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Daneshill House
Danstrete
Stevenage
Hertfordshire

17 July 2018

Dear Sir/Madam

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Stevenage Borough Council will be held in the Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage on Wednesday, 25 July 2018 at 7.00pm and you are summoned to attend to transact the following business.

Yours faithfully

Scott Crudgington
Chief Executive

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. MINUTES - ANNUAL COUNCIL - 23 MAY 2018

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Annual meeting of Council held on 23 May 2018 for signature by the Mayor.

Minutes attached.

Page Nos. 7 - 16

3. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

To receive any communications that the Mayor may wish to put before Council.

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

To receive a presentation on the development of an Integrated Transport Strategy.

5. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

None

6. QUESTIONS FROM THE YOUTH COUNCIL

None

7. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None

8. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S UPDATE

In accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, the Leader of the Opposition shall be given the opportunity to raise one matter relevant to the Borough that has arisen since the last meeting of the Council. The Leader of the Council shall then have the opportunity to advise the Council of matters relevant to the Borough that have arisen since the last meeting.

9. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

To consider the following Motion submitted by Cllr S Taylor –

'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 Railway's (GTR) 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 (9 July), 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 their GTR & Northern but with no reassurance that this will resolve the issues we have been enduring.'

We call on our MP, the Rail companies 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

A. Question from Cllr. A McGuinness

'What are the Council's plans to address the significant backlog in parking restriction and yellow line requests?'

B. Question from Cllr. R Parker C.C.

'Why did SBC suffer unacceptable failures earlier this spring/summer with its grass cutting, resulting in many complaints from local residents, when other nearby local authorities did not, and what steps have been taken to make sure this failure is not repeated?'

C. Question from Cllr. G Snell

'What assessment has the Council undertaken on the potential cost and benefits of introducing co-mingled dry household recycling and what plans are in place to increase recycling rates across Stevenage?'

D. Question from Cllr. T Wren

'What assessment has been undertaken by the Council to ascertain the value of the introduction of Neighbourhood Wardens?'

11. UPDATES FROM SCRUTINY CHAIRS

To receive updates from the Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees on the recent activities of those Committees.

12. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON TO SERVE ON THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

To consider an officer report, attached as item 12 concerning the appointment of an Independent Person to serve on the Council's Audit Committee.

Report attached

Page Nos. 17 - 20

13. COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY 2018-21

The report attached as item 13 was considered by the Executive at its meeting on 4 April 2018 when the following recommendation to Council was agreed –

That Council be recommended to approve the 2018-2021 Community Safety Strategy as appended to this report.

Report & Appendix attached

Page Nos. 21 - 54

14. ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT - 2017/2018

To note the report from the three Scrutiny Committees on their activities for the 2017/2018 Municipal Year.

Report attached

Page Nos. 55 - 64

15. MINUTES - AUDIT COMMITTEE

To note the Minutes/draft Minutes of the Audit Committee meetings held on 28 March and 12 June 2018.

Minutes attached – Item 15

Page Nos. 65 - 78

16. 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.

17. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS - RETROFITTING FIRE SUPPRESSANT SPRINKLER SYSTEMS TO RESIDENTIAL TOWER BLOCKS - PROGRAMME PROPOSAL

The Part II report attached as item 17 was considered by the Executive at its meeting on 13 March 2018. The Executive agreed the recommendations contained therein and accordingly recommendations 2.2 and 2.3 of the Part II report are submitted for Council approval.

Report attached for Members – Item 17

18. AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR THE REFURBISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF LIFTS (2018-2023)

The Part II report attached as item 18 was considered by the Executive at its meeting on 11 July 2018. That meeting was informed the Council's Financial Regulations require the expenditure element to be referred to Council for

approval. Accordingly Council is requested to approve recommendation 2.1. of the Part II report.

Report attached for Members – Item18

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STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

ANNUAL COUNCIL MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, 23 May 2018

Time: 7.00pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present: The Mayor (2017/2018) Pam Stuart and Councillors Doug Bainbridge, Sandra Barr, Philip Bibby CC, Lloyd Briscoe, Rob Broom, Jim Brown, Howard Burrell, Laurie Chester, David Cullen, Michael Downing, James Fraser, Jody Hanafin, Roni Hearn, Richard Henry, Jackie Hollywell, Matthew Hurst, Lizzy Kelly, Graham Lawrence, John Lloyd, Mrs Joan Lloyd, Lin Martin-Haugh, Andy McGuinness, Maureen McKay, John Mead, Sarah Mead, Adam Mitchell CC, Margaret Notley, Robin Parker CC, Sarah-Jane Potter, Ralph Raynor, Graham Snell, Simon Speller, Sharon Taylor OBE CC, Jeannette Thomas and Tom Wren

Start / End Start Time: 7.00pm
Time: End Time: 8.10pm

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Gardner, M Gardner, E Harrington and A Webb.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 **MINUTES - WEDNESDAY 28 FEBRUARY 2018**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Council meeting of 24 February 2018 are approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

At this juncture, the outgoing Mayor informed Members that serving as a Mayor of Stevenage had been a privilege. She had carried out over 257 engagements and had met hardworking and supportive residents. Councillor Pam Stuart indicated that she was pleased to have raised the profile of her two charities - Homestart and the Betty Game Opportunities Trust.

The other highlights of the year were:

- Meeting the Irish Network and 'Give Back to Stevenage' groups
- Visit to the twin town of Ingelheim in Germany
- Attending the enthroning of the first Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of the new Diocese of London, His Eminence Archbishop Angaelos
- Attending the Holocaust Memorial Day in late January
- Attending the installation ceremony for the new Lord Lieutenant and the High Sheriff's Justice Service at St Albans Abbey

- Civic celebration of Stevenage at Marriotts School

The outgoing Mayor thanked her consort (Tony), her daughters (Amanda and Kyrstin), Tracey Frost (Mayor's PA) and friends for their support.

The Leader of the Council thanked the outgoing Mayor for her two terms as Mayor and 28 years of service on the Council. Councillor Robin Parker CC expressed gratitude for Pam Stuart's long service to the community.

3 **ELECTION OF MAYOR**

The Mayor asked for nominations for the Office of Mayor for 2018/19.

Councillor S Taylor OBE CC nominated Councillor M Notley for the Office of Mayor.

The nomination was seconded by Councillor P Bibby CC.

There being no other nominations a vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor M Notley be elected as Mayor for the 2018/19 Municipal Year. Councillor Notley then made the statutory declaration of office.

The Mayor announced that Councillor Laurie Chester would be the Mayoress for 2018/19. She also announced that her charities for the year would be Carers in Hertfordshire, Tracks Autism and Stevenage District Scouts.

4 **ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR**

It was moved and seconded that Councillor S Speller be appointed as Deputy Mayor for the 2018/19 Municipal Year.

There being no other nominations a vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor S Speller be appointed Deputy Mayor for the 2018/19 Municipal Year.

Councillor Speller then made the statutory declaration of acceptance of office.

The Deputy Mayor announced that Bridy Speller would be his Deputy Mayoress for the 2018/19 Municipal Year.

5 **APPOINTMENT OF YOUTH MAYOR**

The Mayor thanked the outgoing Youth Mayor, Santino de Freitas, for his work as a representative for the young people of Stevenage and as an ambassador for the town.

Santino de Freitas then made a short speech in which he said that he had enjoyed his time as Youth Mayor. The outgoing Youth Mayor informed Members that highlights of his term included a visit to the twin town of Ingelheim and initiatives to raise mental health awareness among young people. He thanked those that had helped him throughout the year and concluded by saying that he had been impressed by the levels of contribution by young people to issues that affected them.

Councillor Richard Henry thanked the outgoing Youth Mayor for his work. He informed Members that he was proud that Stevenage had an active Youth Council and had appointed Youth Mayors for the past six years. The Leader congratulated the Youth Council for organising the Youth Mayor elections. Members were informed that Stevenage was the only authority in Hertfordshire that had a Youth Mayor.

Council was informed that following an election the Youth Council had nominated Ugonna Umunnakwe as the 2018/2019 Youth Mayor.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that Ugonna Umunnakwe be elected as Youth Mayor for the 2018/2019 Municipal Year.

In his acceptance speech the Youth Mayor stated that he was grateful to be offered the opportunity to represent the young people of the town and he thanked those that had supported him during his campaign. He added that he would focus on education, crime prevention awareness and enabling young people to make informed decisions.

6 **BOROUGH COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2018**

Council considered a report that detailed the results of the Borough Council Elections that were held on 3 May 2018.

The Leader thanked Scott Crudginton, Luke Fattorusso and the staff involved in the elections and welcomed new and re-elected Councillors to the Chamber.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the results of the Stevenage Borough Council Elections 2018 be noted.

7 **APPOINTMENT OF LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION**

The Chief Executive advised the Council that the Leader of the Opposition would be Councillor J Fraser and that Councillor P Bibby CC would be his deputy.

8 **APPOINTMENT OF LEADERS AND DEPUTY LEADERS OF THE POLITICAL GROUPS ON THE COUNCIL**

The Chief Executive advised the Council that Councillors S Taylor OBE CC, J Fraser and R Parker CC had been appointed as Leaders of the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups respectively. It was noted that Councillors Mrs J Lloyd, P Bibby CC and A McGuinness would be Deputy Leaders of the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups respectively.

9 **CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES**

Council had before it a report relating to the Member level decision making structure of the Council and the Council's Constitution for the 2018/2019 Municipal Year which had been circulated on the Supplementary Agenda.

The Leader of the Council clarified that Reports of each Scrutiny Body would be submitted to the Council for noting only (paragraph 4.19) and reference to the Leader being having the opportunity to respond should be deleted.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED**:

1. That the Terms of Reference, as detailed in the appendices to this report; and the size and political composition to be agreed in accordance with the rules of proportionality, where appropriate, for 94 of the Committee places, be approved for the following bodies that form the non-Executive Member level decision making structure of the Council:
 - Overview and Scrutiny Committee* (Appendix A) – 14 Members (9 Labour Group, 4 Conservative Group, 1 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - Community Select Committee* (Appendix B) – 10 Members (7 Labour Group, 2 Conservative Group, 1 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - Environment and Economy Select Committee* (Appendix C) – 11 Members (7 Labour Group, 3 Conservative Group, 1 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - Planning & Development Committee* (Appendix D) – 13 Members (8 Labour Group, 4 Conservative Group, 1 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - Licensing Committee (Appendix E) – 14 Members (8 Labour Group, 5 Conservative Group, 1 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - General Purposes Committee* (Appendix F) – 14 Members (8 Labour Group, 5 Conservative Group, 1 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - Appointments Committee* (Appendix G) - 8 Members (6 Labour Group, 1 Conservative Group, 1 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - Standards Committee* (Appendix H) – 8 Members (6 Labour Group, 1 Conservative Group, 1 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - Audit Committee* (Appendix I) – 8 Members (6 Labour Group, 1 Conservative Group, 1 Liberal Democrat Group) + 1 Co-opted non-elected member
 - Statement of Accounts Committee* (Appendix J) – 8 Members (6 Labour Group, 1 Conservative Group, 1 Liberal Democrat Group)

*Indicates where those bodies covered by the rules of proportionality for the purposes of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups), Regulations 1990 – total Committee places being 94

2. That the composition of the Executive and the Portfolios, details of which to be circulated at the meeting, be noted.
3. That the various Executive bodies appointed by the Leader, details of which to be circulated at the meeting be noted. The relevant Terms of Reference for each body are shown at Appendix K.
4. That Council approves the dates for Council meetings for the Municipal Year, as shown at paragraph 4.7 and notes the draft dates for other meetings as shown at Appendix L.
5. That Council appoints 5 Members to the Housing Management Advisory Board (4 Majority Group, 1 Opposition Member).
6. That it be noted that the Leader has given delegated authority to all Members regarding the spend of their £2,500 Local Community Budget and for the Youth Mayor's £3,300 Youth Community Budget.
7. That Council places on record its thanks to Brian Mitchell who has served as the Independent person on the Audit Committee since it was established in 2006. The appointment of the new independent person to serve on the Committee will be reported to Council in July.
8. That the proposed change to the Budget & Policy Framework Rules of the Council's Constitution, as set out in paragraph 4.13 – 4.1.5 be approved.
9. That the proposed additional delegations from the Planning & Development Committee to the Assistant Director (Planning & Regulatory) as set out in paragraphs 4.16 – 4.17 be approved.
10. That Standing Orders for Ordinary meetings of the Council be amended to include provision for the Chairs of Scrutiny Committees to provide a verbal update on their Committees' activities since the last ordinary meeting (up to 5 minutes per Chair).
11. That it be noted that the Leader has extended a standing invitation to Chairs of Scrutiny Committees to attend meetings of the Executive to present Minutes of their meetings when they appear on agendas.
12. That Members note the proposed arrangements for Executive Portfolio Holder Policy Advisory Groups to seek guidance and comment from relevant Scrutiny Members on policy proposals to be considered by the Executive (paragraphs 4.21 – 4.23 refers).
13. That the Executive and members of Executive Bodies are appointed for the 2018/19 Municipal Year as follows:

PORTFOLIOS

Deputy Leader and Resources - Councillor Mrs J Lloyd

Neighbourhoods and Co-operative Working - Councillor R Broom

Environment and Regeneration - Councillor J Gardner

Children, Young people and Leisure - Councillor R Henry

Communities, Community Safety and Equalities - Councillor Hollywell

Economy, Enterprise and Transport - Councillor R Raynor

Housing, Health and Older People - Councillor J Thomas

EXECUTIVE BODIES

JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (JCC) (EMPLOYER SIDE)

Councillors - Mrs J Lloyd (Employer Side Chairman), J Gardner, R Raynor and J Thomas.

APPEALS, GRIEVANCES AND LITIGATION COMMITTEE

Councillors - Mrs J Lloyd (Chairman), J Gardner, R Raynor and S Taylor OBE CC.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Councillors - J Thomas (Chair), R Broom, J Gardner, Mrs J Lloyd and S Taylor OBE CC.

STEVENAGE, NORTH HERTS., EAST HERTS. AND HERTSMERE JOINT CCTV COMMITTEE

Councillors - J Hollywell (Chair – when appropriate), Mrs J Lloyd and R Henry.

STEVENAGE AND EAST HERTS. JOINT EXECUTIVE REVENUES AND BENEFITS SHARED SERVICE COMMITTEE

Councillors - Mrs J Lloyd (Chairman – when appropriate), J Thomas, R Raynor and (J Hollywell – substitute)

10

APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL

Details of the individuals nominated to serve on each Committee had been circulated at the meeting.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED**:

1. That the membership of Committees, together with the Chairs and Vice Chairs where detailed, are appointed for the 2018/19 Municipal Year as follows:

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 Members (9-4-1)

Councillors – L Martin-Haugh (Chair), P Bibby CC (Vice-Chair), S Barr, J Brown, M Downing, J Fraser, J Hanafin, M Gardner, L Kelly, J Mead, S Mead, A Mitchell CC, R Parker CC and S-J Potter

COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE

10 Members (7-2-1):

Councillors – S Mead (Chair), A Mitchell CC (Vice-Chair), S Barr, J Brown, E Harrington, R Hearn, J Mead, S-J Potter, S Speller and T Wren

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE

11 Members (7-3-1):

Councillors – M Downing (Chair), M Hurst (Vice-Chair), L Briscoe, J Brown, D Cullen, J Fraser, L Kelly, A McGuinness, A Mitchell CC, S-J Potter and S Speller.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

13 Members (8-4-1)

Councillors – D Cullen (Chair), D Bainbridge, L Briscoe, L Chester, J Fraser, M Gardner, J Hanafin, E Harrington, L Kelly, G Lawrence, J Lloyd, M McKay and G Snell.

LICENSING COMMITTEE

14 Members (8-5-1)

Councillors – L Chester (Chair), D Bainbridge, S Barr, L Briscoe, M Downing, M Gardner, J Hanafin, R Hearn, M Hurst, E Harrington, G Lawrence, J Lloyd, M McKay and T Wren.

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

14 Members (8-5-1)

Councillors - L Chester (Chair), D Bainbridge, S Barr, L Briscoe, M Downing, M Gardner, J Hanafin, R Hearn, M Hurst, E Harrington, G Lawrence, J Lloyd, M McKay and T Wren.

APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

8 Members (6-1-1)

Councillors – S Taylor, OBE, CC (Chair), P Bibby CC, J Gardner, R Henry, Mrs J Lloyd, M McKay, R Parker CC, and J Thomas.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

8 Members (6-1-1)

Councillors – Mrs J Lloyd (Chairman), S Barr, P Bibby CC, J Lloyd, A McGuinness, M McKay, J Mead and S-J Potter. Independent Person who must be consulted on alleged breaches to the Code of Conduct - Dr. Robert Cawley – until July 2020.

AUDIT COMMITTEE

8 Elected Members (6 -1-1) + 1 Independent co-opted Member

Councillors – M McKay (Chair), H Burrell**, L Chester, D Cullen, J Gardner, G Lawrence, J Lloyd and G Snell. Vacancy - Independent, non-elected Member.

** - appointed after Annual Council

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

8 Members (6-1-1)

Councillors – Mrs J Lloyd (Chairman), P Bibby CC, R Henry, J Mead, S Mead, R Raynor, J Thomas and T Wren.

2. That 5 Members be appointed to the Housing Management Board as agreed at Item 9, resolution 5, as follows:

5 Members (4 Majority Group, 1 Opposition Member)

Councillors – S Barr, P Bibby CC, L Kelly, L Martin-Haugh and S-J Potter.

11 APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Council considered the list of individuals nominated to serve on Outside Bodies which had been circulated at the meeting.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the following individuals are appointed to represent the Council on the various bodies detailed below for one year, unless otherwise stated.

COUNCIL FOR THE PROTECTION OF RURAL ENGLAND THE
HERTFORDSHIRE SOCIETY - Portfolio Holder Environment and Regeneration

EAST OF ENGLAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION - The Leader of the
Council

EAST OF ENGLAND REGIONAL PLANNING - Portfolio Holder Environment and
Regeneration

HCC JOINT WASTE MANAGEMENT GROUP - Portfolio Holder Environment and
Regeneration

HERTFORDSHIRE INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING AND POLICY GROUP -
Portfolio Holder Environment and Regeneration

HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL AUTHORITIES LEADERS GROUP - The Leader of the
Council

HERTFORDSHIRE SUPPORTING PEOPLE COMMISSIONING BODY MEMBERS
OVERVIEW GROUP - Portfolio Holder Housing, Health and Older People

HERTFORDSHIRE SUSTAINABILITY FORUM STEERING GROUP - Portfolio
Holder Environment and Regeneration

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION - The Leader of the Council

RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY GROUP (COMMUNITY SAFETY) - Portfolio Holder
Safer Communities, Older People and Health

SOSTEVENAGE PARTNERSHIP - The Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader

STEVENAGE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP - Portfolio Holder
Communities (including Safer Communities) and Equalities

STEVENAGE LEISURE LIMITED (OBSERVER) - The Leader of the Council and
Portfolio Holder Children Young People and Leisure

AGE CONCERN STEVENAGE - Councillor J Lloyd

BEDWELL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION - Councillor L Harrington

BRAGBURY CENTRE - Councillor J Lloyd

CHELLS MANOR COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION - Councillor A McGuinness

DOUGLAS DRIVE SENIOR CITIZENS ASSOCIATION - Councillor J Lloyd

HOME-START STEVENAGE - Councillor J Gardner

KADOMA LINK ASSOCIATION – Councillors J Gardner and G Snell

LIVING ROOM PROJECT - Councillor J Hollywell

OLD STEVENAGE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION – Councillor J Brown

OVAL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION - Councillor L Briscoe

PIN GREEN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION – Councillor J Thomas

SHEPHALL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION - Councillor J Mead

ST NICHOLAS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION – Councillor S Barr

STEVENAGE WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE -Councillor Mrs J Lloyd

STEVENAGE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU – Councillor R Raynor

STEVENAGE COMMUNITY TRUST – Councillors R Henry and J Mead

STEVENAGE CREDIT UNION LIMITED - Councillor L Chester

STEVENAGE FURNITURE RECYCLING SCHEME - Councillor S-J Potter

STEVENAGE HAVEN - Councillor R Broom

STEVENAGE/AUTUN/INGELHEIM ASSOCIATION - Councillor R Henry and
S Speller

STEVENAGE WORLD FORUM FOR ETHNIC COMMUNITIES - Councillor J Gardner

SYMONDS GREEN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION - Councillor L Chester

TIMEBRIDGE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION – Councillor J Hollywell

TURN THE TIDE – Councillor L Kelly

EAST OF ENGLAND LGA IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY PANEL – Councillor R Henry

HCC HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - Councillor M McKay

LOCAL GOVERNMENT INFORMATION UNIT - Councillor M Downing

LUTON AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE - Councillor J Gardner

STEVENAGE CONSOLIDATED CHARITIES (FOUR YEAR PERIOD) - Councillors R Raynor (to 2020), C Latif (to 2020), M McKay (to 2021) and J Mead (to 2021).

MAYOR

Meeting: COUNCIL

Agenda Item:

Date: 25 JULY 2018

APPOINTMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT PERSON-AUDIT COMMITTEE

Author – Clare Fletcher (Ext 2933)

Lead Officer – Clare Fletcher (Ext 2933)

Contact Officer – Clare Fletcher (Ext. 2933)

1. PURPOSE

To appoint an 'Independent Person' in accordance with CIPFA best practice for the Audit Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Mr Geoff Gibbs be appointed as the Council's Independent Person for a term of four years, subject to satisfactory references.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Councillors will be aware that this Authority operates an Audit Committee, the committee's terms of reference reflect its responsibility to provide oversight of the authority's audit and governance arrangements.
- 3.2 Membership of the Audit Committee is agreed by Full Council. The Audit committee has one independent member in addition to those who are Councillors and that member has been in the role for over ten years.
- 3.3 In December 2013, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting ('CIPFA') updated its practical guidance on Audit Committees for local authorities and the police. That guidance considers the various elements necessary to ensure that authorities have the benefit of an Audit Committee which is balanced, objective and independent of mind as well as comprehensively well-equipped to discharge its role.
- 3.4 While Audit Committees in Welsh local authorities and Police Audit Committees in both England and Wales are subject to specific rules on composition, there are currently no statutory requirements in place to dictate the composition of audit committees in England. The recommendations in the guidance are therefore a matter of best practice only.
- 3.5 The guidance emphasises the degree to which adopting a non political, Un-invested approach to meetings and discussions is necessary to ensure the success of the Committee. This emphasis on the independent mindedness of the Committee informs all of the best practice.

- 3.6 Some of the positive reasons for co-opting independents include the potential to import in additional knowledge and expertise as well as the reinforcement of the committee's independence and political neutrality. The CIPFA guidance warns however against over-reliance on the independents by other committee members and indeed notes that where independents do not have organisational knowledge or context then this may impact adversely on the usefulness of their contribution.
- 3.7 Best practice recommends that the independent Member is;
- appointed for a period of no more than four years.
 - not a councillor or officer of the council or have been so in the preceding five years prior to appointment.
 - not closely associated with anyone who is now, or has been in the last five years a Councillor or employee of Stevenage Borough Council
 - does not have significant business dealings with the council.
 - politically neutral.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

- 4.1 An advertisement was placed in the Comet and on the Council's website in June 2018 for this role. Four applications were received and two candidates were interviewed by a panel comprising of the Assistant Director Corporate Services and Transformation, Assistant Director Finance and Estates, supported by the Chair of the Audit Committee as an observer.
- 4.2 Both the candidates would have been suitable but the panel considered the experience of Mr Gibbs meant that he was the preferred candidate and recommended that Mr Gibbs be offered the position of Independent Person.
- 4.3 Mr Gibbs is well qualified for this role, a qualified accountant with considerable expertise and a breadth knowledge from working in all three sectors – public, commercial and third (voluntary/charitable). He has been Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee of a £10m national charity based in Stevenage for the last 3 years. A Deputy Chair (currently Interim Chair) of the Board of Trustees of this advocacy organisation.
- 4.4 Before this Mr Gibbs was Deputy Chair for nine years of a £45m industrial and provident society provider based in Welwyn Garden City covering Herts, Essex and Beds. serving the maximum term of office for a trustee and in that time was Chair of all four Committees including Finance and Audit

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Financial Implications

5.1.1 The Members' Allowances Scheme includes provision of an allowance of £1,299 to the Independent Person. This is paid on a monthly basis pro-rata.

5.2. Legal Implications

5.2.1 This appointment is in accordance with the best practice.

5.3 Equalities Impact Assessment

5.3.1 The independent Member does not have the right to vote but is seen as a positive impact for the Audit Committee. The Committee is an advisory body only and as such no adverse Equalities impacts have been identified. The appointment is subject to satisfactory references.

5.3.2 The recruitment process was an open and transparent process with adverts placed in the Comet and on the Council's website.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

APPENDICES

None

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Meeting: EXECUTIVE
Portfolio Area: Community Safety
Date: 4 APRIL 2018

COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY 2018-21

Author – Sarah Pateman Ext. 2458
Lead Officers – Rob Gregory Ext. 2568
Contact Officer – Sarah Pateman Ext. 2458



1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider, for recommendation to Council, the draft Community Safety Strategy which outlines the emerging priorities of the SoSafe partnership for the next three years and which was considered by the Responsible Authorities Group (RAG) at its meeting on 5 February 2018.
- 1.2 The Council's Constitution includes the Community Safety Strategy as a Budget and Policy Framework item and as such the Overview & Scrutiny Committee were consulted on the draft Strategy post consideration by the Executive on 13 March 2018.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Council be recommended to approve the 2018-2021 Community Safety Strategy as appended to this report.
- 2.2 That Council be recommended to amend Article 4 of the Constitution to delete from the Policy Framework the Community Safety Strategy as this is no longer a statutory requirement (*Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011*¹).

3. BACKGROUND

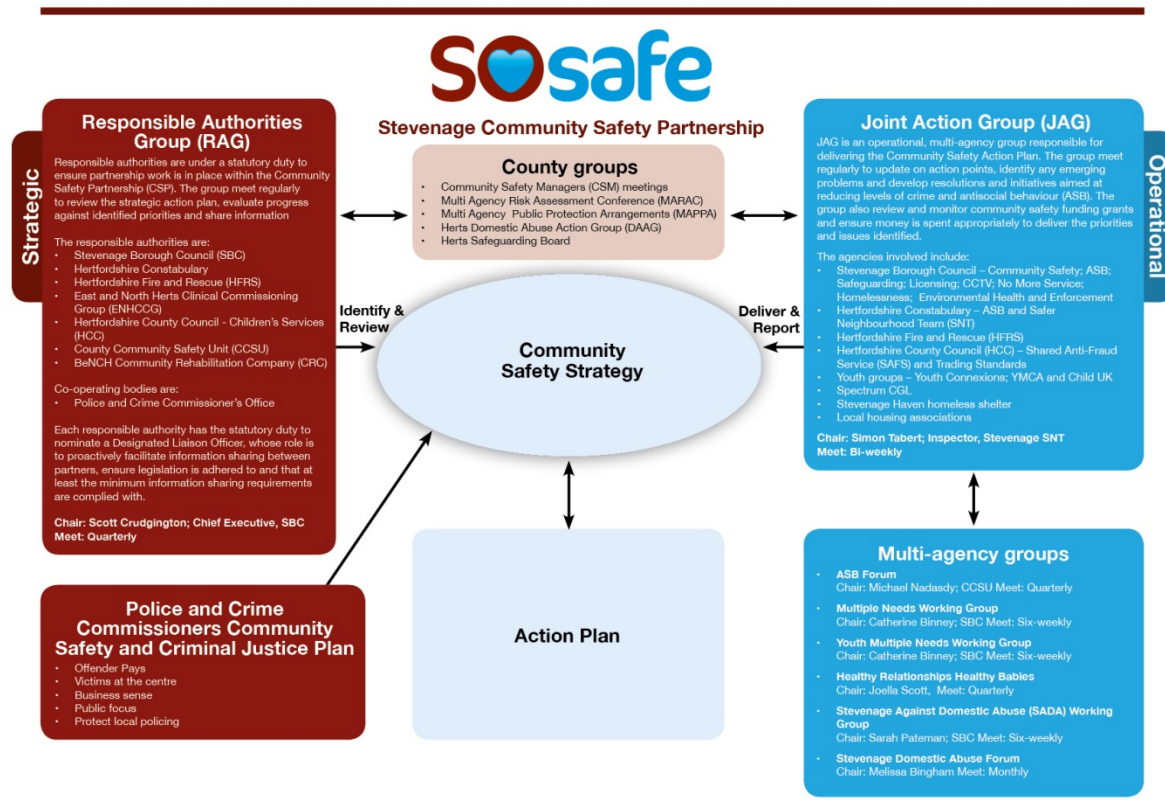
- 3.1 The town is rapidly changing and with a preferred developer MACE now on board to help take forward the town centre regeneration ambitions there will be much more change to come over the coming months and years. The population is growing and a broad cross-section of people have chosen Stevenage to live and work in. Stevenage continues to be a safe place to live and work. There are however, peaks in crime and anti-social behaviour, often through the sudden occurrence of a criminal activity, or a spate of connected incidents. The Council is aware through the most recent Residents Survey that people in some parts of the town feel troubled by youth nuisance and that

¹ *Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011* found at:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/13/contents/enacted>

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they are concerned about going out after dark. The Community Safety Partnership -SoSafe will work to address these issues working co-operatively with local communities.

- 3.2 The development of a strategy is central to the overall purpose of the Community Safety Partnership and is summarised in the diagram below.



- 3.3 This strategy will ensure that Stevenage, as a co-operative council, utilises its available resources in the most effective manner possible to deliver meaningful crime reduction outcomes. SoSafe is committed to building on progress achieved in recent years, and will strive to continue to drive down crime and disorder in Stevenage. In his most recent visit to the partnership in February 2018 the Police and Crime Commissioner recognised the strength and effectiveness of SoSafe as a community safety partnership.

- 3.4 Between 2015-2018 the partnership secured £132k of external funding to help it deliver on priorities and initiatives. This funding resulted in the delivery of some innovative projects including the SoSafe Youth Ambassadors, the Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) Traveller Project and various community reassurance events. In addition to this, the No More Service allotment successfully secured a £1,000 grant from the Tesco Bags for Help scheme and in February 2018 SADA won the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) Excellence in the Community award.

- 3.5 The ASB Team managed a number of complex cases that resulted in successful enforcement action being taken. This included re-possession of a nuisance property on the Absolute Ground for Possession, as well as a

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Property Closure Order on an address where drugs were being dealt that resulted in a high level of ASB for the residents.

- 3.6 Numerous partnership operations with the Police were undertaken such as regular residents' surgeries in tower blocks where there were reports of ASB and crime, have helped to reassure residents and encourage them to report ng nuisance behaviour.
- 3.7 During the year the partnership has engaged with residents on a number of occasions including the Domestic Abuse 16 Days of Action and Operation Night Owl which targeted drinking and the night time economy. The partnership has been instrumental in arranging training for front line staff, partners and volunteers; including tackling extremism, DA Awareness, Hate Crime Awareness Training, Safeguarding and Child Sexual Exploitation Training.
- 3.8 By properly engaging with the local community and working with them to shape the service offer it has been possible to increase the profile of the partnership and highlight the benefits of co-operative through the work of volunteers and partners and through mechanisms like the ASB forum. It has also been possible to highlight what can be achieved when resources are co-ordinated and strategically aligned in particular the outcomes achieved through SADA.
- 3.9 During November and December 2017, the SoSafe Partnership worked with local partners to shape the draft strategy. The themes for the strategy were further developed at consultation events in the town centre and via surveys shared with customers. There are a number of differences between the 2015/17 and 2018/20 community safety strategies. Notably, the overall aims have changed to focus on helping people to feel safe and to tackle perceptions of ASB and crime. This will be achieved by empowering residents to get involved and encouraging them to learn more about actual levels of crime and disorder in Stevenage. The 2018/20 strategy aims to safeguard the broader spectrum of vulnerable people beyond those who are victims of domestic abuse. ASB will be tackled with partners and the local community, working co-operatively. In the 2015/18 strategy, the No More Service set out to reduce harm to the individual/client, whereas the 2018/20 strategy is seeking to motivate clients to break the cycle of addiction themselves by understanding the impact their substance misuse has on the community, not just the individual.
- 3.10 The proposed strategy accompanies this report. It is suggested that, subject to agreement by Council to approve the strategy for implementation, it be adopted by the Responsible Authorities Group on 23 April 2018.
- 3.10.1 There are a number of key points that require consideration. These are set out in the following sections of the report and formulate the rationale upon which the recommendations are presented.

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4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

4.1 Local priorities for Stevenage

4.1.1 The draft Community Safety Strategy has gone through the necessary process and compiled based on evidence obtained from Police Performance Reports, the 2017 Residents Survey results, consultation with members of the public and partners and surveys completed by service users. The priorities identified are those that ranked highest, following the consultation.

From 2015-2018 the identified priorities were:

1. Helping to make People feel Safe
2. Reduce Crime and Disorder
3. Provide a Co-ordinated Response to Domestic Abuse
4. Tackle antisocial behaviour (ASB) with partners
5. Reduce harm caused by drugs and alcohol

The five key priorities identified for 2018-2021 are:

1. Helping to make People feel Safe
2. Reduce crime and Disorder
3. Protect and Safeguard Vulnerable People
4. Tackle antisocial behaviour (ASB) Co-operatively with partners
5. Break the cycle of substance misuse and offending

These priorities are underpinned by two overarching objectives to:

- Build Resilient Communities
- Work co-operatively with communities to help reduce fear of crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

4.2 Rationale for priorities

4.2.1 This strategy provides a framework for the activities and initiatives that the partnership delivers to improve community safety and community confidence in the town. Following consultation with members of the public and partners, this strategy identifies the priorities that SoSafe will focus on over the next three years. Whilst many of the priorities remain the same as in previous years there is a broadening focus on the wider safeguarding agenda. Domestic abuse remains a key area of focus within this arena, but alongside issues such as child sexual exploitation and human trafficking. The council also remains committed to a cooperative approach of working with communities across the town and this remains an underlying theme across all objectives.

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4.2.2 Alongside the strategy, a detailed action plan is produced each year, which shows how SoSafe will achieve its aims and objectives. It contains specific targets and is monitored, updated and reviewed regularly.

4.2.3 As the Co-operative Neighbourhood Management Programme progresses, there will be further opportunities to develop localised approaches to support delivery of the Community Safety Strategy at a neighbourhood level. For example it may be possible to deliver more targeted intervention in neighbourhood hot-spots, and/or to work with colleagues to design-out crime in planned neighbourhood improvement works. There will also be further opportunities to develop interventions with local neighbourhood-based community and voluntary organisations.

4.2.4 The Community Safety Strategy has been developed with due regard to the following:

- Public Consultation
- National Developments and Changes to Legislation
- Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) plan *Everybody's Business*
- Annual Strategic Assessment for Stevenage 2016/17
- County Community Safety Unit (CCSU) domestic abuse strategy and the Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse Strategy
- CCSU drugs and alcohol strategy
- National Probation Service Reducing Offending Strategy
- Historical and Current Crime Data.
- Residents Survey.

4.3 Strategic fit and context

4.3.1 The profile of the SoSafe partnership is of growing importance and it is increasingly being called upon to share best practice and co-operative ways of working. The responsibility to make Stevenage a safe place to live, work and visit is paramount to all SoSafe partners.

4.3.2 The Community Safety report was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 19 March 2018, the report was acknowledged by the Committee.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

5.1.1 The council will utilise existing resources to help tackle some of these issues, including its communications functions, its continued investment in CCTV and the work of its own community safety team. There is also recognition that a number of existing activities that are having a positive impact are reliant on time-limited funding, such as New Homes Bonus and other external funding resources. Decisions on the future of some of these services will need to be considered in relation to this. These funding challenges are also being

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considered through the Communities and Neighbourhoods Business Unit Review. The community safety strategy remains a partnership strategy for the town and the council will continue to work with other commissioners and funders such as Herts County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner, Government Departments and other funders to help lever in investment where possible.

- 5.1.2 There may be some match-funding or pump priming requirements related to progressing certain initiatives and projects. The SoSafe partnership Action Plan is developed annually as part of the final strategy and will highlight where resources will be required to support delivery of specific projects.

5.2 Legal Implications

- 5.2.1 Production of the strategy is a legal requirement of the community safety partnership. The Crime and Disorder Act 1988 (as amended by the Police and Justice Act 1996) requires the responsible authorities for an area to formulate and implement a strategy for the reduction of crime and disorder (including anti-social behaviour adversely affecting the local environment); combatting the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances and for the education of re-offending in the area.

5.3 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.3.1 The council is committed to providing high quality services that are relevant to the needs and responsive to the views of all sections of the local community, irrespective of their race, gender, disability, culture, religion, age, sexual orientation or marital status. The General Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) requires the council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in the exercise of its functions.
- 5.3.2 There is recognition that crime and ASB can disproportionately impact upon those with protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act. The 2017 Hate Crime Conference hosted by the council highlighted the potential for this to happen at a local level. SoSafe will strive to involve the community in the design and delivery of the interventions which tackle crime and drive down disorder and anti-social behaviour. Relationships will continue to be built with groups around the town, including those from different faiths, BME groups and the traveller community, our LGBT communities, women, girls and older people. It will be essential to ensure interventions meet specific needs for different parts of the community and are delivered in a meaningful and empowering way.

5.4 Risk Implications

- 5.4.1 The strategic commitment of key stakeholders in the development of the strategy has helped to mitigate key risks such as focussing on the wrong priorities or those over which the partners have little impact or influence. Risks

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will continue to be considered as interventions develop through the ongoing work of RAG.

5.5 Policy Implications

5.5.1 The strategy links into other key SBC policies including the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and the health and wellbeing strategy.

5.6 Staffing and Accommodation Implications

5.6.1 Posts within the Community Safety Team will be realigned to fit the strategic aspirations within the strategy through the Communities and Neighbourhoods Business Unit Review.

5.7 Human Rights Implications

5.7.1 The development of the strategy has taken into account human rights including a person's right to defend their rights in our courts and compels public organisations (including local authorities and the police) to treat everyone equally, with fairness, dignity and respect.

5.8 Service Delivery Implications

5.8.1 The strategy will influence and shape the work of the SoSafe Partnership and its delivery strands are clearly aligned back to the outcomes that are sought. This will also apply to the function of the Responsible Authorities Group that will oversee delivery of the strategy reporting to Stevenage Together.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Community Safety Strategy 2015/18

<http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/content/committees/117036/117040/117104/Council-25-Feb-2015-Item13-AppA.pdf>

APPENDICES

- Draft Community Stevenage Strategy 2018/21

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Community Safety Strategy 2018/21



Working Together to Make Stevenage Safer Community Safety Strategy 2018-21

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- Working Co-operatively with partners – **The Tower Blocks Action Plan**

Objective two – Reduce Crime and Disorder including Criminal Damage

- Being a volunteer - **What it means to be a Volunteer**

Objective three – Protect and Safeguard Vulnerable People

- Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse – **“The Safe Space”**

Objective four – Tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) co-operatively with Partners

- Intensive Family Support – **Sustaining Tenancies**

Objective five – Drugs and alcohol

- No More Service – **Sustaining Change**

Appendix One – (SADA) Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse Strategy 2017-2020

Appendix Two – Anti social Behaviour Promise

Appendix Three – No More Service Report

Foreword

I am pleased to present SoSafe's Community Safety Strategy for 2018/20. It outlines some of our successes, our priorities over the next three years and the actions we will take to address them.

Stevenage is a co-operative council that prides itself on collaborative working with partners and the community. SoSafe will continue to address the issues the residents, visitors and those that work in our town see as a priority, by involving you in the decision making and by consulting with you.

In future years, as in the past three years, our priorities are what the people of the town have told us they want to see us focusing on, including tackling crime such as domestic abuse and crime associated with drugs and alcohol.

The town is rapidly changing and is a growing, exciting, vibrant place with planned regeneration that is attractive to new businesses and new homes. Our population is growing and the town has a broad cross-section of people who have chosen Stevenage to live and work in. Stevenage continues to be a safe place to live and work, with lower the lowest dwelling burglaries in the County. There will naturally be peaks in crime and anti-social behaviour and we are aware that people in certain parts of the town feel troubled by youth nuisance and are concerned about going out after dark. SoSafe will work to address these issues and involve the communities in order to solve these problems.

There continues to be unprecedented pressures on public sector funding. This strategy will ensure that as a co-operative council we are utilising all available resources in the most effective manner to achieve value for money. SoSafe is committed to building on progress made in recent years, and will continue to drive down crime and disorder in Stevenage. Our partnership is unique, and encourages other partners to be part of SoSafe which is passionate about its people, the town, and creating safe environments for our communities.

Our aim for this strategy is to build safer, stronger and more confident communities. We will do this by decreasing crime and improving community safety. Over the following pages, we have captured actions that we have already completed, are doing, and will do in order to achieve this. I hope that by reading this strategy, you will see how SoSafe is working towards this aim for the benefit of all who live, shop and work in the town.

Scott Crudgington, Chair of SoSafe

Councillor Jackie Hollywell, Executive Member for Safer Communities

Introduction to SoSafe

SoSafe (Stevenage Community Safety Partnership (CSP)) is a strategic partnership, working to reduce crime and offending in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. It is made up of the following organisations:

- Stevenage Borough Council (SBC)
- Hertfordshire Constabulary
- BeNCH Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) (formerly Hertfordshire Probation)
- East and North Herts Clinical Commissioning Group (E&NH CCG)
- Hertfordshire County Council (HCC)
- Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS).

SoSafe is made up of key agencies that each bring their own unique specialism to the partnership. By working collaboratively with partners and our local communities, we have been able to make significant changes to the lives of those people who need support, guidance and advice, whilst tackling crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour.

This strategy provides a framework for the many activities and initiatives that the partnership deliver to improve community safety and community confidence in the town. Following consultation with members of the public and partners, this strategy identifies the priorities that SoSafe will focus on over the next three years.

Alongside the strategy, a detailed action plan is produced each year, which shows how SoSafe will achieve its aim and objectives. It contains specific targets and is monitored, updated and reviewed regularly.

The Community Safety Strategy has been developed with due regard to the following:

- Public Consultation
- National Developments and Changes to Legislation
- Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) plan *Everybody's Business*
- Annual Strategic Assessment for Stevenage 201/17
- County Community Safety Unit (CCSU) domestic abuse strategy and the Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse Strategy
- CCSU drugs and alcohol strategy
- National Probation Service Reducing Offending Strategy
- Historical and Current Crime Data.
- Residents Survey.

SoSafe could not achieve its objectives without help from the public. It is the duty of *all* citizens to play their part in making their communities safer. People can contribute by reporting crime and disorder, supporting criminal justice agencies, and by taking responsibility for their personal safety and the safety of others.

For ideas on other ways to get involved, please visit our website: <http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/about-stevenage/so-safe/>





Stevenage Community Safety Partnership

County groups

- Community Safety Managers (CSM) meetings
- Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)
- Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)
- Herts Domestic Abuse Action Group (DAAG)
- Herts Safeguarding Board

Joint Action Group (JAG)

JAG is an operational, multi-agency group responsible for delivering the Community Safety Action Plan. The group meet regularly to update on action points, identify any emerging problems and develop resolutions and initiatives aimed at reducing levels of crime and antisocial behaviour (ASB). The group also review and monitor community safety funding grants and ensure money is spent appropriately to deliver the priorities and issues identified.

The agencies involved include:

- Stevenage Borough Council – Community Safety; ASB; Safeguarding; Licensing; CCTV; No More Service; Homelessness; Environmental Health and Enforcement
- Hertfordshire Constabulary – ASB and Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT)
- Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue (HFRS)
- Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) – Shared Anti-Fraud Service (SAFS) and Trading Standards
- Youth groups – Youth Connexions; YMCA and Child UK
- Spectrum CGL
- Stevenage Haven homeless shelter
- Local housing associations

Chair: Simon Tabert; Inspector, Stevenage SNT
Meet: BI-weekly

Multi-agency groups

- **ASB Forum**
Chair: Michael Nadasdy; CCSU Meet: Quarterly
- **Multiple Needs Working Group**
Chair: Catherine Binney; SBC Meet: Six-weekly
- **Youth Multiple Needs Working Group**
Chair: Catherine Binney; SBC Meet: Six-weekly
- **Healthy Relationships Healthy Babies**
Chair: Joella Scott, Meet: Quarterly
- **Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) Working Group**
Chair: Sarah Pateman; SBC Meet: Six-weekly
- **Stevenage Domestic Abuse Forum**
Chair: Melissa Bingham Meet: Monthly

Community Safety Strategy

Identify & Review

Deliver & Report

Action Plan

Responsible Authorities Group (RAG)

Responsible authorities are under a statutory duty to ensure partnership work is in place within the Community Safety Partnership (CSP). The group meet regularly to review the strategic action plan, evaluate progress against identified priorities and share information

The responsible authorities are:

- Stevenage Borough Council (SBC)
- Hertfordshire Constabulary
- Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue (HFRS)
- East and North Herts Clinical Commissioning Group (ENHCCG)
- Hertfordshire County Council - Children's Services (HCC)
- County Community Safety Unit (CCSU)
- BeNCH Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC)

Co-operating bodies are:

- Police and Crime Commissioner's Office

Each responsible authority has the statutory duty to nominate a Designated Liaison Officer, whose role is to proactively facilitate information sharing between partners, ensure legislation is adhered to and that at least the minimum information sharing requirements are complied with.

Chair: Scott Crudginton; Chief Executive, SBC
Meet: Quarterly

Police and Crime Commissioners Community Safety and Criminal Justice Plan

- Offender Pays
- Victims at the centre
- Business sense
- Public focus
- Protect local policing

Strategic

Operational

Findings from Stevenage Borough Council 2017 Residents Survey

Almost 9 in 10 (88%) residents feel safe when outside in their local area during the day, and more than half of residents (52%) say that they feel very or fairly safe when outside in their local area after dark. Both of these figures, while still below the national average, are 5 percentage points higher than in 2015 – a statistically significant increase.

Residents who said that they felt very or fairly unsafe outside in their local area were presented with a list of potential issues and asked to select the issue that concerns them the most. Almost 9 in 10 (87%) residents selected 'Youths causing crime/disruption'.

Residents were then asked to rank their top three most important priorities from the previous list from 1 to 3, with 1 being the most important, 2 the second most important and 3 the third most important. A rank analysis of responses show that the top three priorities of Stevenage residents are:

1. A regenerated Town Centre and leisure park
2. A range of housing including affordable housing to buy or rent, and
3. Reducing current levels of crime and anti-social behaviour.

In 2015, the top three priorities of residents were very similar, although ordered differently:

1. Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour
2. A regenerated town centre, and
3. A range of housing including affordable housing to buy or rent.

These findings together with talking to residents and visitors to the town at our various events have helped us to determine what our SoSafe Aims and objectives are for the next three years.

Differences between 2015/17 and 2018/20 strategies

In comparison to the community safety strategy of 2015/18, the SoSafe aims have changed to improve our co-operative working with partner agencies and the community. As a partnership we want to empower the community to get involved and learn more about the actual levels of anti-social behaviour and crime in Stevenage, and give them the chance to get involved and be a part of the SoSafe partnership. The aim for the 2018/20 strategy is to change people's perception of youth crime and inform the community including schools and businesses what the facts are regarding crime and disorder, in comparison the 2015/18 strategy stated we wanted to help people feel safe at home, and while this is true we aim to involve members of the community and help them to feel safer in the town, especially after dark.

The 2018/20 strategy aims to protect and safeguard vulnerable people, including support for those who have experienced domestic abuse, but also our work to protect children and older vulnerable people. This has changed from the 2015/18 Strategy where the aim was to provide a coordinated response to domestic abuse. Through this work we have learnt that survivors of domestic abuse are key to the shaping the service, we need to ensure we continue to give them a voice. The multiple needs working group takes a coordinated approach to safeguarding clients, including those that would normally not be supported and the award winning Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse strives to deliver and share best practices.

Unlike the 2015/18 strategy, we aim to tackle anti-social behaviour co-operatively with partners, rather than the community alone. This will give us the ability to communicate with partners, problem solve with the community, share important information, and act early to prevent crime and disorder. The aim is to have positive activities to divert attention away from hotspot areas. By using our community safety ambassadors we will be able to look at problematic areas and find new ideas that will help reduce levels of youth crime. Since August 2016 we have been using the Public Space Protection Order to allow us to educate those causing anti -social behaviour and nuisance and where appropriate take proportionate enforcement action.

The aim for the next two years is to continue to offer support to break the cycle of substance misuse and offending. The No More Service offers 1 to 1 support to motivate clients to break the cycle themselves; resulting in a reduction of harm that substance misuse has on both the individual and the community. This is similar to the 2015/18 strategy however the aim is to work with clients to help them realise the impact that substance misuse and offending has on them as well as the community. By working co-operatively with clients, partners and the community we can make a real impact to the lives of those who have been affected by alcohol, drugs or offending.

SoSafe Aims

We have established two overarching aims for the 2015/18 strategy:

- **Building Resilient Communities**
- **Working co-operatively with communities to help reduce fear of crime and Anti-Social Behaviour**

SoSafe Objectives

Within SoSafe's overarching aims, we have established five key objectives:

1. Helping to make People feel Safe
2. Reduce crime and Disorder including Criminal Damage
3. Protect and Safeguard Vulnerable People
4. Tackle antisocial behaviour (ASB) Co-operatively with partners
5. Break the cycle of substance misuse and offending.



Monitoring and measuring our performance

The SoSafe Action plan and the commitment of the partners including volunteers is the key to delivering this strategy. As a co-operative council we are aware that we can achieve more by working together to deliver all of the activities that ensures SoSafe achieves its objectives and delivers the needs of the town.

The SoSafe partnership has to rely on existing resources and making additional funding applications.

Below is a list of Successful External Funding Bids:

Date Received	Monetary Value and who is delivering the project	How the Funding is used
February 2017	£107,000 (Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse)	A domestic Abuse Safe Space in Stevenage
April 2017	£3,000 (Community Safety & SoSafe partners)	Community Reassurance
October 2017	£3,000 (Community Safety)	Community Safety Ambassadors Program
January 2018	£10,000 (Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse)	Traveller Engagement Project
January 2018	£1,000 (No More Service)	The No More Service Allotment
March 2018	£9,000 (Community Safety Fly Tipping Task Force)	To tackle fly tipping in the town

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How we will measure performance

Performance indicators are agreed annually and reflect the agreed priorities and outcomes whilst taking into account the views of our customers from their engagement with us. We will set SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely), challenging targets and measure these four times a year to check that we are making progress, and report on the progress at out four weekly JAG (Joint Action Group) meetings with partners.

How we will monitor performance

To understand crime and associated disorder the partnership need to work together to address the underlying problems, effective crime reduction relies on the partnership working with our communities and listen to what and where our problems are. This helps us to direct partnership resources efficiently and effectively, to deliver services in the right place at the right time.

Crime trends are monitored regularly, and performance against our targets is reported to the Responsible Authorities Group (RAG). This group includes SoSafe's most senior managers and the elected councillor with responsibility for community safety. Additionally, elected councillors sit on a scrutiny committee which challenges SoSafe's performance. Hertfordshire's PCC is the public's elected representative for policing matters. As such, the PCC maintains strong links with the county's CSPs.

Objective One – Helping to make People feel Safe

What will we do?

A key focus in this strategy is engagement with Communities and groups who sometimes don't have the opportunity to get involved. Engagement will take place across the town at events and in other ways, including our different customer forums, residents meetings, through our partner agencies, surveys, social media, street meets and surgeries.

Crime and anti-social behaviour (which includes youth nuisance) remains one of the most widely perceived problems across Stevenage, although youth nuisance only made up 20% of the reported crime/ASB in the town for period July – September 2017, which incorporates the summer months, the perception is that the problem is a lot higher. With the help of our partner agencies, we want to keep people informed about the actual statistics relating to crime and ASB and address their perceptions. In a recent residents survey, members of the public were asked to rank their top three priorities for the town, one being the most important to three being the third most important. The public placed reducing current levels of crime and anti-social behaviour as the third most important. This being a massive change from the 2015 survey where tackling crime and anti-social behaviour was the most important priority.

We will target those areas that have told us that they have concerns for their safety we will engage with the community and the local businesses to change the perceptions regarding feeling secure when they are out and about in Stevenage. High visibility policing and co-operative working in neighbourhood centres, will continue and key operations such as Operation Night Owl, PSPO events and Street Meets will be promoting feeling safe at night.

To help with this, SoSafe is piloting a new programme for enthusiastic individuals to become Community Safety Ambassadors for Stevenage. The programme will provide a new and unique opportunity for young people to act as 'ambassadors' by delivering key community safety messages in Stevenage, whilst gaining valuable training and experience with a variety of agencies who work together to keep Stevenage safe. As an ambassador, successful applicants will be given the opportunity to:

- Take part in community safety, crime prevention and awareness projects
- Gain experience and training on a wide range of community safety issues
- Gain valuable work experience with a variety of public sector agencies
- Develop knowledge of how local services work together to keep the public safe
- Develop professional networks and enhance CV and employability skills

We will monitor our performance using these measures:

- perception surveys about the perception of crime and ASB
- feedback from Silver Street Meets, Operation Night Owl and other community engagement events
- Reaching different communities and groups of people for their views
- Raise awareness of success through our partnership.



What have we been doing?

<p>Community Engagement Events</p> <p>The partnership holds a number of events in and around the town including stalls in the town centre. We have held many engagement events to get people’s views including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Safety Events • Neighbourhood Watch • Operational Night Owl 	<p>Street meets and surveys</p> <p>As a partnership we organise regular multi-agency street meets in the community. Surveys with members of the community take place on a regular basis. Neighbourhood surveys help the partnership to understand the priorities of our customers;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silver Street Meets • Satisfaction Surveys • Neighbourhood Surveys • Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) 	<p>Customer Forums</p> <p>The partnership is actively encourages local residents to get involved to help shape our services;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) D A Forum • Anti-Social Behaviour(ASB) Forum • Residents Meetings • Resident Inspectors/volunteers
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From January 2017 to December 2017, we have carried out surveys with 56 complainants of anti-social behaviour regarding the service they received.

We have **supported 122 victims/survivors** of domestic abuse through Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse (SADA). Since June 2016

The No More Drugs, Alcohol & Offender Service was nominated for a national award and attended an awards ceremony on 8th November 2017.

Working Co-operatively – The Tower Block Action Plan

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Following complaints of drug use at The Tower Blocks during the summer months a problem solving partnership Action Plan was produced.

By working co-operatively with internal, external partners and the residents we were able to identify the property that was causing most of the issues. A number of regular surgeries were held, and residents were able to report their concerns to the Tenancy Advisor, local Police Officer, ASB Officer or the Wardens.

Since the introduction of the Action Plan and the co-operatively working reports of drug use in the area has ceased, and the property closed under a Closure Order.

Surgeries and street meets are continuing in the area and are principally around increasing reassurance and gathering any further intelligence from the residents of the Tower Blocks.

During the surgeries and street meets officers visit and leave questionnaires at addresses with no response.

Objective two – Reduce crime and disorder including criminal damage

What will we do?

We will use our partnership powers to deter and reduce all types of crime. We aim to disrupt and shut-down criminal individuals and groups who negatively impact on our communities, including those involved with drug dealing, child sexual exploitation (CSE) and serious organised crime (SOC). We will take a multi-agency approach to these crimes, appropriate to the level of threat.

We will manage persistent offenders, ensuring that appropriate interventions are provided to them and help them to access local services in order to prevent reoffending. We will deter potential offenders from entering the criminal justice system and support restorative justice (RJ), to ensure that criminals take responsibility for the harm caused to victims and the community.

We will monitor crime data for increases and emerging patterns. This will allow us to target specific locations and individuals, and coordinate appropriate preventative or enforcement action.

We will build relationships with health related agencies such as Lister Hospital, Mental Health services and local GPs, in order to help them identify the correlations between crime and health and allow all agencies to undertake their statutory duties effectively.

We will monitor our performance using these measures:

- **Rate of all crime**
- **Crime rates for burglary dwelling**
- **Crime rates for robbery**
- **Violent crime rate including Domestic Abuse**
- **Customer satisfaction surveys**
- **Outcomes for offenders subject to the integrated offender management (IOM) programme and SBC's No More Service.**

What have we been doing?

<p>Information Sharing</p> <p>We have devised partnership Action Plans to help tackle hot spots areas of anti-social behaviour. The Action Plan provides an excellent way of building up intelligence, and preventing situations from becoming more serious. We have used the professionals meeting and the Action Plans to identify vulnerable people quickly, and use our partnership networks to work co-operatively with partner agencies and the community</p>	<p>Co-operative Working</p> <p>We have been actively encouraging cross - boundary working with other housing providers and local authorities. We have carried out training with North Herts, East Herts and Stevenage Football Foundation. PREVENT (Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015) training has been carried out internally and offered to partners agencies. A public meeting was held at SBC by Trading Standards on Scams and Fraud</p>	<p>Volunteering and work experience</p> <p>Community Safety has a number of various roles which have been undertaken by volunteers including, being a resident inspector, a member of the ASB Forum or the SADA Domestic Abuse Forum</p>
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Information sharing has been instrumental to tackling crime, disorder and ASB in our town.

We have created a SoSafe partnership child sexual exploitation/modern slavery action plan in January 2018 following a Police priority setting meeting on December 4th 2017.

We are empowering volunteers to be part of the SoSafe partnership and represent us at events.

Being a Volunteer – What it means to be a volunteer

Being a volunteer and a member of the ASB Forum has meant that I get more of an insight into what is happening in my town. I have been part of the forum for a number of years after being involved in an ASB case. As a group we review the ASB in the town and work with the team to find solutions to stop nuisance. It is important that the residents have a say in what happens and that we feel empowered to be involved in developing the service and reviewing its policies and procedures. As a member we have attended various events and even visited the local courts to hear how cases are heard. This has given the group even more knowledge on how cases are processed and the other agencies that are involved. Members of the forum are from many different backgrounds and ages, this means we can look at things from different people's perspectives.

Objective three – Protect and safeguard vulnerable people

What will we do?

We will continue to raise awareness, informing the public about how and where they can report domestic abuse; empowering victims to come forward and seek advice from our dedicated Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) Team and the volunteers from the SADA Forum.

The SADA Working Group has been encouraging organisations to have a consistent approach to domestic abuse through training and attendance at the various SADA led groups. SADA has a multi-agency approach to tackling domestic abuse, focusing on the importance of having the appropriate measures in place to stop escalation by working with medium, standard or low-level cases.

Work has also been focused around changing the behaviours of perpetrators, either by working with partners including the Change Project which provides appropriate rehabilitative support. The No More Service which offers 1-1 support and focuses on offenders that may also have drug and alcohol problems, working closely with Families First and the For Baby's Sake team.

As an organisation, safeguarding is an essential part of our day- to-day role. We refer people to the Single Point of Access for support when they are in crisis including self-harm and suicide, request Welfare checks from the Police when we are concerned for their safety as well as hold emergency professionals meetings to create a multi-agency action plan. The Community Safety team have 5 Designated Safeguarding Officers, 1 Strategic Safeguarding Officer and 1 Family Intervention Worker. Co-operative working in this area has helped us to use the whole family approach to help sustain tenancies, get people back into training or work, improve school attendance and manage behaviour at home.

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The Multiple Needs Working Group allows partner agencies to refer vulnerable clients, or cases with safeguarding concerns to a panel of partner agencies from areas such as Mental Health, Families First, the Police, CAB, Probation, Housing, Adult Care Services, Children Services and Supporting Herts. The panel share information and look for ways to support the referee.

We will monitor our performance using these measures:

- Rates of domestic abuse
- Outcomes for clients referred to Herts Change perpetrator programme and the No more Service
- Outcomes for clients referred to the SADA Domestic Abuse Panel, referred to the service for support, crisis intervention and referrals to the Safe Space
- Monitoring outcomes of any domestic homicide reviews (DHR), especially in relation to the CAADA (Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse) DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking & Honour Based Violence) risk assessment and its use by partners.

What have we been doing?

<p>Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) Following the introduction of the service in 2012, SADA has completed some ground breaking work including the introduction of a domestic abuse forum managed, by survivors of domestic abuse in Stevenage and a SADA Panel meeting which discusses medium, standard and low-risk cases of domestic abuse with partner agencies. The SADA strategy, which was collated by the partners of SADA working group, is supported by a local and county-wide Action Plan (appendix Two).</p>	<p>For Baby's Sake For Baby's Sake is a programme for expectant parents, whether they are together as a couple or not, who want to bring an end to domestic abuse and create the best possible start in life for their baby. They also help both mums and dads to create a positive future for their baby and any other children in the family.</p>	<p>Herts Change We have secured the Change Project for Stevenage for a further twelve months and have clients from the No More Service that are due to commence training to help deliver the programme. Referrals from agencies or a self – referral can be made to the programme which helps to break the cycle of offending, helping them to develop a better understanding of the detrimental long-term impact that their actions have on their families.</p>
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The SADA DA panel discussed 76 medium/low cases since April 2017.

Rebecca Butterworth from Baby's sake received one of the No More community awards for the Outstanding Contribution to the Community Award in December 2017.

The Herts change project runs weekly in Stevenage and funding has been applied to continue until March 2019.

Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse – “The Safe Space”

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Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse set up the fully equipped flat where victims can rest and seek advice and help while they work out how to go forward with their lives.

One of the first women to use the flat told the Comet her story:

She said: “I was referred through work because I had concerns about a family member with mental health problems.

“The police were involved and it got to the point where it felt unsafe in the property.

“Having that bit of time out gave me a chance to get out of the situation with my daughter and get my own thoughts together without fear of violence.

“SADA talked to me about the problems I had and showed me to the flat.

“It gives you that place to go when there is nowhere else.

“You can get a decent night’s sleep and feel safe.

“My situation has now improved with the support of other services

“SADA are still there if I need them. It’s a lot better knowing there is someone there to talk to if something happens.

“The staff were very helpful and the flat was absolutely brilliant, a really lovely place where you can have a break from things.”

Objective Four - Tackle Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Co-operatively with partners

What will we do?

We will communicate with our partners and share information; we will act early and prevent problems from escalating, taking the proportionate enforcement action where problems persist. We will target hotspot areas and repeat offenders of all ages, working co-operatively with partners to divert young people away from anti-social behaviour. As a partnership we will support positive activities away from hot spot areas and encourage our youth ambassadors to get involved in problem solving, encouraging new ideas for diverting young people away from causing a nuisance in the community.

As part of the Families First initiative we, support the needs of the whole family; this could include working with schools, local police, Youth Offending Team, YC in Herts, Children Services, this is necessary to address bad behaviour and supporting positive activities instead. As a partnership we support the whole families and those individuals whose behaviour affects the wider community.

We will tackle alcohol and drug fuelled ASB, making full use of our ASB tools and powers such as Community Protection Notices, Property Closure Orders and Fixed Penalty Notices. Within the Community Safety Team, there are 5 police accredited officers who have the designated power to issue notices. SBC also has 3 accredited neighbourhood wardens and an Environmental Enforcement Officer.

We will plan at the Joint Action Group with our SoSafe partners specific operations around seasonal fluctuations in ASB, especially around Halloween, Bonfire Night and the summer holidays; utilising multi agency bicycle patrols and high visibility partnership patrols.

We will use our powers to enforce against environmental crime offenders, including on the spot penalty notices, and will proactively investigate and prosecute perpetrators of fly tipping.

We are currently updating our mobile CCTV cameras which the partnership has available to help with stopping and prosecuting offenders that are causing ASB, committing crime, or fly tipping in our town.

We will monitor our performance using these measures:

- **rates of ASB incidents**
- **rates of criminal damage**
- **rates of deliberate fire**
- **customer satisfaction surveys and consultation**



What have we been doing?

PSPO Public Spaces Prevention Order

Stevenage's PSPO came into force on the 15 August 2016. The PSPO replaced Existing Designated Public Place Orders (DPPOs) in Bedwell/Town Centre and The Hyde (Shephall), with the addition of zoned areas around The Oval (Pin Green) and the Old Town High Street. These areas were identified by partners from SoSafe as problematic areas for anti-social behaviour in Stevenage.

Family Intervention (Families First)

Within the team is a FIP worker who is part-funded by SBC and Families First. The worker supports families, some that may be at risk of losing their homes because of ASB, rent arrears, or other circumstances. The Key worker, coordinate a unique team of individuals to work closely with all members of the family. The positive impact on the community, due to this intervention, can be significant. Family members feel empowered and some have gained training, sustained their tenancies and found work.

The Youth Ambassadors Project

The youth ambassadors were interviewed and recruited from North Herts College and John Henry Newman School, they will help to promote information and offer advice on how to report crime and increase feelings of safety for residents and visitors to Stevenage. Following their training they are able to give tailored information for people with complex needs.

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Partnership events take place every quarter in the designated PSPO areas. We have held events every quarter since 15th August 2016.

The Family Intervention worker is co-funded by Families First and Hertfordshire County Council. The pilot project started in 2009 and is now co-funded until 2020.

The ambassadors are running their first event on 21st February 2018.

Intensive Family Support – Sustaining tenancies

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This tenant was originally known to the ASB team due to nuisance in the area where she resided. The nuisance caused a problem in the street, with parties in the garden, friends shouting, loud music, dog nuisance and visits from the police concerning her partner at the time. The residents in the street made visits to the council offices and the local police to lodge complaints on a daily basis. Initially we worked with the police and the residents to gather evidence for the case and the tenant was served with an Acceptable Behaviour Agreement and a Notice of Seeking Possession. The tenant attended meetings on a weekly basis with the ASB Team and family Intervention worker; we put in strategies to help her manage her tenancy and helped her to put in boundaries for her son and stopping her ex-partner and friends from causing a nuisance. The tenant has worked hard to implement the strict guidelines and began to meet her goals; the nuisance complaints slowed down and eventually stopped.

The tenant has made positive changes to turn her life around and has been attending a 6 week parenting programme; she has attended all of her appointments with her support worker from the family intervention and has taken responsibility for her own actions, by working with all the agencies including the police and the school.

Objective Five – Break the cycle of substance misuse and offending.

We will continue to support people to break the cycle by putting practical solutions in place to tackle issues that cause or exacerbate substance misuse or offending. By the No More Service (NMS) helping clients to do this, we will reduce the impact of drugs, alcohol and crime have on the individual and the community. We work alongside enforcement agencies to take a collaborative approach to stop reoffending, through deterrents and reintegration to the community, including attending Prolific and Priority Offender meetings and MAPPA meetings (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements). The ethos of the No More Service is by improving the person's self-worth and helping them to earn something positive such as housing or a role in the community, this will enable and motivate them to break the cycle of crime or substance use.

Page 50 We will publicise the work and successes of the Service to other agencies, in order to increase knowledge of the service and number of referrals. We produce an annual report on the service, demonstrating the humanistic impact of the service to the community and case studies from clients to show the improvement to their own lives. We also calculate the predicted saving to services including the Council, Police, Probation and HFRS. We are going to be calculating the predicted saving to the NHS, Children's services, prison and the courts. We continue to apply for funding to be able to continue to provide the service, as we demonstrate the cost effectiveness of assisting people to make sustainable changes to their lifestyle, rather than short term solutions to manage their risk.

We will continue to seek innovative approaches to reduce the harm of drugs and alcohol on the community. This includes looking into the application of the initiatives to reduce the availability of cheap, high strength alcohol. We will continue to support clients to overcome the barriers created by crime and substance use, including pathways out of homelessness,

We will monitor our performance using these measures:

- Assessing the reduction in risk to the individual and the community
- Calculating the predicted cost saving made to the public by engaging clients
- Number of referrals and agencies providing these.

What have we been doing?

Engaging people

We continue to adapt our practices to meet and engage hard to reach clients, that may have 'fallen through the net' or been deemed as 'entrenched and unchanging'. We meet with people whilst in prison, so they can set their goals for what they want to do when they are released and understand how they can achieve these. We also offer to attend joint appointments with other professionals they are already working with. We also offer same day appointments to people, so they can get access to help as soon as possible, once they have decided they want to make a change to their life.

Celebrate client success

NMS hosted the community awards ceremony in December 2017 which celebrated the success and achievements of our clients. This included some of our clients who have gone onto start volunteering, abstained/reduced their drug and alcohol use and a prolific burglar who hasn't been arrested for almost two years.

Develop innovative approaches

By listening to our client's needs, we aim to develop new ways of engaging them to overcome barriers.

The stick with us project encourage clients to express their goals and life experiences by making collages within a group setting.

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475% increase in No More referrals from September 2012 – August 2013 to April 2016 – March 2017

£129,863.11 is the predicted saving to SBC, Police and HFRS for the clients referred for intensive support between April 2016-March 2017.

96% of clients sustained housing or gained housing after being of no fixed abode.

88% of clients have no ASB case following closure from NMS.

In May 2014, I was still on a methadone programme with CRI, using as much heroin as I could get hold of on top of this and I had to move out of my partner's Council flat. At this point I was referred to the No More Project.

I had previously thought about following my partner when she passed away, especially when I was faced with being made homeless again (having given up my room to move in to become my partner's carer). However, my No More support worker helped me by looking at all my options to prevent this from happening and I was able to move into my own council flat.

My support worker never lost their temper, was pig stubborn, understood my grieving and was always there when I needed them. They spent time to explain things, in terms I could understand, like explaining letters I got sent from the Council and other agencies. When they said they were going to do something, they would make the time to actually do it. They came back to help me even when I got annoyed. Whilst working on the No More Project it was the first time I had seen two agencies speak to each other, it had previously taken me ages to get the GP to speak to Cri but it only took my support worker ten minutes.

I have not used heroin since October 2014, since working with the Project. I finished my methadone programme in November 2015 and I have no desire to use drugs.

I still get texts from dealers but I just ignore them. I have completed grief counselling and I am taking my anti-depressants. Stopping heroin and methadone was easier to cope with than dealing with the pains of everyday life that came back once I stopped using drugs. My flat has no rent arrears and has had no reports of anti-social behaviour since I moved in. I have plans for the future and want to get a motorbike so I can visit my boys, as I have a good relationship with them now.

Appendix

- No More review report
- Domestic abuse strategy
- Our Achievements

List of acronyms

ASB	Anti-social Behaviour
A&E	Accident & Emergency
BeNCH CRC	Bedfordshire, Norfolk, Cambridge and Hertfordshire Community Rehabilitation Company (formerly Hertfordshire Probation)
BME	Black and minority ethnic
YC in Herts	Youth provision in Stevenage
CAADA DASH	Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse: domestic abuse, stalking and honour based violence (risk assessment tool)
CCSU	County Community Safety Unit
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
Class A drugs	Heroin, methadone, cocaine, crack, ecstasy, LSD and amphetamines
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CSP	Community Safety Partnership
DA	Domestic Abuse
SADA	Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse
DHR	Domestic Homicide Review
E&NH CCG	East & North Herts Clinical Commissioning Group
FIP	Family Intervention Project
HBV	Honour Based Violence
HCC	Herts County Council
Herts Change	Domestic abuse perpetrator rehabilitation programme
HFRS	Herts Fire and Rescue Service
IOM	Integrated Offender Management
JAG	Joint Action Group
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
LIFE	Local Intervention Fire Education

LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
NMS	No More Service
NPS	New Psychoactive Substances
NTE	Night Time Economy
OPCC	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
OWL	Online Watch Liaison
PCC	Police and Crime Commissioner
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
RAG	Responsible Authorities Group
RJ	Restorative Justice
SADA	Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse
SARA	Scanning, analysis, response and assessment
SBC	Stevenage Borough Council
SMART	Specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, timely
SNT	Safer Neighbourhood Team
SOC	Serious Organised Crime
SoSafe	Stevenage community safety partnership
SoStevenage	Stevenage local strategic partnership

Meeting: COUNCIL
Date: 25 JULY 2018

ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2017/2018

Author – Stephen Weaver (on behalf of the Scrutiny Members) Ext.No. 2332
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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To report on the work undertaken by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Select Committees during the 2017/18 Municipal Year and to outline the Work Programme for the three Committees for 2018/19.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the work undertaken by Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Select Committees during 2017/18 be noted.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000 Overview and Scrutiny's role is to operate as an independent function of the Council's decision making process, by having overview of the Council's decision making, holding the Executive to account, having the power to "call in" decisions for reconsideration and undertake internal and external scrutiny reviews.
- 3.2 The Council's Constitution requires that there be an annual report to Council on the scrutiny activity over the past Municipal Year (see Article 6.3 of the Constitution).
- 3.3 This report is a retrospective look at the scrutiny review work undertaken by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the two Select Committees during the 2017-18 Municipal Year.
- 3.4 In accordance with the Constitution the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was also charged with scrutinising the Executive's proposals on Budget & Policy Framework items that go before Council for decision. In addition the Committees considered updates on Scrutiny studies that had been undertaken previously, examining the progress of recommendations and where appropriate following up on matters raised.
- 3.5 The Committees have also worked with their relevant Executive Portfolio Holders on a number of separate policy development meetings developing

policies and considering reports before their submission to the Executive. This report, however, focuses on the Committees' Scrutiny role.

4. SUMMARY OF SELECT COMMITTEE REVIEWS FOR 2017/2018

4.1 Each Select Committee review made formal recommendations to the relevant Executive Member, officers and external partners. The following is a summary of the outcomes of each scrutiny review.

4.2 Community Select Committee – Review of Housing Allocations

4.2.1 In conducting this review the Community Select Committee met on 5 occasions and received written and oral evidence from the following people:

- Walter Oglina, Empty Homes Manager
- Jaine Cresser, AD for Housing
- Theo Addae, Interim Housing and Homeless Manager
- Peta Caine, Housing Operations Manager
- Jeannette Thomas, Executive Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Older People
- A tenant who had recently moved from sheltered accommodation to a general needs bungalow
- Elayne Crisp, Lettings Advisor
- Denis Panter, Compliance Manager (for Gas compliance)

4.2.2 The review focused on the following issues:

- Establish whether the allocations policy is effective in housing residents according to the premise that members of each band and group are being given the opportunity of housing.
- Establish whether the letting process is dealing accordingly with housing needs – evidence should be presented to the Committee to show where the process is effective and where it is not.
- Establish whether all housing is priority need - in 2014/15, the Council promised the residents, if they remained on the list, that every section of the list should expect to be housed and anyone who wasn't going to be housed was taken off of the list. Has this happened?
- Establish whether the housing offered is fit for habitation and meets the needs of the resident (including sheltered housing – i.e. is sheltered housing being used appropriately).
- Establish whether owners have moved into council housing through the scheme which allows people to do so.
- Identify any additional problems with allocations in order to inform changes needed to the policy.
- Establish what Gas safety checks are carried out for new tenants

4.2.3 The review made 10 separate recommendations on the above themes. The Executive Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health & Older People has provided

the Community Select Committee with a response to the review recommendations, which the Committee considered on 5 June 2018.

4.2.4 In summary the review recommended:

- Staff training to ensure consistency of service regarding advice when moving between properties, more support offered to tenants with literacy needs or language problems
- Consider the provision of shared accommodation for the under 35s who will be impacted by the Housing Benefit Cap (the proposed cap was subsequently dropped by the government)
- Priority be given to under occupiers wishing to downsize, to include co-ordination with over occupiers, and where a move is possible, a realistic timeframe be established
- A review of the local connection criteria for persons moving into areas close to the Borough whilst on the housing waiting list.
- Make alternative and improved use of hard to let sheltered accommodation to improve voids
- Establish a communications campaign to help 'myth bust' and liaise with Members and revisit the terminology used in all forms of communication with bidders to be clear and help manage expectations
- Stop the current practise of automatically informing bidders where their bid was within the top 50 bids, and that a narrative be used on the bidding website to explain the scenarios that are likely to result in multiple unsuccessful bids over a long period of time.
- An up-to-date gas check be completed for new tenancies and the gas to be approved and fully working prior to the tenant moving in. In the instances that a 'one-off' exception occurs, the tenant should be offered a suitable reduction in rent for the duration of not having a working gas supply
- That an annual statement detailing allocations per band as a percentage of total allocations be published.
- That officers consider engaging a third party energy comparison partner such as Energy Angels to help tenants get the best energy deal

4.2.5 The Executive Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Older People provided the Community Select Committee with a response to the review recommendations, which the Committee considered on 5 June 2018. The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Older People accepted 8 of the reviews 10 recommendations but with regard to recommendation 7 the Portfolio Holder was of the view that not advising bidders of their position may lead to further suspicion over transparency so this recommendation was not agreed. With regard to recommendation 8 referring to Gas Checks this recommendation was not agreed to as it was considered that current checks were sufficient and the recommendation if accepted could lead to potentially longer periods without a gas supply in properties.

4.3 Community Select Committee sitting as the Council Statutory Crime & Disorder Committee

4.3.1 The Committee considered performance of the Responsible Authority Group, SoSafe Community Safety Partnership against the Community Safety Action Plan and the emerging priorities for 2018-19 on 27 March 2018.

4.3.2 The Committee interviewed the Chair of the Responsible Authorities Group (SBC CE) Scott Crudginton, Exec Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Cllr Jackie Hollywell, Sarah Pateman, SBC Anti-Social Behaviour & Community Safety Manager and Hertfordshire Constabulary, Chief Inspector Simon Tabert and asked questions and made comments on the following issues:

Drugs; knife crime and engagement of young males and gangs.

4.3.3 Members sought clarification on the priorities for 2018/19, cuts to funding for policing and crime statistics. Members provided further challenge regarding the following issues: details on the compilation of the crime league tables; Herts Constabulary to provide a narrative to the crime statistics to provide clarity on successes and shortcomings of local policing and Herts Constabulary to engage more young males in crime prevention programmes.

4.4 Other Scrutiny review items considered by the Community Select Committee – (i) Private Rented Sector and (ii) Rough Sleepers (iii) Update on Fire Safety in High Rise Residential Buildings (iv) Sustainable Transformation Partnership (v) Excellent Council Homes programme

4.4.1 (i) The Community Select Committee revisited the review into the local Private Rented Sector Housing to see what progress there had been with regards to the original recommendations. Members will continue to monitor progress of supporting resident involvement groups; keeping links with the National Landlords Association; new tenant advice and training; officer advice available to all tenures; support for a landlord forum and investigation into a social lettings agency. (ii) The Committee also received a presentation on Rough Sleepers where Members questioned the Council's policy and moving homeless individuals into the Haven and how they transition into independent living. (iii) The Committee also considered the steps that Housing officers had undertaken regarding fire safety procedures and checks in high rise residential buildings in line with a national response in local government to the Grenfell tower fire. (iv) The Committee met with health colleagues from the Hertfordshire and West Essex Sustainable Transformation Partnership to hear about how STPs are developing and what role district councils can play. (v) The Assistant Director Housing and Investment provided Members with an update on the Excellent Council Homes programme, which Members welcomed and would continue to monitor progress in this area.

4.5 Environment & Economy Select Committee – Review of the Indoor Market

4.5.1 In conducting this review the Environment & Economy Select Committee met on five occasions undertaking a review of the Indoor Market as well as two site visits and received written and oral evidence from the following people:

- Market Traders Association Committee Members
- Market Trader Clubman Hairdressers
- Market Trader Mandy's Café
- Market Trader Oyoyo and Zap Intelligent Solutions
- Market Trader DC Collectables
- Market Trader Lenny's Fresh Fish
- Peter Turvey, NABMA (National Association of British Market Authorities)
- Tina Benson, Stevenage Town Centre Manager
- Councillor Mrs Joan Lloyd, Executive Portfolio Holder for Resources
- Tom Pike, Strategic Director
- Carlo Perricone, Garages and Markets Manager

4.5.2 The review considered the following issues:

The need for Market Research; Economic Background; Current Location; Possibility of alternative venues; Needs of Market Traders; Parking Charges; Voids; Access through Boots and Wilkinsons; Improved signage and pedestrian access to the market; Links to Town Centre events and the Town Centre Manager; Current governance arrangements and possible future options; Site visit to Luton Market and Equalities & Diversity issues.

4.5.3 The review made one principle recommendation, nine separate short term and three long term recommendations on the following themes:

Principle recommendation:

- That there be an independent external market research carried out on the needs of local people for a market

Short term recommendations:

- Lobby the two stores Boots and Wilkinson to restore the rear access of their stores
- If the long term plan is to remain at the current location upgrade the pitches and signage
- Make traders keep to the agreed operating times
- Look at further varying the parking charges to incentivise shoppers
- Link events and communications better with the Town Centre Manager
- Encourage a wider diversity of traders and from other markets, with staggered rent for new market traders
- Make uses of void spaces

Long term recommendations:

- Look for an alternative location within the town centre regeneration plans
- Acquire the freehold of a smaller unit in the town centre to create a new smaller market
- Approach an independent company to administrate the market on a commercial basis for the Council

4.5.4 The Executive Portfolio Holder for Resources provided the Environment & Economy Select Committee with a response to the review recommendations, which the Committee considered on 21 March 2017. The Portfolio Holder for Resources accepted a number of the above recommendations and would continue to seek more affordable options in respect of further market research, but expressed concern over the feasibility of long term recommendations 2 and 3 at this stage.

4.6 **Other Scrutiny review matters considered by the Environment & Economy Select Committee**

4.6.1 In addition to the above main review the Environment & Economy Select Committee also undertook scrutiny review work into the following issues which Members made comment on and are being responded to by Officers:

- Stevenage Bus Service
- Flood Risk Management
- Executive Portfolio response to Allotments review
- Hertfordshire Waste Partnership Annual Report

4.7 **Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

4.7.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on 11 occasions to provide overview of the work of the Executive, specifically looking at all Key Decisions made by the Executive and all Budget and Policy Framework items. In addition to these meetings the Committee also considered the following issues:

- Sitting as a Select Committee – Complaints and Feedback Review on 28 June and 20 September 2017, where the Committee received a presentation, agreed a scoping document and interviewed witnesses. The review is not yet complete and has been included in the Committees 2018-19 Work Programme
- LGA Peer Review Feedback Consultation was considered by the Committee on 8 February and 8 March 2018. The Committee met David Holdstock, Director of Communications at the Local Government Association to interview him on the Peer Review findings and recommendations which the Committee endorsed and added their own recommendations to the Executive regarding youth engagement and improved resident engagement and consultation

5.0 2018/2019 Scrutiny Work Programmes

- 5.1 The two Select Committees have agreed their outline Scrutiny work programmes for the 2018/19 Municipal Year:

Community Select Committee:

Effectiveness of Resident Engagement by Stevenage Borough Council – This will be the main review item

Third Sector in Stevenage - to be considered as a one-off item e.g. presentation to Committee revisiting the review Members had previously undertaken

Stevenage Leisure Limited (SLL) – to be considered as a one-off item to look at the outcome of the independent consultants review into SLL

The Community Centres' Review taken as a policy development item
Neighbourhood Planning

Crime and Disorder Committee (Statutory Committee)

Public Health Meeting (Standing Item)

Environment and Economy Select Committee:

District Plan Regeneration - as a discussion item at P&D Committee

Reimagining Fairlands Valley Park

Update on refurbishment of Middle Row and other public toilets

Review on Licence to Occupy procedures - to the Committee for consideration

Cycling strategy briefing for Members

5.2. Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme:

- 5.2.1 In addition to undertaking all scrutiny of Budget & Policy Framework items and decisions of the Executive, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the capacity to undertake a "Select Committee" style meeting during the year if it so wishes. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has agreed to sit as a select Committee to consider the following items:

Complaints/Feedback Handling continuation of the review

Scrutiny of the Scrutiny function at SBC

Sickness Management as part of a Member and Customer focus group

- 5.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will review the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions and also consider all 'Call-in' requests in accordance with the Council's Constitution as well as considering any Councillors Call for Action in relation to matters relating to Resources and any Petition appeals, in accordance with the Councils Petition Scheme, regarding matters relating to Resources or of a Corporate or Council wide nature.

5.4 Scoping reviews

5.4.1 A schedule of meetings for the two Select Committees has been arranged for the 2018-19 Municipal Year. These meetings will incorporate the scoping of the review where Members will identify the areas they wish to cover during the review, who to interview, what evidence/background information is required and which Members will lead the questioning on a specific area, as well as undertaking site visits, where appropriate. Meetings will also be arranged to revisit previous reviews to monitor actions.

5.5 The following items have been agreed for monitoring by the two Select Committees:

Community Select Committee – (i) Revisit the recommendations for the review into Decent Homes Review; and (ii) Revisit the recommendations for the review into Damp and Mould in Stevenage Homes

Environment & Economy – (i) Monitoring of the Indoor Market Review.

5.6 **New clerking arrangements for Portfolio Advisory Groups (Policy Development Meetings)**

5.6.1 The Policy Development meetings will be undertaken as and when requested by Executive Portfolio Holders in consultation with Assistant Strategic Directors and will be referred to as Portfolio Advisory Groups. These meetings will now be clerked by Constitutional Services Officers.

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial Implications

There is a budget of £1,500 to support study activities, site visits and specialist advice and training where necessary.

6.2 Legal Implications

Any legislative changes during the 2017-18 Municipal Year, will be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the relevant Select Committee(s).

6.3 Equalities and Diversity Implications

Equalities and Diversity issues are considered at the scoping stage of each Scrutiny review with regards to questioning of witnesses and the collection of oral and written evidence. Also E&D issues are addressed in the final report for each review.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Local Government Act 2000

Individual agendas and study material for each Scrutiny review undertaken by the Select Committees as described in this report are available for inspection.

The full Executive responses to the Scrutiny Reviews are available for inspection.

APPENDICIES

None.

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STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Monday, 26 March 2018

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Shimkent Room - Daneshill House, Danestrete

Present: Councillors: Maureen McKay (Chair), John Gardner (Vice-Chair), Howard Burrell, Laurie Chester, David Cullen, Graham Snell and Brian Mitchell

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

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Broom and G Lawrence.

There were no declarations of interest received from Members.

2 **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING OF 5 FEBRUARY 2018**

The minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, held on 5 February 2018, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 **SAFS PROGRESS AGAINST SBC'S ANTI-FRAUD ACTION PLAN 2017/2018**

The Committee considered a report, which provided information on:

- Progress on the Council's Anti-Fraud Plan for 2017/2018
- A proposed Stevenage Borough Council Anti-Fraud Plan for 2018/2019
- Transparency Code Data

Members were referred to the Local Government Association's "A Councillor's Workbook on Bribery and Fraud Prevention", which was deemed a very helpful and worthwhile document.

Specific reference was made to the Council's standing as a founding member of the Hertfordshire Shared Anti-fraud Service (SAFS) and how SAFS worked across the whole Council dealing with all aspects of fraud from deterrence and prevention to investigation and prosecution.

The report laid out the Council's position in relation to its Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy and included advice to Members, senior officers and staff about how to deal with identified fraud. It also referred to the Council's Anti-Fraud Action Plan for 2017/2018, which covered all areas recommended by CIPFA to ensure that the

Council acknowledged the risk of fraud, its responsibility to combat these risks and took appropriate action to prevent, deter and pursue fraud. It was noted that, in the first three quarters of the current financial year, 184 cases of alleged fraud were reported to SAFS for investigation, including allegations of fraud affecting areas such as council tax liability, housing applications, blue badge use, housing benefit and business rates.

Officers responded to Members' questions in relation to:

- The level of recoverable losses claimable by the Council
- The recovery of properties
- The number of cases where action had been taken
- Letting Agents and the letting of Council properties

It was noted that a full report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the progress made by the Council and the SAFS in delivering the Anti-Fraud Action Plan 2017/2018, be noted; and
2. The proposed Anti-Fraud Plan 2018/2019, be approved.

4 **PROPOSED ANTI-FRAUD ACTION PLAN FOR 2018/2019**

The Committee considered the Anti-Fraud Plan 2018/2019, which supported the Council's current Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy by ensuring that the Council, working in partnership with the Hertfordshire SAFS, had in place effective resources and controls to prevent and deter fraud as well as investigate those matters that did arise.

The Plan included objectives and key performance indicators that supported the Council's strategy and met the best practice guidance and directives from Central Government Departments such as the DCLG and other bodies, including the National Audit Office and CIPFA.

It was reported that the SAFS Board had fixed the annual fee for district councils and that the fee for Stevenage Borough Council for 2018/2019 would remain at £100,000 plus VAT.

It was reported that there would be a review of the data hub by March 2019 and that Auditors were talking to the Cabinet Office to see whether a Herts-shared hub could be created.

In response to a Member's question with regard to Key Performance Indicator 1 and whether full training had been undertaken, it was noted that details of all such training would be included in a future report to the Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** that the progress made in respect of the proposed Anti-Fraud Action Plan for 2018/2019, be noted.

5 **ASSESSMENT OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS AND GOVERNANCE CODE ANNUAL REVIEW**

The Council's Assistant Director of Corporate Services and Transformation (RP) introduced the report, which advised Members of the activity completed during 2017/2018 to strengthen governance arrangements and the enhancement activity identified for delivery in 2018/2019 as a result of the Council's self-assessment of current corporate governance arrangements against the principles of good governance, as set out in the CIPFA and SOLACE Framework, "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (2016)."

He said that, each year, self-assessment of the Council's current corporate governance arrangements was carried out. He made reference to the CIPFA and SOLACE seven core principles of good governance listed in the report, which the Council was assessed against.

Some of the key considerations arising from the self-assessment were the progress and status surrounding the Council's Property Investment Strategy, Asset Management Strategy, implementation of the Technology Shared Service Plan and GDPR and the readiness of the Council.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. Progress on significant governance enhancement activity during 2017/18, as summarised in Paragraph 3.6 to the report, and highlighted in Appendix A (Appendix A also outlined governance enhancement activity pertaining to best practice), be noted; and
2. The significant governance actions identified for 2018/19 that would facilitate the Council's continued compliance with the requirements of the CIPFA and SOLACE Framework "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (2016)", as set out in Paragraph 3.7, summarised in Appendix B and outlined together with governance enhancement activity pertaining to best practice in Appendix C to the report, be noted.

6 **2018/19 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN REPORT**

The Committee considered a report, which provided Members with the proposed Stevenage Borough Council 2018/2019 Internal Audit Plan.

It was reported that there had been extensive discussions amongst the Council's

Internal Auditors and its Assistant Directors and that the outcomes from these were detailed in the report.

It was reported that:

1. The SIAS Board had approved a 10% reduction in audit plan days across all partner plans at its December 2017 meeting. For Stevenage, this amounted to a reduction of 40 days from a total of 390 to 350 days in the 2018/2019 Audit Plan; and
2. The performance indicators, listed in Section 3 to the report, remained unchanged.

It was **RESOLVED** that the 2018/2019 Internal Audit Plan Report, be approved.

7 **SHARED INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE PROGRESS REPORT**

The Committee considered a report, which provided Members with:

- a) The progress made by the Shared Internal Audit Service (SIAS) in delivering the Council's 2017/2018 Internal Audit Plan as at 9 March 2018;
- b) The findings for the period 21 January to 9 March 2018;
- c) The proposed amendments required to the approved Annual Internal Audit Plan;
- d) The implementation status of previously agreed high-priority audit recommendations; and
- e) An update on performance management information as at 9 March 2018.

It was reported that seven reports were expected to be completed that week, which would equate to 94.2% output, which was just below the target set. Also, it was noted that this would mean that 33 out of 35 projects would have been completed, which equated to "excellent."

It was **RESOLVED** that the Internal Audit Progress Report for the period 9 March 2018, be noted.

8 **URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

In accordance with Rule 37(a), the Chair had agreed that the following matters be deemed urgent and considered at the meeting:

- a) Audit Planning Report – Year Ended 31 March 2018
- b) External Audit Update Report – March 2018
- c) Local Government Audit Committee Briefing

It was noted that the External Audit Plan report should have been included within the original agenda despatched for the meeting but, given that notice and receipt of the report (and the other two listed above) by Constitutional Services was after the date of despatch of the original agenda, the Chair was contacted to seek her approval to consider the matters at this meeting..

Accordingly, the Chair agreed that the following matters be deemed as urgent as to not present the External Audit 17-18 Plan and progress report to this meeting, would result in its consideration being delayed until June 2018, at which point this would be significantly late and beyond when the Council had to issue draft 17-18 accounts for audit.

- a) Audit Planning Report – Year Ended 31 March 2018

Neil Harris, the Council's External Auditor (Ernst and Young LLP) (EY), introduced the report, which set out how EY intended to carry out its responsibilities as the Council's Auditor and to provide the Committee with a basis to review EY's proposed audit approach and scope for the 2017/18 audit, in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the National Audit Office's 2015 Code of Audit Practice, the Statement of Responsibilities issued by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) Ltd., auditing standards and other professional requirements. The attached Plan set out to ensure that EY's audit was aligned with the Committee's service expectations and summarised EY's initial assessment of the key risks driving the development of an effective audit for the Council, and outlined EY's planned audit strategy in response to those risks.

Mr Harris addressed a number of specific areas, including:

- "Management override" – susceptibility where managers had to make

estimations

- Capitalisation of revenue spend
- Inherent risks e.g. actuaries
- Pension liabilities – any assumptions made in accounts
- Changes in Audit Strategy this year – increase in commercialisation activity in the Council

Mr Harris responded to Members' questions in relation to:

- The accuracy of the statement under “details” in relation to achievement of savings needed over the medium-term, as detailed at Page 6 to the report;
- “Performance materiality” – an important issue for Members to be aware of
- Earlier deadline for production of financial statements
- Better ways of holding each other to account
- Publication of Annual Audit Letter in September 2018 – was this correct?
- Total fees listed on Page 30 (£55,841) – was this correct?
- Reference to Rochford District Council (should have referenced Stevenage Borough Council)
- Commercialisation – was this an increasing area?

b) External Audit Update Report – March 2018

With reference to Minute No.4 to the minutes of the Audit Committee held on 5 February 2018, Mr Harris introduced the report, which summarised the work EY had undertaken to date and their plans for the remainder of the 2017/18 year. The purpose of the report was to provide the Committee with an overview of the stage EY had reached in its 2017/18 audit and ensure that EY's audit was aligned with the Committee's service expectations.

Mr Harris said that the report set out where EY was with the accounts and value for money and that there were no significant concerns. It was noted that value for money considerations would be fluid as information was awaited on the Council's SG1 redevelopment proposals.

c) Local Government Audit Committee Briefing

The Committee considered the briefing, which covered issues that may have an impact on the Council, the local government sector and the audits that EY undertook. It was noted that the briefings brought together not only technical issues relevant to the local government sector but wider matters of potential interest to the Council.

It was **RESOLVED** that all of the above reports, be noted.

9 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

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.

10 **PART II MINUTES OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE OF 5 FEBRUARY 2018**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 5 February 2018 be noted.

Members recalled that an update should have been provided at this meeting in relation to the Technology Shared Service Improvement Plan and that given this was a work in progress, should have been reflected in the minutes of the meeting of 5 February 2018.

11 **STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Strategic Risk Register for Stevenage Borough Council, be noted.

CHAIR

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STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: 12 June 2018

Time: 6:00 pm

Place: Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

Present: Members: Councillors: M McKay (Chair), J Gardner (Vice Chair), H Burrell, D Cullen, G Lawrence, J Lloyd and G Snell

In Attendance: C Wood and S Martin (Shared Internal Audit Service)
N Jennings (Shared Anti-Fraud Service)

Start/End Time: Start Time: 6:00 pm
End Time: 7:40 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

An apology for absence was received from Councillor L Chester.

There were no declarations of interest.

S Martin was introduced to the Committee as the new Client Audit Manager for the Shared Internal Audit Service.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that Councillor J Gardner is elected to serve as Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee for the municipal year 2018/2019.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

It was **RESOLVED** that the Terms of Reference are noted.

4. MINUTES – AUDIT COMMITTEE – 26 MARCH 2018

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 26 March 2018 are approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2017/18

The Committee received a report which advised on the content of the Council's Annual Governance Statement for 2017/18 following the review of the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal control and governance arrangements.

The Chair complimented Officers for the clarity of the report.

In reply to question concerning potential learning points from the difficult financial situation faced by Northamptonshire County Council and their governance arrangements, the Committee was advised that the Assistant Director Finance & Estates would provide a summary of the issues to Members.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council's 2017/18 Annual Governance Statement, as attached at Appendix One, is recommended for approval by the Statement of Accounts Committee.

6. STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL 2017/18 ANTI-FRAUD REPORT

The Committee received the Council's 2017/18 Anti-Fraud Report.

The Committee was advised that all targets except for one (success rates for cases investigated) had been achieved and that targets had been stretched for 2018/19.

The Committee was further advised that the percentage of allegations of fraud reported by staff were higher than in similar authorities and this reflected positively on the attitudes of staff working for the Council.

Members then asked a number of questions about the process for determining whether an allegation of fraud should be investigated.

In reply the Committee was advised that once an allegation of fraud had been received it would be reviewed and pursued if appropriate. It was confirmed that if a recommendation to prosecute was made it would usually be followed after consultation with the legal team.

In reply to a further question concerning learning points it was confirmed that the investigation process identified methods to prevent recurrences of that type of fraud.

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

7. SHARED INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE (SIAS) PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee received the Internal Audit Progress Report for the period to 25 May 2018.

The Client Audit Manager advised the Committee that since the publication of the report the percentage of actual billable days had increased to 19% and that a further audit report had been issued.

The Committee was further advised of three potential new high priority recommendations including one relating to Cyber Security in addition to those included in the progress report.

Members raised a number of issues concerning the Council's ICT service and the Committee was advised that a number of initiatives were underway to cleanse data and reduce the amount of storage capacity required together with a plan to implement the recommendations of the latest cyber security audit.

In reply to a question it was confirmed that the Council's IT 'patching' regime was up to date.

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

8. STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL 2017/18 ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT AND INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee received the Council's 2017/18 Annual Assurance Statement and Internal Audit Report.

The Committee was advised that two minor amendments had been made to the Audit Charter. Paragraph 1.1 of the Charter had been amended to reflect any potential public interest in risk management, control and government arrangements whilst paragraph 8.2 had been amended to include all Members as interested parties in overseeing the effectiveness of SIAS.

In reply to a question the Assistant Director (Finance and Estates) confirmed that the scope and resources for internal audit were subject to no inappropriate limitations in 2017/18.

In reply to a question concerning the timescale for implementing high priority recommendations the Committee was advised that the Assistant Director of the relevant business unit was responsible for the individual action plan for implementation and that the action plan would include timescales for completion. Any slippage against the plan would be documented.

In reply to a further question concerning targets and key performance indicators the Committee was advised that Senior Leadership Team reviewed targets and indicators annually on a challenge / test basis. It was acknowledged however that some targets were based on national targets

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the Annual Assurance Statement and Internal Audit Annual Report are noted.
2. That the results of the self-assessment, as required by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme are noted.
3. That the SIAS Audit Charter is accepted
4. That assurance be sought from management that the scope and resources for internal audit were not subject to inappropriate limitations in 2017/18.

9. URGENT PART I BUSINESS

9a - ANNUAL AUDIT FEE LETTER

Due to an administrative error this report had not been circulated five clear days before the meeting (nor was it available for public inspection for that time). The Chair agreed that the item is accepted as urgent as the next meeting of the Committee is not until September 2018.

The Committee was advised that the External Auditor's fee for 2016/17 has not yet been agreed and is currently in arbitration. The Assistant Director (Finance and Estates) undertook to inform the Committee of the decision of the arbitration panel once known.

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

Councillors H Burrell and J Gardner left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.

10. 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 Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006.
2. Members considered the reasons for the following reports being in Part II and determined that the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighed the public interest in disclosure.

PART II

11. STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

The Committee received the Council's latest Strategic Risk Register.

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

12. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

12a - REPAIRS AND VOIDS SERVICE.

This report had not been circulated five clear days before the meeting. The Chair agreed that the item is accepted as urgent given the requirement for the report to be considered alongside the SIAS progress report at item 7 on the agenda.

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

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the report is noted
2. That the service responses are noted
3. That the actions that are being implemented in conjunction with the recommendations of the audit are endorsed.

CHAIR

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