

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

Meeting:	Council	
Date:	Wednesday, 14 October 2020	
Place:	Virtual (via Zoom)	
Members Present:	Councillors:	Jim Brown (Mayor), Michelle Gardner (Deputy Mayor), Doug Bainbridge, Sandra Barr, Philip Bibby CC, Stephen Booth, Lloyd Briscoe, Rob Broom, Adrian Brown, Teresa Callaghan, Laurie Chester, David Cullen, Alex Farquharson, John Gardner, Jody Hanafin, Liz Harrington, Richard Henry, Jackie Hollywell, Lizzy Kelly, Graham Lawrence, Mrs Joan Lloyd, John Lloyd, Andy McGuinness, Maureen McKay, Lin Martin-Haugh, John Mead, Sarah Mead, Adam Mitchell CC, Margaret Notley, Robin Parker CC, Claire Parris, Loraine Rossati, Graham Snell, Simon Speller, Sharon Taylor OBE CC, Jeannette Thomas and Tom Wren

1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
	<p>Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Michael Downing.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p> <p>At this juncture, the Mayor advised that he would be taking the Motion concerning Local Government Reorganisation shown at item 10, as Main Debate (item 4) and item 12 (Change to Standing Orders - Voting at Council Meetings) as the first item.</p>	
2	MINUTES - 15 JULY 2020	
	<p>It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 15 July 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.</p>	
3	MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS	
	<p>The Mayor informed Members that the October Council meeting coincided with Local Democracy Week and Black History</p>	

Month. A small ceremony to mark the 125th anniversary of an elected Council in Stevenage was due to be held on 23 October 2020. The Mayor reported that the Stevenage Helps appeal by Stevenage Community Trust had raised £63,399.26. With the help of Stevenage Community Trust, a fundraising site for the Mayor's three charities had been set up.

Since the last Council meeting, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor had been involved in a number of activities including:

- Visits to Knebworth House
- Re-opening of Stevenage Arts and Leisure Centre
- Handing out face masks
- Summer Play Roadshow
- Virtual Special Constable attestation
- Cycling Festival photocall and other cycling-related events
- VJ Day events
- Unveiling underpass artwork
- Public health webinar
- Re-opening of St Nicholas Church
- Filming landmarks of Stevenage
- Visiting Forgotten Soldiers Exhibition at Stevenage Museum

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electric vehicle charging points photocall <p>The Mayor concluded by stating that while the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions were continuing to impact the role of the mayoral team, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor would be happy to support local organisations at small group or virtual events.</p>
4	MAIN DEBATE
	There was no Main Debate.
5	PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS
	There were no petitions and deputations.
6	QUESTIONS FROM THE YOUTH COUNCIL
	<p>There were no questions from the Youth Council.</p> <p>The Youth Mayor (Alissa Crew) apologised on behalf of the Youth Council for not submitting questions. The Youth Mayor outlined why no questions had been submitted on this occasion.</p>
7	QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC
	The Council received one question from a member of the public relating to maintenance of the cycleway network. The response to the question had been published in the supplementary agenda for the meeting. The questioner (Jill Borchers) was present in the meeting, and asked the following supplementary question:

“Would it be possible for the Council to set up a meeting with Cycling UK Stevenage group to discuss cycling matters relating to Town Centre Regeneration?”

The Portfolio Holder for Environment & Regeneration agreed to meet the cycling group. Arrangements for the meeting would be provided after consultation with officers. The Portfolio Holder indicated that the Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Transport was in the process of setting up a liaison group for Town Centre Regeneration.

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LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S UPDATE

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Phil Bibby, asked the following question:

“What communication and/or promotion has taken place to encourage more take up of the Temporary Pavement Licences that were introduced to streamline applications by businesses to place temporary furniture, such as tables and chairs outside of cafes, bars and restaurants?”

The Leader of the Council confirmed that one business had formally applied for the licence. However, the Council was working with hospitality outlets to assess their requirements. A number of hospitality operators were waiting for details of the three-tier lockdown system before deciding whether or not to apply for the Temporary Pavement Licence. Councillor Taylor stated that the Council was waiting for a number of applications to be submitted so as to allocate the licences fairly.

The Leader informed Council that parts of Stevenage High Street had been cordoned off primarily to allow pedestrians to move safely while social distancing. She noted that weather had a bearing on outdoor seating arrangements.

Councillor Taylor asked Assistant Director (Planning & Regulation) to provide a written answer on arrangements for managing Temporary Pavement Licences in Stevenage High Streets.

The Leader of the Council went on to congratulate Stevenage-born Formula One (F1) driver, Lewis Hamilton, for equalling Michael Schumacher’s all-time record for career F1 victories (91) by winning the Eifel Grand Prix. Councillor Taylor informed

Council that Councillors Rob Broom, John Gardner and Jeannette Thomas had been shortlisted for 2020 LGIU and CCLA Councillor Awards. In her Covid-19 update, the Leader informed Council that Stevenage continued to have the lowest number of cases in Hertfordshire. Stevenage was in Tier 1 (Medium Risk) of the new three tier system. Councillor Taylor also provided updates on future governance of the Herts Growth Board and transformation of the Stevenage Indoor Market.

The Council then received updates from relevant Executive Portfolio Holders on the following matters:

- Green Flag Awards for five of Stevenage's green spaces
- Stevenage High Street Improvements
- Stevenage Economic Task Force
- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping
- Housing Development Team Award
- Car Cruising
- Black Lives Matter
- Stevenage Museum Exhibition- Forgotten: the British African colonial soldiers of the Second World War
- New SBC Website
- Neighbourhoods

The Leader of the Council congratulated officers and green space volunteers for maintaining the five Green Flag sites in Stevenage. Councillor Taylor thanked Assistant Director (Communities & Neighbourhoods) for producing an e-book on the work done by Cooperative Councils to support communities during the pandemic.

	<p>The Leader of the Opposition (Councillor Bibby) welcomed Stevenage High Street improvements including signage to indicate location of the three hours free parking area in Primett Road. Councillor Taylor acknowledged that it had taken longer than planned to install the signage.</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>UPDATE FROM SCRUTINY CHAIRS</p>
	<p>The Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee reported that the Committee had met three times since the last Council meeting. Members of the Committee welcomed the livestreaming of Executive meetings. Live broadcasts were a helpful tool for meeting preparation.</p> <p>The Chair of the Community Select Committee reported that the first Committee meeting for 2020/21 was scheduled for 21 October 2020. The main agenda items for this meeting were Sport and Leisure Review Report and an update on Members' questions relating to the Council's complaints system.</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>NOTICE OF MOTIONS</p>
	<p>Councillor Sharon Taylor moved and Councillor Sandra Barr seconded a motion in respect of Local Government Reorganisation. Following debate and upon being put to the vote, it was RESOLVED that:</p> <p>“This council strongly rejects the proposal from Hertfordshire County Council to create a single unitary council for the 1.2 million people living in Hertfordshire.</p> <p>We reject the proposal to create what would become the biggest council in the country because it would:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. greatly reduce the democratic input of Stevenage people to decision-making and impact upon their ability to hold those taking decisions on their behalf to account and; 2. almost certainly result in the reduction or cessation of important discretionary services that are relied upon by our

businesses and residents, especially those who are isolated and/or vulnerable.

We believe the government's intention to commence a structural reorganisation of local government in the middle of the Covid Pandemic is ill-timed and will unnecessarily divert attention and resources . We should be focussed on recovery not reorganisation.

Council urges government to publish its green paper on social care before the white paper on local government reorganisation as the future structure of social care has a fundamental impact on the structure of local government.

Council supports the work of Hertfordshire Districts & Boroughs to explore and assess alternative options to the County Council's proposal to form a single Hertfordshire Unitary Council and agrees that proper engagement should take place with Hertfordshire people.

Council agrees to:

Write to the Leader of the County Council setting out our objections to his proposal.

Ask that the Leader of the County Council sets out what commitment there would be to ensure that the people of Stevenage would be given equal opportunities in respect of employment, funding, business initiatives, Council housing investment, leisure facilities, arts facilities and sporting facilities and health initiatives.

Write to the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government to demand that the publication of the Recovery and Devolution White Paper is delayed until after the next General Election by which time the social care green paper will have been published and implemented and the local and national recovery from the Covid crisis will hopefully be well under way.

Continue to support the work of Hertfordshire District & Borough Leaders to explore alternative local government structural options in the event that the Recovery & Devolution White Paper confirms the Government's intention to commence the structural reform of local government

Ensure that the views of Hertfordshire people be sought and taken into account when developing any alternative local

Government structural options for Hertfordshire.

Communicate the potential impact of a Single Unitary Council for Hertfordshire on Stevenage to the people of the town.”

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QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO COMMITTEE CHAIRS/PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

The Council received three questions from the Members to Committee Chairs/Portfolio Holders. The responses to the three questions had been published in the supplementary agenda for the meeting.

(A) Question from Councillor Graham Lawrence

Supplementary question - “Can we use some of the communication resources to keep people more informed about some of the major projects that are going on within Stevenage?”

In response to the supplementary question, the Leader of the Council stated that she spent a lot of time giving information to regional and local radio. She emphasised the importance of exercising caution with regards to enquiries relating to planning applications and maintaining the independence of the Planning and Development Committee. With regards to the Kenilworth development, Councillor Taylor informed Council that utilities, tree and engineering work had commenced on site.

(B) Question from Councillor Doug Bainbridge

Councillor Bainbridge did not ask a supplementary question.

(C) Question from Councillor Alex Farquharson

Supplementary question - “Did the Council change its position regarding authorisation of Broadwater Day 2020 and if not, would the Council go ahead with potential sanctions?”

	<p>The Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Co-operative Working replied that the Council had complied with Hertfordshire Director of Public Health's decision to allow the event to go ahead. However, SBC did not formally support the event. The Council's decision was consistent with its position on holding public events during the pandemic. With regards to the changing of public toilet locks in the area, the Leader of the Council pointed out that the toilets had been out of use for a long time. Health and safety compliance checks could not be carried out in time for the event. Councillor Taylor informed Council that following uncertainty about the extent to which outdoor events, such as Broadwater Day, were permitted to take place, Public Health had developed guidance for local authorities and event organisers.</p>	
12	CHANGE TO STANDING ORDERS - VOTING AT COUNCIL MEETINGS	
	<p>Council considered an amendment to the Council's 'Temporary' Standing Orders for voting at Council meetings.</p> <p>It was moved, seconded and RESOLVED that the Temporary Standing Orders approved in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panels Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 be amended to provide an alternative method for voting at Council meetings as set out in paragraph 3.3 of the report.</p>	
13	ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW OF 2019/20 INCLUDING PRUDENTIAL CODE	
	<p>It was moved, seconded and RESOLVED that the 2019/20 Annual Treasury Management Review be approved by Council.</p>	
14	AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES	
	<p>The Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 10 September 2020 were received and noted.</p>	

15	EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS	
	<p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they 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. 	
16	EMERGENCY COVID-19 FUNDING SUPPORT FOR STEVENAGE LEISURE LIMITED	
	<p>Council considered a report outlining the Executive recommendations in relation to emergency funding provision for Stevenage Leisure Limited (SLL) as a consequence of the financial impact of Covid-19.</p> <p>It was moved, seconded and RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the report to Executive on 12 August 2020 be noted. 2. That Council approves funding for Stevenage Leisure Limited (SLL) up to a maximum of £1.38 Million, for the reasons as set out in the Executive report. 	

