

Daneshill House
Danestrete
Stevenage
Hertfordshire

28 February 2023

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, 8 March 2023 at 7.00pm and you are summoned to attend to transact the following business.

Yours faithfully



Matthew Partridge
Chief Executive

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

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

3. COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS

None received.

4. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

None received.

5. QUESTIONS FROM THE YOUTH COUNCIL

None received.

6. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None received.

7. 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.

8. UPDATE FROM SCRUTINY CHAIRS

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

9. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

In accordance with Standing Orders, the following motions have been received for consideration:

- (i) A fully funded, proper pay rise for Council and School workers

To be moved by the Labour Group.

“That this Council notes:

Local government has endured central government funding cuts of more than 50% since 2010. Between 2010 and 2020, councils lost 60p out of every £1 they have received from central government. New research by UNISON has shown that councils across England, Wales and Scotland are facing a collective funding shortfall of £3bn by the financial year 2023/24 and a cumulative funding gap of £5bn by 2024/25.

Councils led the way in efforts against the Covid-19 pandemic, providing a huge range of services and support for our communities. Local government has shown more than ever how indispensable it is. But Covid has led to a massive increase in expenditure and loss of income, and as we emerge from the pandemic, local authorities and schools need far more support from Westminster. Recent funding announcements from the Government relating to schools did nothing to help.

Council and school workers kept our communities safe through the pandemic, often putting themselves at considerable risk as they work to protect public health, provide quality housing, ensure our children continue to be educated, and look after older and vulnerable people.

Since 2010, the local government workforce has endured years of pay restraint with the majority of pay points losing at least 25 per cent of their value since 2009/10. Staff are now facing the worst cost of living crisis in a generation, with inflation hitting 10% and many having to make impossible choices between food, heating and other essentials. This is a terrible situation for anyone to find themselves in.

At the same time, workers have experienced ever-increasing workloads and persistent job insecurity. Across the UK, 900,000 jobs have been lost in local government since June 2010 – a reduction of more than 30 per cent. Local government has arguably been hit by more severe job losses than any other part of the public sector.

There has been a disproportionate impact on women, with women making up more than three-quarters of the local government workforce.

Recent research shows that if the Government were to fully fund the unions' 2023 pay claim, around half of the money would be recouped thanks to increased tax revenue, reduced expenditure on benefits and tax credits, and increased consumer spending in the local economy.

This Council believes:

Our workers are public service super-heroes. They keep our communities clean and safe, look after those in need and keep our towns and cities running.

Without the professionalism and dedication of our staff, the council services our residents rely on would not be deliverable.

Local government workers deserve a proper real-terms pay increase. The Government needs to take responsibility and fully fund this increase; it should not put the burden on local authorities whose funding has been cut to the bone and who were not offered adequate support through the Covid-19 pandemic.

This Council resolves to:

Support the pay claim submitted by UNISON, GMB and Unite on behalf of council and school workers, for an increase of RPI + 2%

Call on the Local Government Association to make urgent representations to central government to fund the NJC pay claim

Write to the Chancellor and Secretary of State to call for a pay increase for local government workers to be funded with new money from central government

Meet with local NJC union representatives to convey support for the pay claim and consider practical ways in which the council can support the campaign

Encourage all local government workers to join a union.”

(ii) Vaping

To be moved by the Liberal Democrat Group.

“Whilst acknowledging the role vaping products play in aiding adults to stop smoking, Council notes with concern:

- The increased use of vaping products by children in the UK buying them directly from newsagents, supermarkets and other outlets.
- The increasing number of local authorities who have had to take enforcement action against shops illegally selling vaping products to youngsters.
- The marketing of certain vaping products with bright coloured packaging and flavours such as “bubblegum” that might appeal to children.

- The significant increase in availability of disposable and single-use vaping products which are cheaper and easier for children to access.

That this Council calls for:

- Vaping products to be in plain packaging and kept out of sight behind the counter.
- Mandatory age-of-sale signage on vaping products (this is currently voluntary).
- A ban on free samples of vaping products being given out to people of any age.

That Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to Stephen Barclay MP, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, to express Council's demand for the greater regulation of vaping products detailed in this motion.

That Council further resolves to bring a joint report to an upcoming meeting of the Licensing Committee detailing enforcement activity and strategy within Stevenage related to the illegal sale of vaping products to children, and exploring opportunities for engagement with local schools to inform young people of the potential dangers of vaping."

10. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO COMMITTEE CHAIRS / PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

In accordance with Standing Orders, written answers to the following questions will be circulated on a supplementary agenda.

(A) Question from Councillor Bret Facey

"Do you believe apprenticeships play an important role in the aspirations and future prospects of Stevenage's young people?"

(B) Question from Councillor Julie Ashley-Wren

"Why has the Council not restarted its periodic leaseholders' engagement forums?"

(C) Question from Councillor Graham Snell

"Does the Council have plans to raise revenue by selling advertising space in and around the New Bus Interchange, including the Walkway between the Town Centre and the Bus Interchange?"

(D) Question from Councillor Robin Parker CC

"SBC's response to questions/queries/complaints on the Your Say system, for both Members and the public, has been a complete shambles now for at least 2 months. The new 'system' was started with no consultation about its design or requirements with either members or the public and no prior information was

supplied to either. Responses from SBC bear no reference to the original issue and so get referred back by members to SMT for a proper answer. As they are meaningless, they are then deleted. All this is a complete waste of staff and Member time and resources. Responses to the public therefore are delayed or lost.

- (a) Why was the new 'system' introduced by officers?
- (b) Why was there no consultation with Members about it?
- (c) Why was no prior information supplied to Members?
- (d) When will managers revert to the previous system (which worked well) or consult with Members and the public on a new fit-for-purpose system and then introduce it?"

(E) Question from Councillor Andy McGuinness

"What plans do the Council have for working with the County Council to make the temporary positive changes to Lytton Way traffic flow permanent?"

(F) Question from Councillor Tom Wren

"Does the Council consider it acceptable for builders' waste and rubble to be dumped on grass verges?"

(G) Question from Councillor Stephen Booth

"Why has the children's playground located at the north end of the town centre park between the swimming centre and Harrow Court been closed? Access is limited only by padlocks to the gates and a warning notice loosely on the ground advising "Safety First" and stating that the playground is closed for essential repairs. Children can easily climb over the low surrounding fence and do so regularly to access and use the play equipment. If there is a serious safety issue involving danger to children should the site not be properly secured? Please advise what action the Council proposes to take, how long the playground has been closed and when it will reopen."

(H) Question from Councillor Chris Howells

"Why was the junction between Lytton Way and Swingate altered necessitating the traffic management system to be installed to avoid long queues exiting Tesco's?"

(I) Question from Councillor Adam Mitchell CC

"Given that the Council has taken hundreds of thousands of pounds out of its play services budget, does it intend to use some of that money to re-instate play areas in the wards?"

(J) Question from Councillor Alex Farquharson

"The long-awaited Community Centre for Bragbury End is expected to be funded using the proceeds of the Kenilworth development. Can SBC confirm that this funding will solely be used for the provision of a high quality Bragbury End

Community Centre and not be diverted to other Wards?"

11. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2023/24

To consider a proposed Members' Allowances Scheme for 2023/24.

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12. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2023/24

To consider a report recommending the Pay Policy Statement for the financial year 2023/24.

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13. AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES

To note the Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 7 February 2023.

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