

Daneshill House
Danestrete
Stevenage
Hertfordshire

12 December 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, 20 December 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. MINUTES - 18 OCTOBER 2023

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 18 October 2023.

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3. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

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

4. COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS

None received.

5. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

To consider a petition containing over 1,000 signatories received by the Council in respect of Fairland Valley Park Lighting.

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6. QUESTIONS FROM THE YOUTH COUNCIL

None received.

7. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None received.

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. UPDATE FROM SCRUTINY CHAIRS

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

10. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

In accordance with Standing Orders, the following motion has been received for consideration:

Supporting Voter ID

To be moved by Councillor Bret Facey and seconded by Councillor Phil Bibby CC.

"Stevenage Borough Council recognises the importance of public trust in the security of the electoral process.

This Council notes:

- The threats to the democratic process must be combated to protect the integrity of our democracy.
- That the independent Electoral Commission has called for a resolution to issues relating to voter ID in the UK.
- The recent law change allows for the provision of free voter ID cards (Voter Authority Certificates) which are issued by local authorities. This means financial hardship will not be a barrier to a voter's ability to get an ID and cast their ballot.

This Council believes:

- Considering how frequently residents now require ID in their day-to-day lives, the new requirement for voters to have ID to vote is a reasonable approach to reducing the threat of voter fraud and ensures that there are still not significant barriers to voting.
- That the system for applying for voter ID for those without a valid voter ID is simple and has ensured that all can access the electoral process.

This Council resolves:

- To put on record its support for the Election Act 2022's positive change which has introduced voter ID to further safeguard our democratic process.
- To fulfil its duty to properly inform residents about the latest change in voting requirements.
- To commit to continuing to use its communication channels to notify residents about the need for voter ID in next year's Local Elections and potential parliamentary elections."

11. 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 Margaret Notley

"Since the near disaster that occurred with the collapse of part of the structure during demolition of Swingate, we know that a Health and Safety investigation took place, but the report has never been provided by the Health and Safety Executive. In view of the public concern that death or injury could have easily been the outcome, does the Executive Member not agree that they have the right to see this report to get the necessary assurances that appropriate safeguards were in place, with measures recommended to avoid a recurrence?"

(B) Question from Councillor Andy McGuinness

"How many cases of enforcement action (non-parking) have the Council undertaken over the past 2 years, including (a) planning, (b) ASB, (c) fly tipping, (d) noise, (e) environmental health, and (f) dangerous dogs?"

(C) Question from Councillor Bret Facey

"Does the Executive Member believe that the maintenance fee charged to owners of garages within Council-managed garage blocks is fair and value for money?"

(D) Question from Councillor Alex Farquharson

"What options are being considered for the land currently occupied by garages which have been condemned due to contamination with asbestos fibres?"

(E) Question from Councillor Tom Wren

"What timescales does the Council think are acceptable for responding to and dealing with issues raised by councillors?"

(F) Question from Councillor Julie Ashley-Wren

"Considering the aim of the Council for a modal shift, would it be possible to focus attention on the issues of cars around schools at drop off and pick up times? All

schools are plagued by issues of parents parking on pavements, on yellow lines or idling in their cars whilst also blocking main roads.

Unfortunately, the level of traffic enforcement is not able to prevent or deter such behaviour, despite being illegal, dangerous and often causing pollution in areas where children, who are walking, are exposed to it.

What measures are SBC doing to change the mindset of parents by working with schools to encourage more children to walk to school and ensure that there are adequate resources for enforcement of illegal parking?"

(G) Question from Councillor Stephen Booth

"To what extent is the Council's geographical information system being used to help inform departments, officers and work teams to locate critical information on topics such as occupation and ownership of properties, domestic dwellings, public buildings, commercial premises, land parcels, footpaths, pavements etc.?"

(H) Question from Councillor Graham Snell

"There has been recent local social media comment about this year's poor offering from SBC of the (alleged) Christmas tree in the Town Centre near the former bus station.

Who decided on this object and on its location?

Why was it changed from the previous long-standing design?

Can we have a proper, traditional Christmas tree back next year, please?"

(I) Question from Councillor Adam Mitchell CC

"Do you agree that the Council's communication should have been clearer to tenants of its asbestos contaminated garages?"

(J) Question from Councillor Wendy Kerby

"What are your plans for the Bandle Hill Play Centre site?"

(K) Question from Councillor Robin Parker CC

"The Scrutiny committees are stated by the Government to be an important integral part of the local government process, and are supposed to gather evidence on issues affecting local residents and to make recommendations to the Executive, all done under the watchful eye of the public.

Therefore:

1. Why has SBC decided (with no public discussion amongst councillors or announcement to councillors or to the public) to stop streaming, or reporting on, all Scrutiny meetings?
2. Who made this decision, and when?
3. Will this decision be reviewed soon?"

12. MID YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW 2023/24

The report circulated at Item 12 was considered by the Executive on 15 November 2023 when the following recommendation to Council was agreed:

“That the 2023/24 Mid Year Treasury Management Review and Prudential Indicators be recommended to Council for approval”.

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13. REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES 2023 - OUTCOME OF REVIEW

To consider and adopt proposals relating to Parliamentary Polling Districts and Polling Places for use in all future elections.

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14. AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES

To note the Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 8 November 2023.

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