

Daneshill House
Danestrete
Stevenage
Hertfordshire

13 October 2026

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, 21 October 2026 at the conclusion of the Special Council Meeting 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 - 22 JULY AND SPECIAL MEETING 22 JULY 2025

to approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meetings of the Special Council and Council on 22 July 2026.

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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

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

What can the council do to increase opportunities for young people to access free

or affordable local activities?

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:

(1) Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

To be moved by Councillor Loraine Rossati

Council welcomes:

1. The Government's *National Plan to End Homelessness*, with its increased focus on prevention and ambition to halve long-term rough sleeping by the end of this Parliament and ultimately end homelessness and rough sleeping.
2. The Government's new £442 million Rough Sleeping Programme, taking planned national investment in homelessness and rough sleeping to more than £4 billion over three years, and its commitment that everyone sleeping rough who needs help should be offered a route off the streets this winter.

Council notes:

1. That rough sleeping and homelessness are distinct but connected issues, requiring different but coordinated responses.
2. That demand for homelessness advice and prevention in Stevenage remains high, with more than 1,300 approaches in each of the last three years; with common reasons including family exclusion, domestic abuse, loss of private rented accommodation, relationship breakdown, rough sleeping and 'sofa surfing'.
3. That Stevenage's Homelessness Prevention Action Plan already prioritises early intervention, trauma-informed and person-centred support, and partnership working, including work to strengthen housing pathways for people leaving hospital or prison.
4. That some groups face particular risks or barriers, including women experiencing hidden homelessness, families with children, those who have served in the Armed Forces, care-experienced people, older people, and

people leaving prison or with a history of offending; and that women sleeping rough are particularly likely to be missed because they often do not feel safe sleeping visibly.

Council believes:

1. With the Prime Minister, that “no one should be forced to sleep rough on our streets”, and that everyone should have access to a safe and secure home. Where someone is not ready or able to accept an offer of accommodation, support and engagement should continue without judgement.
2. That the Government’s shift towards prevention, early identification and assessment based on need provides an opportunity to reach people who may previously have been missed, and to better recognise and respond to the different experiences and barriers faced by women, care-experienced people, people who have served in the Armed Forces and others at greater risk of homelessness.
3. That preventing homelessness requires public services to work together, and that housing, health, social care, Probation and other services should identify people at risk early rather than waiting until they reach crisis.

Council resolves:

1. To review Stevenage’s Homelessness Prevention Action Plan in light of the Government’s National Plan, strengthening early identification and prevention, aligning our approach with the new national framework and making best use of the additional national investment.
2. To better identify and support women experiencing rough sleeping and hidden homelessness, including participating in the Women’s Rough Sleeping Census, using the Government’s new tools and guidance to develop safe, gender-informed support, and exploring local need for women-only temporary accommodation.
3. To build on existing work to strengthen early identification and homelessness prevention for people who have served in the Armed Forces, working with local Armed Forces organisations to support those at risk and connecting them, where appropriate, to the specialist housing and support services being expanded by Government.
4. To review the Council’s housing allocation and homelessness policies to ensure that the Council’s recognition of care experience as lifelong is properly reflected in the support available to care-experienced adults of all ages; and to request that the Cabinet Member for Housing write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government calling for changes to national legislation and policy to recognise care experience beyond the age of 25 within homelessness prevention and housing policy.
5. To work with the NHS and Hertfordshire County Council (including Public Health) to strengthen local prevention and support for people who are homeless or sleeping rough, including access to physical and mental healthcare, substance misuse services, and effective hospital discharge pathways; and to champion the Government’s proposed new duty on public services to collaborate in preventing homelessness.

(2) Thameslink and Great Northern services – First Class Carriages

To be moved by Councillor Tom Wren

The Council Notes That:

- Overcrowding on peak-time Thameslink and Great Northern services remains a major issue for commuters boarding trains at Stevenage.
- The network has transitioned into public ownership under DfT Operator Limited, meaning the government now directly runs the service rather than a private franchise.
- First-class areas typically restrict access to 26 seats that frequently sit empty while standard-class commuters stand in overcrowded trains.

The Council Believes That:

- Retaining any restricted premium sections on an intensive, government-run commuter route is an inefficient use of train capacity.
- Fully declassifying first class would immediately open up extra standard-class seats, as well as additional standing room, with little impact on revenue.
- Across the morning and evening peak windows alone, this simple operational change could provide an estimated 400 to 500 extra available seats daily for commuters using these services.

The Council Resolves To:

1. Write to the Secretary of State for Transport, urging them to use the government's direct operational control of the network to immediately declassify all remaining First Class areas on Thameslink and Great Northern services.
2. Write to the local MP for Stevenage, requesting their support for this proposal.

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 Sarah Mead

Following a request from a resident, please could floodlights be installed on the basketball court at Shephalbury Park to extend use in the winter months?

(B) Question from Councillor Phil Bibby

Given that the Government has announced a pause of Local Government Reform, in view of the wider legal challenges made based on, amongst other things, gerrymandering, how would the Leader of the Council respond to residents on SBC's proposals for the expensive option of 4 Unitaries, and how are these proposals likely to be amended?

(C) Question from Councillor Peter Wilkins

Can you tell me how many Solar panels and how many air source heat

pumps were fitted to council tenanted homes in the financial year 2025/26 (where the smart export guarantee benefits the tenants directly rather than serving a communal area.) and what the target was for the year?

(D) Question from Councillor Ricki Rands

The Comet reported on 23 September 2026 that council mowing at Shackledell Grassland removed a substantial area of habitat and threatened a rare cricket colony.

The site supports six species of bush cricket, three species of grasshopper, as well as butterflies, moths and wildflowers.

The site is managed by Stevenage Borough Council under a Biodiversity Action Plan and is the only known location in Hertfordshire for the scarce great green bush cricket. It has been alleged that approximately 80% of the grassland was mown, despite the Plan recommending that only one quarter be cut each year, resulting in the loss of one of the colony's principal breeding areas.

A similar over-mowing incident occurred in 2018, which the Council described at the time as an "honest mistake".

Will the Council provide a full account of how this incident occurred?

(E) Question from Councillor John Blackwood

The Council committed to providing a new community centre as part of the development at Bragbury End. For clarity, the community room within Brodie Court does not constitute the promised new community centre.

Will the Council confirm whether it remains committed to delivering this facility?

(F) Question from Councillor Matthew Hurst

The Grade II-listed farmhouse at Fairlands Valley Park is in a poor state of repair and the Council has recently submitted a planning application to demolish outbuildings on the site.

Will the Council confirm unequivocally whether it intends to retain and preserve the farmhouse, or whether demolition is being considered?

(G) Question from Councillor Jaysica Marvell

Recent incidents have raised concerns about online abuse, harassment and intimidation directed at people involved in public life in Stevenage, including councillors, council staff and young people participating in the Council's Youth Advisory Board.

Can the Leader set out what procedures the Council currently has in place for responding to and escalating such incidents?

(H) Question from Councillor Ellie Plater

With the increased public presence of the newly established Youth Advisory Board, and with details of its work and the young people involved being shared online, can the Portfolio Holder outline what the Council is doing to support and safeguard young people who choose to participate in civic life, and what more can be done to ensure that young people feel confident putting themselves forward without fear of online abuse or personal attacks?

(I) Question from Councillor Jade Woods

Following the success of our International Day of Older Persons (IDOP) event, what plans do the Council have to build on this momentum and continue to support older residents throughout the year?

(J) Question from Councillor Andy McGuinness

What is the Council doing to support resident's access to key banking and postal services across our town?

(K) Question from Councillor Doug Bainbridge

Can the Portfolio holder for Housing confirm what specific work has been completed by Stevenage Borough council, outside of the armed forces covenant forum to prepare for the expanded armed forces covenant duty?

In particular which housing policies and procedures and operational practices have been reviewed against the draft statutory guidance.

(L) Question from Councillor Dermot Kehoe

Please can an update to Council be offered regarding the exploratory work on the electrification of larger fleet vehicles?

(M) Question from Councillor Robin Parker

Around the Borough there are a number of defibrillators and bleed control units. Please can consideration be given to making sure all of these are signposted with permanent arrows pointing to the nearest one?

(N) Question from Councillor Ashley-Wren

What plans do the Council have to improve their performance on addressing fly-tipping and support in dealing with the spate of seemingly abandoned vehicles across the Town?

(O) Question from Councillor Parris

The newly refurbished war memorial in the town centre looks fantastic, and I welcome the Council's support for the project. Can the Portfolio Holder

outline what other funding and initiatives are in place to support veterans and the wider Armed Forces community in Stevenage?

(P) Question from Councillor Wren

Most supermarkets now offer a service for the recycling of soft plastics. Can the council consider introducing a soft plastics recycling collection at it's neighbour recycling banks and what impact does the council think this service could have to reduce landfill waste in Stevenage?

12. ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW 2025/26 AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

To approve the Annual Treasury Management Report for 2025/26

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13. AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION - PLANNING SCHEME OF DELEGATION

To consider amendments to the Council's Constitution to ensure that it reflects and is compliant with the new National Scheme of Delegation which the Government is introducing via the Town and Country Planning (Discharge of Local Planning Authority Functions) (England) Regulations 2026.

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14. AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES

To note the Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 16 September 2026.

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