

Daneshill House
Danestrete
Stevenage
Hertfordshire

23 July 2024

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, 31 July 2024 at the conclusion of the Special Meeting 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 - ANNUAL MEETING - 22 MAY 2024

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of Annual Council held on 22 May 2024.

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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

None received.

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. SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

To consider the Annual Scrutiny Report 2023/24.

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11. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

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

(1) Code of Conduct

To be moved by Councillor Phil Bibby

The Council notes that the Code of Conduct for Members states that we should treat other councillors and members of the public with respect, and that the Campaigning Rules state that we must not knowingly make a false statement about the personal character of a candidate.

The Council also notes that there have been instances where these rules have not been adhered to, so resolves to remind all councillors, activists and future candidates of the need to treat everyone with respect and, on all occasions, act with integrity.

(2) Labour Government

On 4th July, 2024, after 14 years of disastrous, draconian and divisive Conservative government, the country chose change. It chose hope. It chose Labour.

The people of Stevenage also chose Labour and, for the first time in 14 years, the Stevenage constituency will have an MP worthy of the title. Kevin Bonavia will reset the expectations of what a good local MP should be: one who works full time for Stevenage; one who works with the local authorities in his constituency, not against them; one who is accessible and accountable to local people.

We congratulate Kevin Bonavia on his election. He is one of 411 Labour MPs in the House of Commons who, with Sir Keir Starmer as Prime Minister, a talented front bench team and a clear mandate, will bring the change and stability that the people of this country want and need.

We also congratulate the former Leader of the Council, Baroness Taylor of Stevenage, on her appointment as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in the Department of Housing, Community & Local Government.

The new Government has hit the ground running. In the King's Speech on 17th July, the Government set out its priorities. They are ambitious and diverse priorities.

- A Renters' Rights Bill that will abolish Section 21 "no-fault evictions" and empower tenants to challenge rent increases "designed to force them out by the back door".
- Respect orders – a revamped form of Asbos – will give police powers to place restrictions on adults to tackle anti-social behaviour.
- A Planning and Infrastructure Bill to speed up the planning process and planning committees will be modernised, with resources to do their jobs.
- A commitment to housing – including social and affordable housing.
- A devolution bill for England,
- An Employment Rights bill, recognising that Labour values workers' rights.
- Nationalisation of our railways.

The Labour Manifesto, published prior to the general election, gave commitments that a Labour Government would work collaboratively with local government. The manifesto emphasises the importance of stable funding, decision-making flexibility, and partnership with local leaders and communities to drive growth and provide essential services. The King's Speech has opened the door to that collaboration, and, in Stevenage, we warmly welcome it.

This Council resolves that:

1. We look forward to a collaborative relationship with the newly elected Labour MP and Government to meet the Council ambitions for housing, growth and regeneration, and for the benefit of the people of Stevenage.
2. The Leader of the Council writes to Kevin Bonavia, MP for Stevenage, congratulating him on his election to Parliament and that SBC looks forward to a close working relationship.
3. The Leader of the Council writes to Baroness Taylor of Stevenage upon becoming Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in the Department of Housing, Community & Local Government and wishes her every success with her new role.

12. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO 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 Robin Parker

What progress has been made since the Council meeting of 20 December 2023 when Council agreed, inter alia, to investigate the installation of wildlife-friendly lighting in Fairlands Valley Park?

Have similar sites in other local authorities been researched?

Has suitable technology been fully considered?

(B) Question from Councillor Stephen Booth

Following the successful trials by South Cambridgeshire Council of switching council employees to working a four-day week, what has the Council done to investigate the important outcomes of this important trial, and what impact it could have specifically for Stevenage Borough Council?

(B) Question from Councillor Andy McGuinness

What is the total amount received in capital receipts from land sales owned by the Council (excluding Right to Buy & property receipts) in each year covering the financial periods since 2019-2020?

(C) Question from Councillor Phil Bibby

Does the Cabinet Member consider there is enough 'Grey Belt' land in Stevenage to cater for the Labour Government's likely increase in house building targets?

13. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2024/25 AND ON-GOING COST PRESSURES

To consider a report requesting an additional £2.434Million for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) during 2024/25, in response to current and ongoing operational pressures.

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14. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON FOR STANDARDS COMMITTEE

To consider the extension of the term appointment of an 'Independent Person for Standards' in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.

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15. AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES

To note the Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 4 June 2024.

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