

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, 22 July 2026

Time: 7.00pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present: Councillors: , , Myla Arceno, Julie Ashley-Wren, Doug Bainbridge CC, Jan Bainbridge CC, Philip Bibby, John Blackwood, Lloyd Briscoe, Rob Broom, Jim Brown, Jeff Bullock, Forhad Chowdhury, Nazmin Chowdhury, Peter Clark, Lynda Guy, Jody Hanafin, Richard Henry, Rob Henry, Jackie Hollywell, Matthew Hurst CC, Dermot Kehoe, Lin Martin-Haugh, Jaysica Marvell, Sarah Mead, Robin Parker CC, Claire Parris, Liam Morrell Phillips, Ellie Plater, Tom Plater, Ricki Rands, Loraine Rossati, Wendy Rouse CC, Nigel Williams, Jade Woods and Tom Wren

Start / End Start Time: 7.00pm
Time: End Time: 10.10am

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

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Leanne Brady, Peter Clark, Coleen De Freitas, Andy McGuinness and Graham Spencer.

Councillors Tom Wren and Robin Parker CC declared interests in Item 14 – Civil Penalties Policy and Item 15 – Renters Rights Act 2025 as residential landlords in Stevenage.

2 **MINUTES - 21 MAY 2026**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting on 21 May 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor subject to the inclusion of Councillor Peter Wilkins in the list of apologies for the meeting.

3 **MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Mayor reported that, during his first nine weeks in office, he had attended 36 civic engagements across Stevenage and the wider community.

These included commemorative events marking the 80th anniversary of VE Day, Armed Forces Day commemorations, the opening of community facilities, and visits to local fairs and volunteer organisations.

The Mayor highlighted his appointment as President of the Stevenage District Scout Association and also referred to engagements alongside civic dignitaries, including the High Sheriff, Lord-Lieutenant and fellow Mayors, as well as celebrations marking significant milestones for local residents.

The Mayor concluded by highlighting the success of Stevenage Day, attended by an estimated 30,000 people, and thanked all those involved in supporting the town's civic and community activities.

4 COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS

There were no community presentations.

5 PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

There were no petitions or deputations.

6 QUESTIONS FROM THE YOUTH COUNCIL

The Youth Mayor, Tyra Karira gave an update on events she had attended since the Annual Meeting.

Tyra reported on a positive and active start to her term in office, having participated in a range of civic and community events. These included representing Stevenage at the Town Twinning event, chairing the Youth Advisory Board and engaging with board members on ways to improve opportunities for young people, volunteering with residents at Silkin Court, and attending Stevenage Day. The Youth Mayor also highlighted attendance at the Goodwood Festival of Speed alongside members of the Youth Advisory Board and local college students, with the visit funded by Mission 44.

Tyra advised that along with the Deputy Youth Mayor, she had approved a grant of £150 to Friends of SADA to support the production of a Christmas song aimed at raising awareness and funds.

Tyra expressed her commitment to continuing to attend community events, and engage with young people to ensure that young people's voices were heard.

7 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Council noted that a response to the question submitted by Daryl Osborn regarding the Scrutiny Review of Bus Services had been published in the supplementary agenda for the meeting.

Daryl Osborne was present at the meeting and asked the following supplementary question:

'Given that Stevenage's 80th Anniversary Heritage Bus Running Day is planned for 15 November, and funding is currently being sought, would Councillor Broom encourage his fellow councillors to consider allocating part of their LCB funding to support the event, helping heritage buses reach as many areas of the town as possible?'

In response, Councillor Broom confirmed his support for the proposal, stating that he

was keen to see events held to celebrate Stevenage's 80th anniversary. He advised that he would be willing to allocate a portion of his Local Community Budget funding towards the Heritage Bus Running Day and encouraged other councillors to consider making similar contributions to support the event.

The Council then noted that a response to the question submitted by Jack Downie-Webb regarding empty homes had been published in the supplementary agenda for the meeting.

Jack Downie-Webb was present at the meeting and asked the following supplementary question:

'How many Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) and Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMOs) have been successfully executed against long-term empty properties in the Borough over the previous five years and to what extent had these powers been used to bring vacant homes back into use?

In response, Councillor Broom advised that he had previously outlined the Council's enforcement powers and provided information on local activity relating to empty homes. He stated that a balance struck between addressing housing pressures, using available enforcement powers where appropriate, and maintaining a development approach that protected green space. He considered that the issues raised had largely been addressed in earlier responses, although he gave a commitment to provide additional detail regarding enforcement activity.

8 LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S UPDATE

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Liam Morrell-Phillips began by thanking the residents of Stevenage for the trust they had placed in his Group at the May Elections. He also expressed appreciation to Council officers for the support and induction provided to the newly elected councillors, which had helped them quickly develop an understanding of Council business and their responsibilities. He advised that the group was committed to learning about the issues facing the town and looked forward to working constructively with councillors from all parties to serve the residents of Stevenage.

Councillor Liam Morrell-Phillips then asked the following question:

Would the Leader of the Council commit to ensuring that the Local Government Reorganisation process was subject to full cross-party scrutiny. Councillor Morrell-Phillips stressed the importance of safeguarding Stevenage's identity, services and interests throughout the transition and ensuring that the needs of Stevenage residents remained a key consideration in any future reorganisation arrangements.

The Leader of the Council responded and agreed that securing the best outcomes for the residents of Stevenage and Hertfordshire was of paramount importance. The Leader advised that he worked closely with the Leaders of all Hertfordshire councils, together with Chief Executives and the Police and Crime Commissioner, through the Hertfordshire Leaders Group, which had reaffirmed its commitment to collaborative working in the interests of residents across the county.

The Leader also highlighted the extensive programme of information, engagement and training provided to Members and staff on Local Government Reorganisation over the preceding 18 months, with opportunities for all Members to contribute. The Leader confirmed that he would continue to engage with all Members on the developing arrangements, including future governance structures and preparations for a shadow authority, and he welcomed input from across the Council as the reorganisation progressed.

The Council then received updates from the relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holders on the following matters:

- New Homes Update
- Youth Team Enjoy VIP STEM Inspiration Day at Silverstone with Mission 44
- Launch of We WILL Build it Better project, as part of the Pioneering Young STEM Futures programme
- Stevenage 80
- Playzone
- Veterans Hub (VALOUR Programme) – Progress Update
- Care experience added as protected characteristic
- Food Waste Collections
- Local Government Reorganisation

9 UPDATE FROM SCRUTINY CHAIRS

Councillor Ellie Plater, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee gave an update on the work of the Committee. At its meeting on 15 June 2026, Members had considered a range of reports, including those relating to Pavement Licensing, Civil Penalties, Enforcement under the Renters' Rights Act, the Local Plan Partial Update, the Community Infrastructure Levy, Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), and Contract and Land Development matters. Members had noted the Council's robust approach to housing enforcement, including the ring-fencing of income from civil penalties for private sector housing enforcement activity. The Committee also received assurances that the current Local Plan would remain in force until its end date and sought clarification regarding proposed governance arrangements associated with LGR.

At its meeting on 21 July 2026, the Committee considered reports including the St Nicholas Pride in Place programme, the Quarter 4 Outturn Monitoring Report, the Corporate Performance reports, the Draft Tenancy Strategy 2026-2031, Sports and Leisure services, and a Contract Award for Repairs and voids materials. Members focused particularly on the composition of the St Nicholas Pride in Place Board, measures being taken to address ongoing challenges with housing voids through improved tenant engagement and tenancy audits, and proposals within the Draft Tenancy Strategy to strengthen tenant engagement and involvement.

Councillor Jim Brown gave an update on the work of the Community Select Committee. He advised that the Committee had agreed its 2026/27 work programme including policy development of the Tenancy Strategy and Housing Strategy, a major review of support for young people, an annual review of the

Housing Allocations Policy, updates on housing damp and mould, preparation for Local Government Reorganisation, the Statutory Crime and Disorder Committee, and a standing Public Health item.

The Committee also considered the scoping document for its review of support for young people. Members agreed that the review should focus broadly on young people aged 14 to 25 and include consideration of education, training, employment, young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), looked-after children and care leavers. Members further agreed that the review should adopt a partnership approach involving schools, health services and other key organisations, with a particular emphasis on mental health, access to support services, neurodiversity, family support and the impact of these issues on educational outcomes and wellbeing.

In the absence of the Chair, Councillor Leanne Brady, Councillor Ellie Plater gave an update on the work of the Community Select Committee.

The Committee approved a work programme including reviews of fly-tipping, cycling, skills and employment, and the impact of the cost-of-living crisis. Members also agreed the scope of the fly-tipping review, which would examine enforcement activity, deterrents and penalties, the use of CCTV and signage, reporting arrangements, performance measures, hotspot locations, and access to waste disposal facilities.

The Committee also reviewed its Action Tracker and requested future updates on waste and recycling in flat blocks, the impact of the new college campus on skills provision and the local economy, and the effect of the cost-of-living crisis. Members agreed to defer further scrutiny of bus services, with the option of revisiting the issue in 2027 if required.

10 **SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT**

Councillor Ellie Plater Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, moved that the Annual Scrutiny Report for 2025/26 be noted.

In moving the report, Councillor Plater advised that it reflected the significant volume of work undertaken by the three Scrutiny Committees during the 2025/26 municipal year. She advised that the Committees had conducted a wide range of reviews and investigations, providing detailed scrutiny of Council services and matters affecting local residents. She stressed that the scrutiny process added value through in-depth examination and constructive challenge, which supported informed decision-making. The Chair further commented that the report demonstrated the importance placed on scrutiny by Stevenage Borough Council and highlighted the strong cross-party commitment to the scrutiny function.

Councillor Brown in seconding the report confirmed that the scrutiny reviews undertaken during the year by all three committees had covered a wide range of significant and diverse topics, demonstrating the breadth and depth of the scrutiny function in examining issues of importance to the Council and local residents.

The Leader, Councillor Richard Henry acknowledged the crucial work of the Scrutiny Committees supported by the Scrutiny Officer in holding the Cabinet to account across the ambitious work agenda of the Council. He thanked the current Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees for their work.

It was **RESOLVED** that the work undertaken by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees during 2025/26, as set out in the report, be noted.

11

NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Expanding Apprenticeship Opportunities in Stevenage

Councillor Tom Plater moved the following motion:

This Council notes that:

1. Apprenticeships provide a vital pathway into skilled employment for people of all ages, including young people entering the labour market, adults seeking to retrain or progress in their careers, and residents looking to develop new skills.
2. The Government has placed skills, training and employment at the heart of its mission to grow the economy and break down barriers to opportunity.
3. Recent apprenticeship reforms include measures to increase flexibility for employers and learners, reduce unnecessary bureaucracy, expand opportunities for young people, introduce Foundation Apprenticeships, and reform the Apprenticeship Levy into a Growth and Skills Levy to better meet local labour market needs.
4. Stevenage has a proud history as a centre for innovation, advanced manufacturing, engineering, life sciences and technology, with major employers including Airbus, MBDA, Autolus and GSK, alongside a growing business community requiring a skilled local workforce.
5. This Council has already recognised the success of Stevenage Works in bringing together employers, education providers and public agencies to deliver employment, skills and social value outcomes for local residents.
6. Strong partnerships between local authorities, employers, colleges, training providers and Government are essential if local people are to benefit fully from apprenticeship reforms and wider economic growth.
7. Despite progress, barriers remain for residents seeking apprenticeships, including awareness of opportunities, travel costs, confidence, access to networks, caring responsibilities and competition for placements.

This Council believes that:

1. Every resident in Stevenage should have access to high-quality education, training, apprenticeships or employment opportunities at every stage of life.

2. Apprenticeships should be accessible to people from all backgrounds and at all ages, supporting social mobility, lifelong learning and inclusive economic growth.
3. Stevenage Borough Council has an important leadership role in convening partners and ensuring that regeneration and inward investment create opportunities for local people throughout their working lives.
4. The Government's reforms provide a significant opportunity to increase apprenticeship participation, address local skills shortages and ensure businesses can access the workforce they need.
5. Existing partnerships, including Stevenage Works, provide a strong foundation on which to expand apprenticeship opportunities across the town.

This Council resolves to:

1. Work with key partners, including North Hertfordshire College, local schools, employers, training providers, the Hertfordshire skills system, Stevenage Works and business networks to maximise the opportunities arising from the Government's apprenticeship reforms.
2. Strengthen and promote partnership working across Stevenage to increase apprenticeship availability and encourage greater employer participation.
3. Work with existing contractors, developers and partners to increase apprenticeship opportunities through procurement, Section 106 agreements, social value commitments and workforce planning, whilst ensuring that agreed apprenticeship, employment and skills commitments are effectively monitored and delivered.
4. Support the promotion of apprenticeships through careers events, outreach activity and engagement with residents, particularly those who are not currently in education, employment or training, or who may benefit from retraining and upskilling opportunities.
5. Work with local employers to identify barriers to apprenticeship recruitment and retention and advocate for solutions where appropriate.
6. Request that the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Skills reports back to Members within twelve months on progress made, including:
 - apprenticeship opportunities supported or created;
 - partnership activity undertaken;
 - engagement with local employers and education providers; and
 - recommendations for further action.
7. Ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Rt Hon Baroness Smith of Malvern, Minister of State for Skills, welcoming the Government's apprenticeship reforms, highlighting the work being undertaken in Stevenage through Stevenage Works and related partnerships, and inviting Ministers to engage with Stevenage as an example of effective local delivery of the Government's skills agenda.

In moving the motion, Councillor Plater highlighted the importance of apprenticeships, skills development and employment opportunities in ensuring that residents of all ages could access education, training and rewarding careers. He spoke of the benefits of apprenticeships in improving social mobility, addressing skills shortages and supporting economic growth, and welcomed recent Government reforms aimed at increasing flexibility and access to training.

Councillor Plater made reference to Stevenage's strengths in advanced manufacturing, space technology, defence and life sciences, and the need to ensure that local residents have the skills required to access employment opportunities arising from these sectors. He advised that the Council was already supporting this objective through initiatives such as Stevenage Works, partnerships with employers, schools, North Hertfordshire College, training providers and Jobcentre Plus, and by embedding skills and employment opportunities within the town's regeneration programme.

Councillor Plater referred to the Council's partnership with Mission 44 and its commitment to removing barriers to opportunity, particularly for young people seeking careers in STEM-related fields. He further acknowledged the value of the Council's own apprenticeship programme and its focus on developing and retaining talent within the organisation.

Councillor Plater advised that the Council was strengthening partnerships with employers and training providers, exploring barriers to apprenticeship creation and increasing access to skills and training opportunities. He also confirmed that the Council would write to Government to highlight Stevenage's successful approach to skills development and apprenticeships and to support the continued growth of opportunities for local residents.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Dermot Kehoe.

Councillor Morrell-Philips, Leader of the Opposition moved and Councillor Matthew Hurst seconded the following amendment:

To delete the final resolution, which read:

"Ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Rt Hon Baroness Smith of Malvern, Minister of State for Skills, welcoming the Government's apprenticeship reforms, highlighting the work being undertaken in Stevenage through Stevenage Works and related partnerships, and inviting Ministers to engage with Stevenage as an example of effective local delivery of the Government's skills agenda."

and replace it with:

"Ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Rt Hon Baroness Smith of Malvern, Minister of State for Skills, highlighting the apprenticeship, skills and employment work being undertaken in Stevenage through Stevenage Works and related partnerships, and seeking additional Government support and funding to expand apprenticeship opportunities for Stevenage residents."

Councillor Morrell Phillips advised that the remainder of the motion would be unchanged and that the intention was simply to focus the requested letter on securing further support and funding for Stevenage residents.

A number of Members spoke on the amendment and following consideration by the mover of the original motion, Councillor Tom Plater and in agreement with the mover of the amendment Councillor Morrell Phillips, the Motion was altered to read:

This Council notes that:

1. Apprenticeships provide a vital pathway into skilled employment for people of all ages, including young people entering the labour market, adults seeking to retrain or progress in their careers, and residents looking to develop new skills.
2. The Government has placed skills, training and employment at the heart of its mission to grow the economy and break down barriers to opportunity.
3. Recent apprenticeship reforms include measures to increase flexibility for employers and learners, reduce unnecessary bureaucracy, expand opportunities for young people, introduce Foundation Apprenticeships, and reform the Apprenticeship Levy into a Growth and Skills Levy to better meet local labour market needs.
4. Stevenage has a proud history as a centre for innovation, advanced manufacturing, engineering, life sciences and technology, with major employers including Airbus, MBDA, Autolus and GSK, alongside a growing business community requiring a skilled local workforce.
5. This Council has already recognised the success of Stevenage Works in bringing together employers, education providers and public agencies to deliver employment, skills and social value outcomes for local residents.
6. Strong partnerships between local authorities, employers, colleges, training providers and Government are essential if local people are to benefit fully from apprenticeship reforms and wider economic growth.
7. Despite progress, barriers remain for residents seeking apprenticeships, including awareness of opportunities, travel costs, confidence, access to networks, caring responsibilities and competition for placements.

This Council believes that:

1. Every resident in Stevenage should have access to high-quality education, training, apprenticeships or employment opportunities at every stage of life.
2. Apprenticeships should be accessible to people from all backgrounds and at all ages, supporting social mobility, lifelong learning and inclusive economic growth.
3. Stevenage Borough Council has an important leadership role in convening partners and ensuring that regeneration and inward investment create opportunities for local people throughout their working lives.

4. The Government's reforms provide a significant opportunity to increase apprenticeship participation, address local skills shortages and ensure businesses can access the workforce they need.
5. Existing partnerships, including Stevenage Works, provide a strong foundation on which to expand apprenticeship opportunities across the town.

This Council resolves to:

1. Work with key partners, including North Hertfordshire College, local schools, employers, training providers, the Hertfordshire skills system, Stevenage Works and business networks to maximise the opportunities arising from the Government's apprenticeship reforms.
2. Strengthen and promote partnership working across Stevenage to increase apprenticeship availability and encourage greater employer participation.
3. Work with existing contractors, developers and partners to increase apprenticeship opportunities through procurement, Section 106 agreements, social value commitments and workforce planning, whilst ensuring that agreed apprenticeship, employment and skills commitments are effectively monitored and delivered.
4. Support the promotion of apprenticeships through careers events, outreach activity and engagement with residents, particularly those who are not currently in education, employment or training, or who may benefit from retraining and upskilling opportunities.
5. Work with local employers to identify barriers to apprenticeship recruitment and retention and advocate for solutions where appropriate.
6. Request that the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Skills reports back to Members within twelve months on progress made, including:
 - apprenticeship opportunities supported or created;
 - partnership activity undertaken;
 - engagement with local employers and education providers; and
 - recommendations for further action.
7. Ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Rt Hon Baroness Smith of Malvern, Minister of State for Skills, welcoming the Government's apprenticeship reforms, highlighting the apprenticeship, skills and employment work being undertaken in Stevenage through Stevenage Works and related partnerships, and seeking additional Government support and funding to expand apprenticeship opportunities for Stevenage residents.

Following further debate, Councillor Tom Plater thanked Members for their contributions.

Upon being put to the vote, the altered Motion was carried.

Protecting Fairlands Valley Park and South Field from Development beyond Local Government Reorganisation.

Councillor Tom Wren moved the following motion:

This Council notes that:

1. Fairlands Valley Park is one of Stevenage's most valued public open spaces, providing essential recreational, environmental, health, and wellbeing benefits to residents of all ages.
2. The Park, including South Field and all associated green spaces, is widely used for leisure activities including walking, sport, community events, wildlife enjoyment, education, and informal recreation.
3. Public green spaces play a critical role in protecting biodiversity, improving air quality, supporting mental and physical health, mitigating flooding, and maintaining the character and identity of Stevenage
4. Future generations should be guaranteed permanent access to these open spaces for recreation and leisure purposes.
5. The maximum environmental protections are currently in place for Fairlands Valley Park and South Field under the existing town plan. There is concern that our current intentions are vulnerable to future challenges and potential changes to the town plan by successive administrations following local Government reorganisation, which may change the status of Fairlands Valley land.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. Publicly state our firm opposition against any current or future proposal for housing development, residential construction, or urban encroachment within Fairlands Valley Park, including the South Field.
2. Explore and implement the strongest available legal protections, including but not limited to:
 - a. a restrictive covenant in partnership with Herts Wildlife Trust
 - b. protected open space designation,
 - c. Fields in Trust protection,
 - d. or other legally binding mechanisms,
3. Ensure the land is permanently safeguarded for leisure, recreation, environmental, and community use only.
4. Request that Council officers prepare a report outlining the legal options available to secure long term protection of the Park and South Field from development other than for the improvement of existing infrastructure,

including the Farmhouse.

5. Commit to working with local residents, environmental groups, sports organisations, and community stakeholders to preserve and enhance the park for future generations.
6. Write to relevant regional and national planning authorities confirming the Council's position that Fairlands Valley Park in its entirety and South Field must remain protected public leisure land and should not be allocated for housing development or industrial use in any future local planning framework.

In moving the motion, Councillor Wren advised that while existing Local Plan protections for Fairlands Valley Park were strong, they could be amended in the future. Councillor Wren emphasised the importance of taking action now to secure the strongest possible protections for Fairlands Valley while the Council had the ability to do so. It was argued that safeguarding the area now would help ensure its long-term protection for future generations.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Sarah Mead expressed concern about the potential implications of Local Government Reorganisation and the possibility of decisions affecting Stevenage being taken by representatives from outside the town. She emphasised the importance of protecting Fairlands Valley, describing it as a valued landmark and community asset enjoyed by generations of residents and serving as a place that brought people together across the town.

While acknowledging that Fairlands Valley currently benefitted from protection through the Local Plan, Councillor Mead stressed that planning policies could be changed in the future and therefore should not be relied upon alone and contended that stronger, long-term protections should be pursued to preserve Fairlands Valley for future generations and protect it from potential development proposals.

Following further debate in support of the motion it was acknowledged that Fairlands Valley already benefitted from significant environmental and planning protections and that the area was designated as a Principal Open Space within the Stevenage Borough Local Plan and protected by policies relating to green infrastructure, the natural environment, principal open spaces and the Stevenage Green Link Network.

Upon being put to the vote, the Motion was carried.

12 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO CHAIRS/PORTFOLIO HOLDERS**

The Council received eight questions from Members to Committee Chairs/Portfolio Holders.

The responses to the eight questions had been published in the supplementary agenda for the meeting.

(A) Question from Councillor Peter Wilkins re: Food Waste Collection

Supplementary question – Given that the Council's recycling rate was currently around 37-38% and remained below many neighbouring authorities, would the

Council consider setting a target to increase recycling to at least 42% within the next two years?"

The Portfolio Holder acknowledged that further work was required to improve communications and encourage greater participation in food waste recycling. He advised that while early indications were encouraging, it was considered too soon to draw firm conclusions regarding longer-term trends but it was anticipated that participation rates would continue to increase gradually over time. Councillor Brown also made reference was also made to discussions held through the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership, where similar challenges were being experienced by other authorities.

- (B) Question from Councillor Andy McGuinness re: the planned schedule of environmental maintenance

Supplementary question – if there was additional capacity arising from reduced grass cutting, could this be used to undertake targeted weed clearance in high-footfall areas, such as neighbourhood centres, particularly where weeds had been sprayed but not subsequently removed?

The Portfolio Holder advised that the Council was continuing to invest in the maintenance of the public realm, including additional work on hedgerow management and environmental upkeep across the town. He advised of a number of issues were currently affecting green spaces, including the impact of the prolonged dry weather, which had resulted in some trees shedding leaves prematurely and created additional maintenance requirements. He acknowledged the points raised by Councillor McGuinness and confirmed that they would be taken into consideration as part of the Council's ongoing management of the town's green spaces and public realm.

- (C) Question from Councillor Phil Bibby re: fuel inflation

There was no supplementary question

- (D) Question from Councillor Robin Parker re: automatic external defibrillators (AEDs)

Supplementary question – could a small budget be established within the General Revenue Account from next April to fund the replacement of automatic external defibrillators and any necessary replacement parts across the town.

The Portfolio Holder advised that he would be willing to explore the provision of funding and the mechanism and source of funding but gave a commitment to investigate the options available and determine whether support could be provided.

- (E) Question from Councillor Julie Ashley-Wren re: Fairlands Valley Lakes

Supplementary question – Would the Council give consideration to reinstating the climbing wall at the Lakes

The Portfolio Holder explained that the matter had previously been considered and that concerns regarding safety, together with the potential cost of replacement, had prevented further progress at that time. The issue would be considered as part of the Council's wider review of facilities and activities within Fairlands Valley.

(F) Question from Councillor Peter Clark re: extreme heat

Supplementary question – What measures were put in place to support people sleeping rough during the recent heatwave?

The Portfolio Holder explained that the Council's Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) was activated during periods of extreme weather, including both severe cold and extreme heat. The Rough Sleeper Team increased its outreach and support activity and adopted a proactive approach to engagement, seeking to support individuals into accommodation where possible while respecting personal choices.

Additional measures included responding promptly to reports of rough sleeping, undertaking extra welfare visits and supporting approximately 8 to 10 people each day through the Homeless Community Hub. The Hub provided access to cold water, meals, ice lollies, sunscreen, hats and other items to help people stay safe during the heatwave.

Members were advised that similar support measures would be implemented during any future periods of extreme heat.

(G) Question from Councillor Jaysica Marvell re: Financial Support for residents

Supplementary question – is the Council measuring whether the apprenticeship programmes lead to improved outcomes for residents, such as moving into employment, increasing earnings, or, where appropriate, reducing reliance on benefits?

The Portfolio Holder for Resources advised that he did not have the requested information available and was unable to confirm whether the figures currently existed. He undertook to provide a written response to the Member following the meeting.

(H) Question from Councillor Tom Wren regarding: Pride in Place Funding

Supplementary question – Could further information be provided on the data behind the Community Needs Index, and how this compared across all Stevenage wards?

The Leader of the Council advised that the criteria used to allocate funding had been based on objective measures and had been assessed independently. The Council would act as the accountable body during the early stages of the programme, with responsibility for governance, financial oversight and

decision-making with both the local MP and Council representatives to be involved in the Board and its decision-making processes.

In addition, the Leader explained that a preferred candidate for the role of Chair had been identified and once appointed, would work with Council representatives to consider applications for the Neighbourhood Board and ensure balanced representation from local organisations and residents, with a significant proportion of members drawn from the St Nicholas community. The Leader also offered to provide further information regarding the Government's funding allocation process.

13 **BUSINESS & PLANNING ACT 2020 – NEW PAVEMENT LICENSING POLICY**

The Council considered a report in respect of the Council's Draft Pavement Licensing Policy.

It was moved by Councillor Rob Broom, and seconded by Councillor Lin Martin-Haugh, that the Recommendations in the report be approved.

Upon the motion being put to the vote, it was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the report be noted and the proposed Stevenage Borough Council Pavement Licensing Policy (attached at appendix A) be approved.
2. That the proposed Stevenage Borough Council Pavement Licensing Policy be adopted.

14 **CIVIL PENALTIES POLICY**

The Council considered a report in respect of the Council's revised Civil Penalty Policy.

It was moved by Councillor Rob Broom, and seconded by Councillor Loraine Rossati, that the Recommendations in the report be approved.

Upon the motion being put to the vote, it was **RESOLVED** that Civil Penalty Policy, attached as Appendix A to the report be adopted.

15 **RENTERS RIGHTS ACT 2025 - ENFORCEMENT POLICY**

The Council considered a report in respect of the Council's Renters' Rights Act 2025 Enforcement Policy.

It was moved by Councillor Rob Broom, and seconded by Councillor Loraine Rossati, that the Recommendations in the report be approved.

In response to concerns from a member regarding staffing capacity, the Portfolio Holder acknowledged that the additional workload associated with the proposals would place increased pressure on the enforcement team. The need for additional resources to support delivery would be monitored closely as demand developed. It

was recognised that effective implementation would require sufficient enforcement capacity, and Councillor Broom confirmed a commitment to keeping resource requirements under review.

Upon the motion being put to the vote, it was **RESOLVED** that the Renters' Rights Act 2025 Enforcement Policy, attached as Appendix A to the report be adopted.

16 **STEVENAGE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN PARTIAL UPDATE: ADOPTION**

The Council considered a report in respect of the adoption of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan Partial Update.

It was moved by Councillor Rob Broom, and seconded by Councillor Claire Parris, that the Recommendations in the report be approved.

Upon the motion being put to the vote, it was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the Stevenage Borough Local Plan Partial Update, incorporating Main Modifications (Appendix C to E) and associated Proposals Map (Appendix F) be adopted.
2. That the feedback from the Planning & Development Committee on the content of the Report be noted.

17 **STEVENAGE BOROUGH REVISED COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY: ADOPTION**

The Council considered the adoption of the Stevenage Borough Revised Community Infrastructure Levy.

It was moved by Councillor Rob Broom, and seconded by Councillor Claire Parris, that the Recommendations in the report be approved.

Upon the motion being put to the vote, it was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the Stevenage Borough Revised Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule (Appendix B) be adopted.
2. That the feedback from the Planning & Development Committee on the content of this Report be noted.

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

The Council considered a report in respect of the 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.

The Monitoring Officer reported that, in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny

Procedure Rules, where the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had agreed to waive call-in on grounds of urgency, the decision must be reported to the next available meeting of Council together with the reasons for urgency. Members were advised that call-in had been waived in this instance due to the requirement for Hertfordshire authorities to submit a single collective response to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) within a prescribed timescale.

It was then moved by Councillor Richard Henry, and seconded by Councillor Ellie Plater, that the Recommendations in the report be approved.

Upon the motion being put to the vote, it was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

19 **AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 2 June 2026 were received.

20 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

It was **RESOLVED**:

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 involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1 to 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by SI 2006 No. 88.
2. That having considered the reasons for the following item being in Part II, it be determined that maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighed the public interest in disclosure.

21 **STEVENAGE NEW LEISURE CENTRE - WORKS CONTRACT**

The Council considered a Part II report in respect of the delivery of the new Stevenage Sports and Leisure Centre

Following debate where all Members welcomed the new Leisure Centre, upon being put to the vote it was **RESOLVED** that the recommendations in the report be approved.

CHAIR