

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Date: Wednesday 1 March 2017

Time: 6:00 pm

Place: Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

Present: Members: M Downing (Chair), M Hurst (Vice-Chair), J Brown
L Chester, J Fraser and E Harrington.

Start/End Time: Start Time: 6:00 pm
End Time: 6.15 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Bainbridge, R Broom and A McGuinness.

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES – 18 JANUARY 2017

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Economy Select Committee held on Wednesday 18 January 2017 are approved and signed by the Chair.

3. UPDATE ON THE PROVISION OF PUBLIC TOILETS IN THE TOWN

The Strategic Director presented a report giving an update to Members on the provision of public toilets across the Town. The report covered:

- The possibility of forming a Community Toilet Scheme in Stevenage and details of the scheme currently in operation at East Herts District Council;
- Increasing the provision and times when toilets are open to the public at Fairlands Valley Park, in particular during the summer months;
- Improving toilet provision visibility on the SBC website;
- The possibility of public funded buildings including community centres and council buildings to provide toilets accessible to the public.

The Chair advised that he had been on a visit with officers to East Herts District Council (EHDC) to obtain more information regarding the community toilet scheme which was run in their area. Officers advised that EHDC would be providing further clarification in relation to the fees payable to the participants of the scheme.

The Chair advised that the purpose of the review however, was not to replace existing provision but to fill in the gaps that currently existed. It was suggested that the views of the Businesses in the Town could be sought through the Business

Partnership to see if there was any interest in taking part in a community toilet scheme. Conversations also needed to be held with community centres around use of toilets in the centres but it was recognised that there had been issues in the past with regard to the misuse and vandalism of toilets inside community centres. It was also noted that public access could also be an issue if playgroups or children's groups were held in the centres.

In relation to the provision at Fairlands Valley, the consensus was that as part of the consideration of the Committee's work programme, Officers should be requested to undertake a separate piece of work to take a wider look at all facilities at the Valley including options available for toilet provision. Currently toilets were available at the Sailing Centre and the café but only when these facilities were open.

Concern was expressed by Members regarding the lack of facilities at high footfall retail areas such as the Roaring Meg shopping area.

In respect of the Old Town, the view of the Committee was that the opening hours of the public facilities should be extended if there was a major event going on in the High Street.

It was **RESOLVED** that a further progress report incorporating the issues raised at the meeting be brought back to this Committee in due course.

4. 2017/18 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Officer presented a report seeking Member's approval for the Scrutiny Work Programme for the new Municipal Year.

The Scrutiny Officer had canvassed all Members involved in the scrutiny process, responses had been received from a number of Members commenting on the current scrutiny arrangements. A number of topics were also suggested as potential scrutiny items.

It was **RESOLVED**

1. That Scrutiny Members' feedback on ideas for improving Scrutiny (see section 4 of the Scrutiny Officer's report) be noted.
2. That having considered ideas put forward by individual Members, and from the public (see section 5), the Committee determine the following subject matters to be added to a 'long list' work programme of potential Scrutiny reviews items for 2017/2018:
 - Open Spaces – including the use and facilities at Fairlands Valley Park;
 - Flood Risk Management;
 - Stevenage Indoor Market;
 - Neighbourhood Area Maintenance
 - Buses – including possible joint working with the Stevenage Bus User Group;
 - Town Twinning – potential cross cutting review with the

Community Select Committee on the economic and cultural value of town twinning to the Town;

- Cycleways – lighting and maintenance;
3. That the comments regarding the Future Town Future Council programme and the relationship between Scrutiny and the officer Senior Leadership Team (see section 5.4 & 5.5 of the report respectively) be noted.
 4. That the following matters be revisited for monitoring:
 - Inward Investment Opportunities and Business Support;
 - Allotments
 5. That the following subjects be agreed to go forward as areas for Policy Development work for the Committee:
 - Refuse and Recycling Services
 - Car Parking Strategy
 - Green Travel Plan – refresh in 2018
 - Town Centre Manager's Annual Report
 - Business Relationship Manager's Annual Report

4. URGENT PART I BUSINESS

None.

5. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Not Required.

6. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.

CHAIR