

Daneshill House
Danestrete
Stevenage
Hertfordshire

10 December 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, 18 December 2024 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

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 16 October 2024, the Special Council on 16 October 2024 and the Special Council on 2 December 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

To receive a community presentation from Cycling UK Stevenage.

5. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

None received.

6. QUESTIONS FROM THE YOUTH COUNCIL

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

Could the Council provide an update on the initiatives or planned initiatives they

are supporting to equip young people in schools with the necessary skills to progress to the next stage of their lives, particularly in STEM, and what efforts are being made to increase awareness of these?

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 motions have been received for consideration:

(i) Labour Government Budget

To be moved by Councillor Roopchand and seconded by Councillor Woods

On Wednesday 30th October, Chancellor of the Exchequer Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP delivered a Labour Government Budget for the first time in 14 years. With a strong mandate from the electorate in July, including 17,698 voters in Stevenage, the Chancellor vowed to restore stability to our economy and to begin a decade of national renewal, to fix the foundations and deliver change through responsible leadership in the national interest.

Council notes the significance of having the first female Chancellor in history deliver the budget, and what that signifies to young women and girls across the UK about unlocking opportunities and aspirations.

Council believes this is the first budget in 14 years to truly back the ambitions of Stevenage, from supporting residents with the cost of living to building affordable homes to supporting local industry to investing in key services such as health, education and transport.

The budget restored economic stability, plugging the devastating £22 billion black hole left behind by successive previous administrations whilst not raising a single tax on workers pay packets. Council notes this strong approach to fiscal responsibility is projected to lead to consistently low inflation and high growth which we will all benefit from.

Council supports the increase in the minimum wage that puts an extra £1,400 into the pockets of the lowest paid full-time workers, the freezing of fuel duty, £500 million investment into fixing potholes, £5 billion allocated to build new affordable homes, the largest increase in the carers allowance since its inception and the commitment to the triple lock on pensions which will lead to a £470 increase next year.

Council recognises that the £1.3 billion invested into local government marks a clear turning point from an era of austerity where councils will finally be given the funds needed to properly run services and support communities.

Council endorses the £22.6 billion increase to the healthcare budget, £6.7 billion increase to the education budget, £1 billion uplift for SEND provision and £650 million allocation for public transport as decisions that demonstrate the Government's commitment to deliver on its promises to fix the foundations of our broken public services.

Lastly, Council celebrates the wide ranging support the budget gave to sectors that are prominent in Stevenage, namely £2.9 billion more for the defence sector, £1 billion for the aerospace industry, £2 billion for the automotive industry, £520 million for the life sciences sector and £6.1 billion for the medical sector.

Overall, this was a budget that comprehensively delivered for working people whilst starting to repair 14 years of economic ruin.

Council resolves to:

Endorse the Chancellor's Autumn Budget and recognise it as a critical step toward economic recovery, growth, stronger services and national prosperity for all.

Encourage the Leader of the Council Richard Henry and Kevin Bonavia MP to continue working collaboratively to achieve positive outcomes for Stevenage at a local and national level.

(ii) Labour Government Budget

To be moved by Councillor Phil Bibby

The Council notes that the labour Government inherited the fastest growing economy in the G7, with mortgage interest rates falling and inflation back to the Bank of England target, after the impact of the COVID pandemic and the energy price crises because of the war in Ukraine.

The independent Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) forecasts that growth will now be lower, inflation will rise and mortgage interest rates will increase as a result of the Chancellor's budget on 30 October.

The OBR also forecasts that the policies in the budget directly:

- Increase tax take to an historic high at 38 per cent of GDP by 2029/30;
- Lower medium-term GDP growth to 1.5 per cent;
- Push up CPI inflation, projected to rise to 2.6 per cent by 2025;
- Increase borrowing by £19.6 bn this year and by £32.3 bn over the next 5 years;
- Reduce real household disposable income by 2029;
- Raise the bank rate and 5 year gilt yield higher than forecast; and
- Cut wages by £7.5 bn as a result of a hike in employers' national insurance.

The council rejects the Chancellor's tax on jobs, which will hit businesses workers in Stevenage. According to the OBR, "*policy changes leave nominal and real earnings growth lower over the remainder of the forecast, as employers pass on the national insurance contribution rise.*" The OBR further notes, "*in 2025/26 firms will pass on 60 per cent of the higher costs to workers and consumers, via lower wages and higher prices.*"

Council believes this budget is a tax on working people.

11. 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.

Question from Councillor Phil Bibby

Does the Cabinet Member agree that following the fire at the Luton Airport multi story car park, the Council would be expected to protect residents, shoppers and their cars by installing a sprinkler system in St Georges Way car park?

12. APPOINTMENT OF MONITORING OFFICER

To appoint a Monitoring Officer in accordance with s5 Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

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13. MID-YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2024/25

To update Members on the Treasury Management activities in 2024/25 and review effectiveness of the 2024/25 Treasury Management and Investment Strategy including the 2024/25 prudential and treasury indicators.

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14. AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES

To note the Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 6 November 2024.

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15. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

To consider the following motions –

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.

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16. REMUNERATION OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

To consider a recommendation from the Appointments Committee proposing a revised pay scale for the recruitment of a new Chief Executive.