

# STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

## **CABINET MINUTES**

Date: Wednesday, 11 March 2026

Time: 1.00pm

Place: Council Chamber

**Present:** Councillors: Richard Henry (Chair), Jeannette Thomas (Vice-Chair), Myla Arceno, Rob Broom, Coleen De Freitas, Jackie Hollywell, Loraine Rossati and Simon Speller

**Start / End** Start Time: 1.00pm

**Time:** End Time: 1.45pm

### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tom Plater and Nigel Williams.

There were no declarations of interest.

### **2 MINUTES - CABINET 11 FEBRUARY 2026**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 11 February 2026 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

### **3 MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY AND SELECT COMMITTEES**

Cabinet received a summary of the issues covered at the most recent meetings of the Select Committees including implementation of the Cycle Strategy at Environment and Economy Select and a focussed meeting on Public Health at Community Select.

In relation to the Cycle Strategy, Members of the Environment and Economy Select Committee discussed the delivery of the Strategy with the Director of Planning and Regulation and the Cabinet member for Transport and made a number of observations and recommendations.

The Community Select Committee met with the Health and Wellbeing Manager and the HCC Director of Public Health and Deputy Director of Public Health, along with the Cabinet Member for Older People. Areas of discussion included education and prevention activity, accessibility of services for those in work or with families or caring responsibilities, and improvements to the visibility of outreach provision.

Members thanked the officers involved in the arrangement of these meetings, as well as the Director and Assistant Director of Public Health for their attendance and input and acknowledged the strength of partnerships in these areas.

The Leader of the Council thanked the Chairs of the two Select Committees for their

work which highlighted the positive initiatives undertaken by the Council.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Environment and Economy Select and Community Select Committee meetings be noted.

#### 4 **STEVENAGE BIODIVERSITY DUTY MONITORING**

Cabinet were presented with the Council's first Stevenage Borough Biodiversity Duty report as required by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended by the Environment Act 2021).

The report, required by legislation, provided Members with information on how Biodiversity Net Gain had been monitored within the Borough alongside the actions and strategies in place to enhance the environment. Members recognised that the Council had a long-standing Biodiversity Action Plan, with real commitment to improving the town through changes such as more trees, woodland and different habitats.

A number of comments were made by Members including:

- They welcomed the actions taken at neighbourhood and local level with the use of the Climate Change Community Fund (CCCF) allocated to Members;
- Members were pleased to note that a number of projects had been funded through the CCCF in response to requests from local residents;
- The ambition to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain sat alongside the work of the ambitions within the Stevenage Local Plan;
- The commitment to the Biodiversity Duty was essential to ensure the improvements to the local environment and that contributions to the future of the planet would benefit the next generation;
- The highest count to date had been recorded following the annual butterfly survey carried out by Green Space Volunteers; and
- Members were pleased to see the introduction of the new micro woods at various locations around the town.

Officers confirmed that the next phase of the Biodiversity reporting would be strengthening ecological networks and improving habitat delivery. It was noted that the report would be reported back to Cabinet in the future to review progress.

It was **RESOLVED** that the information within the Biodiversity Duty Report, set out in Appendix A be noted.

#### 5 **CORPORATE PERFORMANCE - QUARTER 3 2025/26**

Cabinet received a report and presentation from the Chief Executive highlighting the Council's performance across key priorities and projects for Quarter Three 2025/26 and providing an update on progress against current strategic risks.

The report provided Members with an update on delivery of the Making Stevenage Even Better Programme, along with corporate performance results across the Council's business units. Members were pleased to note that Quarter 3 had been

another successful period for the Council, reporting on 54 Corporate Performance Measures and over 70 key projects.

The Chief Executive advised that a small number of areas required specific attention and active management by officers going forward and this was reflected in the report recommendations which were being closely monitored by Senior Management and the relevant Portfolio Holder.

The Chief Executive advised the meeting of the Government's intention to have a local outcomes framework for local government which had approximately 120 indicators reflecting performance of the council alongside public experience of the town and the council.

Cabinet received a presentation highlighting the following:

- All RSH compliance measures maintained 100%, with no overdue Fire Remedial Actions outstanding for the third quarter in a row;
- Works were underway on the site of the new Brent Court Independent Living Scheme including demolition of the garages which would commence following the handover of the parking;
- Work on regenerating The Oval continued with demolition works beginning in the near future and work continued at Phase Two of Burwell with a view to top out this financial year;
- Construction was progressing at the SG1 Plot A – Claxton House;
- An agreement had been executed with the owners of Westgate to improve the entrance to the centre to create a more welcoming visitor experience and improved access;
- The final sites under the play improvement programme had been completed;
- Satisfaction with the CSC customer service remained high at 92.6%; although it was recognised that there was still room for further improvement to be made.

Members made the following comments:

- Thanks were given to all staff working towards the continued performance improvements;
- Members were pleased to note the number of housing development schemes going ahead in the town;
- The opening of the indoor market had been a success with a high footfall through the market;
- Although it was recognised that there was still work to do on the void numbers, the Portfolio Holder for Housing gave reassurances that void properties were being closely monitored and although she was pleased to see that the figures were gradually improving, officers and members were working hard to achieve substantial improvement to this area;
- There had been welcome changes introduced in relation to waste collection services and the Portfolio Holder for Environment thanked the officers involved in the delivery of this service;
- Following Local Government Reorganisation, there would be new and wider

priorities in relation to performance monitoring resulting in necessary learning relating to those areas the Council was not currently responsible for.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the service performance against 54 corporate performance measures and progress of key projects in Quarter Three 2025/26 through the Making Stevenage Even Better Programme (Appendix A) be noted.
2. That the proposal to replace the two Housing Complaints Satisfaction measures be agreed (section 4.3.9).
3. That the improvement actions being taken to improve void turnaround times and deliver value for money for tenants be noted (section 4.3.2).
4. That the strategic risk updates (section 4.6) be noted.

## 6 **QUARTER 3 BUDGET MONITORING**

Cabinet received a report providing an update on the projected General Fund (GF), Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Capital 2025/26 net expenditure and seeking approval to amend the General Fund, HRA and Capital budgets as part of the quarterly revenue monitoring review.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources advised that the Q3 position showed a modest £68k General Fund pressure, driven largely by transitional costs at the Indoor Market, increased provisions for historic insurance liabilities, higher external audit fees, and operational pressures including repairs and vehicle hire. She also advised that the HRA was projecting a £1.234m underspend, mainly due to higher interest on balances, lower repairs and maintenance costs, and vacancy-related savings, with some offsetting pressures from damp and mould work and lower rent income linked to timing of development and Right to Buy sales.

The Strategic Director and Chief Financial Officer advised that the HRA variation related to an increase in investment income driven by capital receipts received in terms of right to buy and grant received that had not yet been spent. It was noted that borrowing had also been taken due to the good preferential interest rate at the time which the Government had confirmed would continue until the end of the next financial year.

It was **RESOLVED**:

### **General Fund**

- 1 That the 2025/26 third quarter projected net increase in General Fund expenditure of £68,060 be approved.
- 2 That the proposed movement on reserves as detailed in paragraph 4.3.1 be noted.

- 3 That pavilion related Fees & Charges for the financial year 2026/27 for the General Fund (GF), as shown at Appendix C, be approved.

### **Housing Revenue Account**

- 4 That the 2025/26 third quarter net decrease in HRA expenditure of £1,234,310 be approved.

### **Capital Programme**

- 5 That the General Fund capital budget re-phasing of £3,260,842 from 2025/26 to future years be approved.
- 6 That the Housing Revenue Account capital budget re-phasing of £7,762,388 from 2025/26 to future years be approved.
- 7 That net changes to budgets of £230,000k fully funded by external contributions in paragraph 4.9.2 be noted.
- 8 That General Fund virement and update of £90,000 in paragraph 4.9.2 be approved.
- 9 That the proposed changes to the funding of the General Fund and HRA capital budgets in section 4.10 be approved.

## **7 REVOCATION AND VARIATION OF TAXI RANKS TO THE HIGH STREET, STEVENAGE**

Cabinet received a report seeking approval to revoke the existing taxi rank located on the southbound side of the High Street, Stevenage and vary the taxi rank located on the northbound side of the High Street, Stevenage increasing the length from 35m to 54m, in accordance with Section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

The Portfolio Holder advised that the proposed changes would result in the taxi rank on the southbound side being removed and the taxi rank on the northbound extending to 54 metres, providing sufficient capacity for approximately 9 vehicles, resulting in the reduction of 3 vehicles compared to the current rank provision. It was also proposed that the operating hours of the taxi rank extend by two and a half hours with the new times being from 18.30 to 04.00hrs (currently 21.00 to 04.00). It was also proposed that the remaining rank would operate on a dual-use basis, to be used for general parking during the daytime, with the provision of appropriate signage to indicate the restrictions which were in place.

It was noted that a full public consultation exercise had been undertaken over a 28-day period in accordance with relevant statutory requirements. The Police had no observations or comments and no responses had been received from the taxi trade or other stakeholders.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the revocation of the existing, adopted taxi rank located on the southbound side of the High Street, Stevenage, in order to facilitate improvement works being undertaken by Hertfordshire County Council be noted.
2. That the variation of the existing, adopted taxi rank located on the northbound side of the High Street, Stevenage, increasing the length of the rank from 35 metres to 54 metres be approved.
3. That a change to the operating hours of the taxi rank which is to remain on the northbound side of High Street, Stevenage, extending the operating hours by two and a half hours, with the new times being from 18:30 to 04:00 (currently 21:00 to 04:00) be approved.
4. That the proposed dual use of the remaining taxi rank during the daytime and note the provision of signage indicating this be noted.

8 **URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

There was no urgent Part I Business.

9 **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.

10 **PART II MINUTES - CABINET 11 FEBRUARY 2026**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II Minutes of the Cabinet held on 11 February 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

11 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

There was no urgent Part II Business.

**CHAIR**