

Daneshill House
Danestrete
Stevenage
Hertfordshire

Date of Publication

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, 17 December 2025 at 7.00pm and you are summoned to attend to transact the following business.

Yours faithfully

Tom Pike
Chief Executive

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. MINUTES - 15 OCTOBER AND SPECIAL MEETING 17 NOVEMBER 2025

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meetings of the Council on 15 October 2025 and Special Council held on 17 November 2025.

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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

Question from Jennifer Huygen

With thanks to Cllr Simon Speller, Cllr Rob Broom and officers for keeping me personally in the loop on the progress of the pre-requisite works in Fairlands Valley Park.

In December 2023, the Council unanimously supported considering eco-friendly, wildlife-conscious lighting. The requisite bat survey, funded in the 2025/26 budget to remove the ecological barrier, is now complete.

However, the Green Spaces Strategy 2025-2035, developed following this vote, categorises this project (Action FV1) as 'Long Term (8-10 years)' to merely 'explore options'. This implies a delivery date of 2033-2035.

This timeline is now untenable given three key developments:

- National Policy: The Angiolini Inquiry Part 2 Report (published 2 December 2025) explicitly classifies 'better street lighting' as a critical preventative measure for violence against women and girls.
- Local Precedent: The Council's Community Safety Unit and Herts Police are currently consulting on a 'Safer Route' from the Old Town, explicitly stating that a 'well-lit route... enhances confidence and security for everyone, especially women and girls.'
- Community Demand: The 'Glow Ride' (October 2025) demonstrated active, physical demand for safer, lit cycling routes in the park.

It is also widely recognised, including in the Angiolini Inquiry, that violence and harassment in public spaces are significantly under-reported, and that many women and girls avoid unlit parks after dark, so recorded crime figures do not fully reflect the level of risk they experience.

Given this material change in national safety guidance, the completion of the bat survey, and the Council's own commitment to "Safer Routes" elsewhere in Stevenage, will the Council now bring forward and implement an accelerated, wildlife-conscious lighting scheme for Fairlands Valley Park by reclassifying Action FV1 from "Long Term" to "Short Term (1–3 years)", updating the wording to "Install wildlife-conscious lighting", allocating the necessary capital funding within the 2026/27 budget (ahead of the 12 February 2026 decision), and commencing design work immediately using the bat survey findings to mitigate wildlife disturbance while enhancing the confidence and security of everyone using the park, especially women and girls?

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:

(1) Renters Rights Act 2025

To be moved by Councillor Jackie Hollywell

This Council welcomes the Renters' Rights Act 2025 — long-overdue reform that finally puts renters' rights first. The Act, coming into force in May 2026, ends “no-fault” Section 21 evictions, creates open-ended periodic tenancies, strengthens repair standards, and gives renters clearer routes to challenge unfair rent increases.

For the estimated 5,000 households who privately rent in Stevenage, this legislation means real security: no more being pushed out of their homes with two months' notice, no more landlords dodging their responsibilities, and no more uncertainty about the basics — safe homes, fair rents, and predictable tenancies. Since 1980, there has been a drastic reduction in the amount of social housing in Stevenage and the UK. A significant number of those homes are now owned by private landlords and the residents pay higher rents with fewer rights than they would have had as social housing tenants.

Labour councillors have consistently argued for these changes, and the Act finally delivers many of the reforms for which renters have waited years, including:

- Abolition of fixed-term assured shorthold tenancies (ASTs) and the move to periodic tenancies, giving renters more stability and choice.
- Stronger legal duties on landlords to maintain homes, tackle hazards and carry out timely repairs.
- Limits on advance rent and fees, so renters are not forced into financial insecurity simply to secure a home.
- A clear right to request pets, with landlords needing a good reason to refuse.
- New enforcement powers for councils — expanded civil penalties, better investigatory tools, and required reporting of enforcement activity.
- A national landlord database, improving transparency and helping councils tackle criminal and rogue landlords.

This Council resolves to:

1. Actively promote renters' new rights — making sure tenants know how to use them, how to report poor conditions, and how to challenge illegal behaviour.
2. Set clear expectations for landlords and letting agents, explaining their new duties under the Act and what full compliance looks like in Stevenage.
3. Strengthen the Council's enforcement capacity so that we are ready from day one to act against unlawful evictions, sub-standard homes and non-compliant landlords.
4. Write to the Minister for Housing, welcoming the introduction of long-overdue protections for renters, and suggesting that additional funding for councils will

be needed to do justice to this Act and achieve the Government's ambitions for renters.

5. Champion renters locally, ensuring that Stevenage leads the way in delivering a fairer, safer and more secure private rented sector.

(2) A Green Enterprise Partnership and Incentive Scheme in Stevenage.

To be moved by Councillor Wilkins

This Council notes that:

- Forward thinking local authorities throughout the UK are providing incentives and encouragement for local businesses to introduce innovative sustainability schemes in partnership with industry experts.
- Through this collaboration local businesses can reduce their environmental impact and reinvest savings in sustainability.
- Central to this success is the **GO GREEN scheme**, the UK's first green tax incentive for SMEs, funded by the Government's shared prosperity fund.

This Council believes that:

- Stevenage must take proactive steps to support local businesses in reducing carbon emissions to achieve net-zero targets.
- A scheme similar to the award-winning GO GREEN scheme introduced by Sutton Council would strengthen the local economy, encourage sustainable practices, and demonstrate leadership in environmental innovation.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. **Commission a report** into establishing a **Green Enterprise Partnership** in Stevenage, engaging with local business networks, sustainability organisations and strategic partners.
2. **Investigate the introduction of a GO GREEN-type incentive**, providing significant business rates relief to SMEs that commit to measurable carbon reduction plans.
3. **Develop a comprehensive roadmap** for supporting businesses in transitioning to sustainable operations, including access to expert advice, certification schemes and reinvestment opportunities.
4. **Report back to Full Council within six months** with findings, recommendations and an implementation plan for Stevenage's own Green Enterprise Partnership.

(3) Residents First: Protecting Family Homes and Community Cohesion in Stevenage

To be moved by Councillor Rob Henry

This Council notes that:

1. Residents have raised concerns about the use of hotels and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) within Stevenage to accommodate people arriving via irregular migration routes and other Government placement

- schemes.
2. The conversion of family homes into HMOs can place pressure on parking, waste services, community cohesion, anti-social behaviour management, and the supply of family housing across the town.
 3. Stevenage Borough Council has existing powers in relation to licensing, enforcement, and planning policy, including the ability to review and amend Article 4 Directions.

This Council believes:

1. Stevenage residents should receive clear information on how temporary accommodation is being used locally and the impact on services.
2. The Council should use its planning and housing powers to protect residential balance and prevent inappropriate HMO proliferation.

This Council resolves to:

1. Publish a quarterly summary, open and accessible to Members and residents, outlining:
 - The number of placements made into local hotels or HMOs via Home Office or other external schemes;
 - The general type of accommodation used (hotel, HMO, other);
 - Any direct costs to the Council or local services.
2. Write to the Home Office and other responsible agencies requesting routine, timely communication with the Council regarding local placements to support service planning.
3. Undertake a review of existing HMO licensing and enforcement, with the aim of:
 - Identifying unlicensed HMOs;
 - Ensuring compliance with safety, amenity and management standards.
4. Amend or expand Article 4 Directions where evidence shows:
 - A concentration of HMOs is affecting residential amenity, parking or local services;
 - Family housing stock is being reduced and community cohesion is or at risk of being impacted.
5. Update local planning guidance so that new HMO applications must clearly demonstrate:
 - Adequate room sizes and waste storage;
 - Sufficient parking provision;
 - Effective management arrangements.

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.

(A) Question from Councillor Peter Wilkins

What air quality monitoring systems are currently in place across Stevenage, how is the council using any data generated to control and manage pollution hot spots, especially around our schools and nurseries?

(B) Question from Councillor Phil Bibby

Does the Cabinet member consider that the level of compensation agreed for the period of stall holders being unable to trade, caused by the delay in relocating the Indoor Market, is sufficient?

(C) Question from Councillor Robin Parker

Has a suitable small mechanical sweeper now been obtained, if so when did it start being used, and what proportion of the borough has now been covered using it?

(D) Question from Councillor Stephen Booth

Can councillors please have a regular monthly summary statement of staff and employee movements and changes, including new postholder appointments and people leaving and joining the Council.

(E) Question from Councillor Tom Wren

When letting commercial property, what due diligence checks does the council undertake on prospective tenants to safeguard against properties being used for illegal activity or money laundering?"

(F) Question from Councillor Andy McGuinness

When can council leaseholders expect to receive final bills for the major refurbishment works? Please could the answer be broken down to include the years when work was completed and when final bills will be issued?

(G) Question from Councillor Rob Henry

Does the Leader agree that this council has a duty to be financially responsible and to keep our debt as low as possible?

(H) Question from Councillor Mason Humberstone

Does the Leader agree with me that community cohesion remains of paramount importance, and that it is increasingly at risk due to the rising number of illegal migrants arriving in our town?

12. MID YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW 2025/26 AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

To update Members on the Treasury Management activities in 2025/26 and review effectiveness of the 2025/26 Treasury Management and Investment Strategy including the 2025/26 prudential and treasury indicators.

13. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS - UPDATE REPORT

To review the Committee Memberships on the Council.

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14. DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE EXECUTIVE UNDER THE SPECIAL URGENCY PROVISIONS OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES (EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS) (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2012

To advise the Council of decision(s) taken by the Cabinet in accordance with the Special Urgency provisions of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

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15. 2026 FLEXIBLE VOTING PILOTS

To consider the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) invitation for applications from local authorities in England to pilot schemes at local elections in May 2026.

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16. AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES

To note the Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 3 September 2025.

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