelle Stokes (Carers in Hertfordshire), Mervyn Terrett (TRACKS Autism) and Amber Hunter and Dean Vaughan (Stevenage Scouts).

4 MAIN DEBATE - "CONNECTED STEVENAGE" - AN INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGY

In accordance with her Disclosable Pecuniary Interest made at the commencement of the meeting, Councillor S-J Potter withdrew from the meeting for the duration of this item.

The Council received a presentation from the Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Transport (Councillor Ralph Raynor), County Councillor Derrick Ashley and Rebecca Cox (Living Streets) on "Connected Stevenage – An Integrated Transport Strategy".

In response to an issue raised by a Member, the Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Transport undertook to provide a written response on the current position on the idea of extending the Old Town High Street into the New Town.

After a full debate, it was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that

Stevenage Borough Council work with residents, businesses and partners to develop and agree a sustainable transport vision for Stevenage leading to the preparation of an Integrated Transport Strategy, connecting residents and businesses with a range of opportunities, and working cooperatively with communities across all neighbourhoods to create living streets that local people can enjoy. Stevenage has a proud history, and the creation of the New Town incorporated sustainable infrastructure in the form of dedicated cycle tracks, a network of local bus routes, streets and squares for residents to enjoy. We will work together with partners to make the most of the outstanding connectivity that has been so important to the success of the town. This Vision will be supported by an action plan and funding strategy, to attract external funding to benefit the economy of the town and bring real benefits to Stevenage people.

5	PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS	
	None received.	
6	QUESTIONS FROM THE YOUTH COUNCIL	
	None received.	
7	QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC	
	None received.	
8	LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S UPDATE	
	The Leader of the Opposition referred to what he considered to be the baffling process for the distribution of Section 106 monies. At a time when funds for public amenity improvement schemes were limited, he failed to understand why the use of	

Section 106 monies were subject to such restrictions.

In response, the Leader of the Council agreed that the Section 106 process could be confusing, and felt that the Council should be more specific in its intent for the use of Section 106 monies. The Planning Team would therefore be requested to provide a response to the issue in writing to all Members of the Council.

The Council then received updates on the following:

- Town Twinning Visit
- Stevenage Works
- Shared Anti-Fraud Service
- The Cycle Tour Series
- Stevenage Day
- Excellence in Public Health Award
- HRA Borrowing Cap
- Social Housing Green Paper
- Town Centre Regeneration
- Stevenage Local Plan
- Green Flag Awards

9	NOTICE OF MOTIONS	
	<p>In accordance with her Disclosable Pecuniary Interest made at the commencement of the meeting, Councillor S-J Potter withdrew from the meeting for the duration of this item.</p> <p>An amended motion was tabled at the meeting.</p> <p>After a full debate, it was moved, seconded and RESOLVED:</p>	

That this Council notes with increasing dismay the complete chaos and confusion caused to rail commuters by the failure to plan for, or implement properly, the new rail timetable.

Stevenage railway station is crucial to the town and local economy, with nearly 5m visits per year. By Govia Thameslink Railways (GTR's) own admission, nearly 20% of services have been cancelled since the new timetable came into effect. No improvement has been achieved since the start of this episode, for example, for peak trains to London on Monday, 38% of trains were late or cancelled.

The terrible impact this has had on people's well-being, jobs, home life and child care/career arrangements cannot be overestimated. Nor can the impact on the frontline staff on our railways who have had to deal with the brunt of commuters confusion and stress when they bear no responsibility for the management failure that has caused them.

We now have yet another new timetable (15 July), across the GTR & Northern services but with no reassurance that this will resolve the issues we have been enduring.

We call on our MP, the Rail Operating companies, Network Rail and the Secretary of State for Transport to meet immediately and take urgent steps to resolve this rail crisis.

10	QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO COMMITTEE CHAIRS/PORTFOLIO HOLDERS	
	<p>Council received four questions. Details of the draft responses given to the original questions are appended to this Summary of Decisions and responses given to the supplementary questions are set out below.</p> <p>A In response to a supplementary question regarding the employment of more Parking Enforcement Officers, the Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Transport advised that consideration would be given in the near future to a new contract for parking enforcement and that Members would be advised once a new contract was let.</p>	

	<p>B In response to a supplementary question as to action on the cases of junctions that had become dangerous due to difficulty with sight lines due to overgrown grass verges that had been reported but had not been addressed, the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration stated that he would arrange for the Assistant Director (Stevenage Direct Services) to provide a written reply on this matter.</p> <p>C In response to a supplementary question in respect of whether or not the Council had ever asked residents if they preferred co-mingled or separate waste bin collections, the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration commented that the Council complied with Waste Management Regulations which currently required local authorities to ensure that collections of waste paper, plastic, metal or glass were by way of separate collection arrangements.</p> <p>D In response to a supplementary question regarding whether or not there were any plans to extend the Neighbourhood Wardens scheme across the town, the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood and Co-operative Working advised that a fourth Warden would shortly be commencing employment with the Council and that it was a continued aspiration to extend the scheme to cover the whole town.</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY CHAIRS</p>
	<p>The Chair of the Community Select Committee (Councillor S Mead) updated Council on the recent work of the Select Committee, and advised that the three recent meeting of the Committee had scrutinised the Resident Engagement review, the Stevenage Leisure Limited contract and the Voluntary and Community Sector review.</p> <p>The Chair of the Environment and Economy Select Committee (Councillor M Downing) updated Council on the recent work of the Select Committee. He commented that, whilst the work of the Committee in 2017/18 had been dominated by the scrutiny of the Indoor Market, the Work Programme for 2018/19 was more varied, and would continue with consideration of the Market Row toilets and public conveniences across the town.</p>

12	APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON TO SERVE ON THE AUDIT COMMITTEE	
	<p>The Chair of the Audit Committee advised that satisfactory references had been received for the recommended appointee.</p> <p>It was moved, seconded and RESOLVED that Mr Geoff Gibbs be appointed as the Council's Independent Person for a term of four years.</p>	
13	COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY 2018-21	
	<p>It was moved, seconded and RESOLVED that the 2018/2021 Community Safety Strategy, as appended to the report, be approved.</p>	
14	ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT - 2017/2018	
	<p>It was moved, seconded and RESOLVED that the work undertaken by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Select Committees during 2017/18 be noted.</p>	
16	EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS	
	<p>It was moved, seconded and RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 to 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 item being in Part II, it be determined that maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighed the public interest in disclosure.	
17	FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS - RETROFITTING FIRE SUPPRESSANT SPRINKLER SYSTEMS TO RESIDENTIAL TOWER BLOCKS - PROGRAMME PROPOSAL	
	It was moved, seconded and RESOLVED that the recommendations in the report are approved.	
18	AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR THE REFURBISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF LIFTS (2018-2023)	
	It was moved, seconded and RESOLVED that the recommendations in the report are approved.	

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO COMMITTEE CHAIRS/PORTFOLIO HOLDERS (Item 10)

A Our starting point is that the Council has a programme of parking enforcement schemes to be carried out in different neighbourhoods, to provide an efficient and sensible way to look at requests for restrictions.

This is for two reasons. Firstly, because the legal process required for the making of traffic regulation orders required for the implementation of new restrictions is onerous, it can be beneficial to look at a wider set of options across a ward or area rather than simply individual requests. Secondly this allows for consistency, dealing with the criticism from residents that we have implemented restrictions in a neighbouring street but been blind to the same problems in a particular street.

The current priority in the programme is to complete the Broadwater review which is anticipated will bring Roebuck and Longmeadow Wards into line with the other New Town wards in respect of the verge and footway parking and dealing with some long-standing obstructive parking issues on bends and junctions. Other high priorities are the implementation of Stevenage's first residents' Permit Parking Area in Burymead and the review of the High Street area.

To increase our capacity and speed of bringing forward these parking schemes, we have created and recruited to a Parking Management Officer post in June 2018. This additional capacity will help deliver our priority programme but also to look at options for smaller interim schemes across the town. Our new Officer will offer to meet ward Councillors understand their priorities and will no doubt support our important work as we take forward the Living Streets idea within the sustainable transport strategy.

- B The extended period of wet and warm weather experienced in Spring this year resulted in high levels of grass growth. Our parks cutting programme experienced a one and a half week delay due to wet and soft ground conditions at the start of the cutting season. The council's tractors were unable to operate at that time due to the risk of churning up the grass surfaces.

The highway verge cutting schedule also experienced delay. The council has to submit applications to the Highway Authority to place traffic management onto roads in order to facilitate the cutting of roadside verges. Unfortunately a number were turned down this season as the periods requested coincided with road works. As a result the council implemented strimming works to junction hammerheads in order to retain junction sight lines.

Unfortunately, the council experienced problems with staff and equipment availability in the early part of the cutting season. A priority response was implemented when this became apparent and additional resources and equipment was placed into the cut in order to bring the work back in line with the schedule. Lessons have been learnt and officers have reviewed the operation, purchased new additional equipment and reconfigured the cutting regime in order to provide more resilience and prevent a recurrence. The team will also review and test its plan and resourcing arrangements in advance of the cutting season incorporating intelligence from weather forecasts so that any operational issues can be proactively identified and mitigated.

- C Council officers have undertaken an initial feasibility assessment for introducing a co-mingled recycling solution for residents and have discussed it with senior management and appropriate Executive members. This assessment considered the pros and cons of this approach and concluded that the timing for implementing such a solution was not right for Stevenage. This in part was due to the current configuration and age of the Council's recycling collection fleet and the high cost of replacing this to facilitate co-mingled collections. The Council's vehicles have a seven year life expectancy and are currently only two years old. It would cost approximately £500,000 to replace three collection vehicles.

The Council currently generates income through the sale of the recyclable material it collects. The Council generated approximately £350,000 of income from the sale of recyclable material in 2016/17. The closure of the Chinese import market for

recyclable material has reduced income yields across certain recyclable waste streams but the council continues at this time to generate income that contributes to the cost of operating the organisation. This would not be possible under current market conditions for co-mingled material as most material recovery facilities charge a gate fee for the processing of mixed recyclable material. The Council would also need to issue wheelie bins to all households for the collection of recyclable material at a cost of approximately £750,000.

The costs associated with the implementation of this option would total an amount that would require a council tax uplift this year of approximately 10% (in addition to the 2.99% increase approved in February) or a reduction of the council's establishment by at least 14 full time employees (assuming average salaries).

Waste management regulations currently require local authorities to ensure that collections of waste paper, plastic, metal or glass are by way of separate collection arrangement. The Council's collection system currently complies with regulation. The waste industry is expecting Government to commence a public consultation in Summer this year regarding a draft national Waste & Resources strategy. It is anticipated that this strategy may reflect the European Union circular economy and include new national recycling targets and requirements for the collection of recyclable material. As such, it is considered prudent to wait for this consultation in order to determine the implications of the strategy before proposing any significant change to the council's existing collection arrangements.

Officers are however developing proposals for enhancing the range of recyclable material that can be presented for collection at the kerbside by our residents. They are also developing a pilot to test alternative containers for plastic and cans and paper and card materials that will help keep materials contained on windy days. I will of course provide you further updates as these proposals are developed.

- D The Neighbourhood Wardens had been invaluable in tackling enviro-crime across the town, as evidenced by the fact that instances of fly tipping had decreased from 3,043 in 2015/16 to 2,468 in 2,078. The Warden Team had also worked on a number of community-led projects to drive community involvement in making local neighbourhoods better. The Wardens attend Resident Groups as required and are seen as a valuable resource by many of those with whom they engage.