

# STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

## COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Monday, 8 January 2024

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

**Present:** Councillors: Sarah Mead (Chair), Alex Farquharson (Vice-Chair), Julie Ashley-Wren, Forhad Chowdhury, Mason Humberstone, Conor McGrath and Carolina Veres.

**Start / End Time:** Start Time: 6.00pm  
End Time: 6.30pm

### 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Wendy Kerby and Ellie Plater.

There were no declarations of interest.

### 2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Community Select Committee held on 14 November 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### 3 DRAFT REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW OF HOUSING REPAIRS

The Chair stated that as Members had read the report, she would not go through each section of the report line by line but invited Members to make comment on the report and recommendations or provide any suggested changes to the wording or any additional recommendations that they might have.

A Member suggested that perhaps recommendation 8 "Development of Customer Self-serve App" might be the hardest to deliver as it would likely be resource intensive. The Chair stated that as many Council services were becoming accessible online it was important to also make the repairs service accessible via an App. The Chair stated that it was the Committee's role to make recommendations and for Executive Members and Officers to evaluate the recommendation and decide if it is deliverable. The Assistant Director, Building Safety and Housing Property Services, Denise Lewis, stated that the review findings and this particular recommendation would be welcomed as the principle that Officers were working towards was to make the service as accessible as possible to the public.

The Chair stated that the Committee had carried out a thorough review and it was

pleasing that many of the findings of the Independent Housing expert, Ridge, had come to similar conclusions as the Member scrutiny review.

It was **RESOLVED** that the draft report and recommendations of the Housing Repairs Scrutiny Review be agreed.

4 **URGENT PART I BUSINESS**

None.

5 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That under Section 100A 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 the reasons for the following reports being in Part II were accepted, and that the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

6 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

The Chair agreed to receive a part II urgent item on activity proposals for Fairlands Valley Sailing Centre and main lake. The reason for urgency was that the matter needed to be considered at this meeting prior to formally being considered at the Executive and then the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and then possible awarding of a contract in time for possible summer 2024 activities to be in place.

The Cultural, Wellbeing and Leisure Services Manager, Geoff Caine provided Members with an outline of options which Members commented on as a piece of pre-scrutiny policy development work ahead of the report being considered at the Executive and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee later in January.

It was **RESOLVED**:

That the report be noted, and Members comments be verbally passed on by the Cultural, Wellbeing and Leisure Services Manager to the Executive in January 2024.

**CHAIR**