

## SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

<b>Meeting:</b>	Council
<b>Date:</b>	Wednesday, 16 October 2019
<b>Place:</b>	Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete
<b>Members Present:</b>	Councillors: All Members with the exception of those listed at Item 1

<b>1</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>	
	<p>Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Dave Cullen, Liz Harrington, Lizzy Kelly, Sarah-Jane McDonough and Graham Snell.</p> <p>Councillor Sharon Taylor declared a personal interest in Item 8 as a Member of the Local Enterprise Partnership.</p>	
<b>2</b>	<b>MINUTES - 24 JULY AND 11 SEPTEMBER 2019</b>	
	<p>It was <b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 24 July 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor</li> <li>2. That the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Council held on 24 July 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor</li> <li>3. That the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Council held on 11 September 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor</li> </ol>	

3	<b>MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS</b>	
	<p>The Mayor introduced a short film featuring a Woolenwick Junior School art project. It was noted that the film was particularly relevant in view of the main debate topic of arts and culture. At the end of the film, the Councillor S Taylor OBE CC informed Council that pupils from the school had created hundreds of clay models (“Terracotta warriors”).</p> <p>The Mayor then provided updates on engagements since the last Council meeting and upcoming events. The Mayor congratulated the Youth Council for being awarded the Abel Smith Commendation at the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) awards on 15 October 2019. The Mayor also highlighted the following engagements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coptic New Year event hosted by the Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London</li> <li>• Schools Parliament event to launch an environment awareness campaign</li> <li>• Flare Awards</li> <li>• Inclusive Dance UK’s British Open Inclusive Dance Festival</li> <li>• Celebrate!!! event scheduled for 19 October 2019 at the Gordon Craig Theatre</li> </ul>	
4	<b>MAIN DEBATE - STEVENAGE RE-IMAGINED: A TEN YEAR ARTS AND HERITAGE (CULTURAL) STRATEGY</b>	
	<p>Council received presentations from SBC Arts and Cultural Development Officer, South East Area Director (Arts Council England) and Associate Director (Mace Developments).</p> <p>After a full debate, it was moved, seconded and <b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>“That this Council recognises the positive contribution culture makes to Stevenage through health, wellbeing, education, skills</p>	

	and the economy. That this Council will continue to commit to the ambitions of the Stevenage Re-imagined Arts and Heritage Strategy working with our partners such as Arts Council England and MACE to embed heritage and the arts as part of our ongoing place-shaping ambitions to regenerate our town centre and our neighbourhoods and align our strategic investments accordingly”	
<b>5</b>	<b>PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS</b>	
	None.	
<b>6</b>	<b>QUESTIONS FROM THE YOUTH COUNCIL</b>	
	None.	
<b>7</b>	<b>QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC</b>	
	None.	
<b>8</b>	<b>LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S UPDATE</b>	
	<p>The Leader of the Opposition welcomed the Bragbury End Housing Development. He stated that residents in the area had expressed concerns about sporadic communication regarding the development.</p> <p>In response, the Leader of the Council informed Council that there had been wide-ranging consultations with local residents. She indicated that officers would provide the Leader of the Opposition with details of communications to affected residents and the consultation timetable. The Leader of the Council emphasised the importance of cross-party support to meet Stevenage’s</p>	

housing needs. It was stated that the development will provide houses and apartments for sale, affordable rent and social rent, new state of the art independent living accommodation, a café, roof garden and retail facilities.

The Leader of the Council then provided updates on the recently announced 1% Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) rate rise, SBC Brexit Working Group and the Pride of Stevenage Awards event that was held on 28 September 2019. She then reported that Stevenage's position as global leader in ground-breaking medical research was acknowledged at the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) conference that was held in early October 2019.

The Council then received updates on the following:

- Car Cruising Injunction
- Delivering New Council Homes
- Rough Sleeper Initiative
- Private Sector Landlord Engagement
- Healthy Stevenage
- Local Industrial Strategy
- Localism Commission
- Regeneration

9	<b>NOTICE OF MOTIONS</b>	
<p>(i) Council considered a motion submitted by Councillor R Parker CC in respect of wild flowers/highway verges. In accordance with Section 19 (b) of Part 4 of the Council’s Constitution, the Mayor allowed two amendments to be discussed with the motion to help business to be dealt with more efficiently.</p> <p>After a full debate, it was moved, seconded and <b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <p>“That it is noted that Stevenage Borough Council has taken a leading role in supporting biodiversity, sustainability and a thriving local environment. We have Biodiversity Action Plan (2017 – 2022), developed through a partnership of Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, with great support of our network of green space volunteers helping to deliver key elements of this Plan.</p> <p>Through this Biodiversity Action Plan and our Open Spaces Strategy, the Council has a dozen locations which are actively managed as meadow and wildflower sites, and with a number of verges and banks across the town where grasses and vegetation are subject to careful management and twice yearly cutting to support diversity and pollinators.</p> <p>That Council notes that:</p> <p>(a) A number of other local authorities have adopted the policy of planting or encouraging wild flowers, and other alternative methods of managing highway verges, which improve biodiversity without increasing the cost of highway verge maintenance.</p> <p>(b) Growing concern about the possible health impacts and effect on biodiversity by the widespread use of glyphosate weed killers.</p> <p>Council also notes that the current Biodiversity Action Plan commits to a grasslands plan, including consideration of possible sites and ways to expand wildflower planting of verges. This work is being undertaken in the current year. Council requests that a progress report is provided to the Environment and Economy Select Committee on this topic. This will provide assessment of benefits to Stevenage, in terms of habitat, environment benefits and whether there are particular costs or</p>		

savings associated with this.

The Council will work with the County Council under its agency agreement to ensure that any resultant Pollinator Action Plan is implemented.”

(ii) A motion seeking support for a smart motorway between junctions 6 and 8 Of the A1 (M) was moved by Councillor A Mitchell CC and seconded by Councillor P Bibby CC.

After a full debate and a vote, this motion was lost.

**10**

**QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO COMMITTEE CHAIRS / PORTFOLIO HOLDERS**

Council received five questions. The responses to the five questions were circulated at the Meeting and are appended (Appendix A).

(A) Question from Councillor Robin Parker, CC

In response to a supplementary question from Councillor Parker, the Mayor reiterated that one of the parliamentary candidates for Stevenage was invited purely for her links with Cycling UK Stevenage. The Mayor indicated that he was happy for the list of invitees to be shared.

(B) Question from Councillor Tom Wren

In response to a supplementary question from Councillor Wren, the Portfolio Holder (Environment and Regeneration) indicated that the Council was in consultation with local authorities such as Oxford and Camden that had adopted the Citizens’ Panel and People’s Assembly model. The Portfolio Holder stated that officers would provide a written reply on funding arrangements for the engagement approach.

(C) Question from Councillor Stephen Booth

Councillor Booth indicated that he was not satisfied with the response to the original question. He had received representations from local businesses that had lost revenue as a result of the Charter Fair. He suggested that the Council considers negotiating

for amendments to the Charter or relocating the Fair to Fairlands Valley Showgrounds. The Portfolio Holder (Economy, Enterprise and Transport) highlighted the responsibilities of Hertfordshire County Council on highway matters. The Portfolio Holder indicated that the Council would continue to liaise with HCC regarding health and safety arrangements during the Stevenage Charter Fair.

(D) Question from Councillor Andy McGuinness

In response to a supplementary question from Councillor Parker, the Leader of the Council informed Members that the Council had not received any representations from local businesses on “No Deal” Brexit scenario planning.

(E) Question from Councillor Graham Snell

Portfolio Holder (Environment and Regeneration) stated that officers were still seeking further information from the Member. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that he was aware of cases of wet floor accident injuries in the Town Centre. He assured Council that the engineering team would carry out investigations whenever reports of unsafe paving were received.

11

**UPDATE FROM SCRUTINY CHAIRS**

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee informed Council that in addition to the Work Plan items, the Committee had commenced a review of the Council’s Scrutiny arrangements. The review came after the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) had published new statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny in local and combined authorities. It was reported that the Centre for Public Scrutiny would be invited to give feedback on the Committee’s final report.

The Chair of the Community Select Committee informed Members that the Select Committee was currently conducting a review on Sports and Leisure in Stevenage.

The Chair of the Environment and Economy Select Committee advised Council that there had been delays to the planned review on Post Offices in Stevenage.

It was **RESOLVED** that the updates are noted.

12	<b>ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW OF 2018/19 INCLUDING PRUDENTIAL CODE</b>	
	<p>It was moved, seconded and <b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the Annual Treasury Management Review of 2018/19 is approved</li> <li>2. That the updated Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy is approved</li> </ol>	
13	<b>REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES 2019 - OUTCOME OF REVIEW</b>	
	<p>The Chief Executive introduced the report on the Review of Parliamentary Polling Districts and Polling Places 2019.</p> <p>An amendment to the Proposals for Polling Districts and Polling Places (Appendix A of the report) was moved by Councillor Robin Parker CC and seconded by Councillor Stephen Booth as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain Chells Manor Community Centre as a Polling Station for Polling District CFA</li> <li>• Retain Martins Wood Primary School as a double Polling Station for Polling District CEB</li> </ul> <p>In accordance with Section 22 of Part 4 of the Council’s Constitution, a recorded vote was held on the amendment to the recommendations.</p> <p>Votes for the Amendment – Councillors S Booth, R Parker CC and T Wren</p>	

Votes against the Amendment – Councillors D Bainbridge, S Barr, P Bibby CC, L Briscoe, R Broom, A Brown, J Brown, T Callaghan, L Chester, M Downing, A Farquharson, J Gardner, M Gardner, J Hanafin, R Henry, J Hollywell, G Lawrence, Mrs J Lloyd, J Lloyd, M Mckay, L Martin-Haugh, J Mead, S Mead, A Mitchell CC, M Notley, C Parris, L Rossati, S Speller, S Taylor OBE CC and J Thomas

Abstentions - Nil

The amendment was lost.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the proposals for Polling Districts and Polling Places in the Borough, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be adopted.

The following voted against the proposals – Councillors S Booth, R Parker CC and T Wren.

<b>14</b>	<b>AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES</b>	
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	It was moved, seconded and <b>RESOLVED</b> that the minutes from the Audit Committee meeting held on 10 September 2019 be noted.	
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# Item 10

COUNCIL – 16 OCTOBER 2019

## MEMBERS QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### Questions to Portfolio Holders

**A. Question from Cllr. Robin Parker, CC – “Reference the Pride of Stevenage Awards on 28.9.2019, excluding award winners and members, who received invitations and, in particular, were invitations issued to the Stevenage MP and all Stevenage parliamentary candidates?”**

Answer (The Mayor) - The MP for Stevenage was invited to the Pride Awards, however Officers did not receive a reply to that invitation.

Parliamentary candidates were not invited to attend in their capacity as parliamentary candidates. We are aware that Jill Borchers was invited by the Mayor, along with several other individuals, because of her links with Cycling UK Stevenage and Sport Stevenage. The fact that she is a parliamentary candidate is purely coincidental.

**B. Question from Cllr. Tom Wren – “On the 12th June, this Council passed a motion declaring a climate change emergency. What actions have been taken by the Council in the 4 months since this declaration?”**

Answer (Cllr John Gardner) - Over the last four months, Officers and Executive Members have been working hard to establish a list of potential short term, medium term and long terms actions the Council and those organisations within Stevenage that contribute to carbon emissions can take. These range from supporting electric vehicles and cycle hire, to free water fountains. We have identified two potential community orchards plus discussions have been held with both the Woodland Trust and our partners the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust for the planting of 490 trees in Fairlands Park South.

There have been a number of important Council meetings including an informal Executive dedicated to the issue and an All Member briefing is planned for next month which will be supported by the Local Government Association (LGA) and which will outline how Members can best action climate change improvements. We are excited to be partnering with the LGA as the first organisation to put in place Member development activities to help build our knowledge and skills in an area that is crucial to us all.

The Council has been working equally hard on an engagement approach to reach the widest range of people, through a Citizens' Panel and People's Assembly, as we can only truly tackle climate change if we work together with our residents and businesses. The Council has prepared a draft Charter, and with input from local people and business will be drawing up a draft Action Plan over the next few months to ensure we can deliver our 2030 promise.

**C. Question from Cllr. Stephen Booth – “What measures does the Council take in ensuring that the Charter Fair is set up in an orderly and safe manner and attention is given particularly to:**

- due regard to Health & Safety regulations
- access to shops and businesses is maintained
- approaches to pedestrian crossings for the public are left clear
- sufficient account is taken for access to those with disability and particularly those with sight disability?”

Answer (Cllr Briscoe) – The Charter Fair is organised by the Showmen's Guild ([www.showmensguild.com](http://www.showmensguild.com)) and held on the public highway. This is a historic and long-standing event in the Town. This is not a Stevenage Borough Council activity. The organisation of the use of the public highway and the relevant closure orders for the High Street are the responsibility of the Hertfordshire County Council Highways Network Management Team.

**D. Question from Cllr. Andy McGuinness – “How much officer time and resources have a) already been used and b) planned to be used, on “No Deal” Brexit scenario planning?”**

Answer (Leader of the Council) – The Council's work on planning for a 'No Deal' Brexit follows the guidance from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. As Members are aware the Civil Contingencies Act identifies the Council as a Category 1 responder and we have a duty to address resilience and emergency planning matters for the Town. I am the lead Executive Member for Brexit and Richard Protheroe, Interim Strategic Director has been appointed as the Council's Brexit Lead Officer.

A Brexit Working Group of relevant senior Council Officers has been established to ensure that as far as possible any risks to the delivery of council services or potential negative affects to the lives of people living and working in Stevenage, are identified and mitigated. This Group meets on a weekly basis. I am sure everyone would agree that this is an appropriate response.

The Council is currently not using a time recording system for officers involved in Brexit preparations and therefore there has been no calculation of the time spent on this work so far. To identify new burdens placed on the authority in future the Council will record officer time spent on Brexit preparations. No additional staffing resources have been sought at this time and therefore the capacity to deal with this matter has resulted in some reprioritising of work for the officers involved.

**E. Question from Cllr. Graham Snell – “In view of the recent reports about some of the new paving in the Town Centre being very slippery when wet, and therefore a hazard, what actions have been taken by the Council to address this?”**

Answer (Cllr John Gardner) – Officers are seeking further information from the Member to ascertain which specific area is being referred to. The engineering team have not received any complaints or concerns in the last year. The upgrade works that took place at Littlewoods and Forum Squares did include new paving, which meet required British standards for slip resistance.