

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Monday 3 July 2017

Time: 6:00 pm

Place: Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

Present: Members: M Downing (Chair), J Brown, L Chester,
E Harrington, J Lloyd and A McGuinness.

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

End Time: 7:20 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Hurst, D Bainbridge, R Broom and J Fraser.

There were no declarations of interest.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

It was **RESOLVED** that the Terms of Reference are noted.

3. MINUTES – 1 MARCH 2017

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Economy Select Committee held on Wednesday 1 March 2017 are approved and signed by the Chair.

4. EXECUTIVE PORTFOLIO RESPONSE TO ALLOTMENTS REVIEW

The Committee received the Executive Member response to the Allotments Scrutiny Review which was carried out in 2016/2017.

The Committee was advised that a draft strategy document for a review into the allotments policy had been written which addressed a number of the points raised in the review. Subject to Members' comments the document would be submitted to interested parties as part of the consultation process prior to implementation.

In reply to a question the Committee was advised that feedback from the consultation would be communicated to allotment holders via email, letter or via the Customer Service Centre.

With regards to the role played by the Stevenage Gardens and Allotment Association (SGAA) the Committee was advised that any changes to the

existing agreement between the Council and the SGAA would be formalised legally.

It reply to a further question concerning neglected plots the Committee was advised that Officer intervention was now more timely and that plot holders were contacted sooner than in the past. In respect of vacant plots weed proof netting was being provided to prevent the spread of unwanted growth to adjacent plots.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Executive Portfolio Holder's response to the allotments review is noted.

5. DRAFT SCOPING REVIEW DOCUMENT AND PRESENTATION – SCRUTINY REVIEW INTO THE INDOOR MARKET

The Committee received a presentation on the Indoor Market which covered its history, steps taken by the Council to support and promote the market, especially since the economic crash of 2008 and recent recommendations that had been implemented following a consultation between the Market Traders Association and senior officers of the Council.

Members then discussed the challenges facing the market which included its location, local building works, changing consumer spending patterns, the number of vacant stalls in the market, the Mutual Agreement Between Traders and more effective methods of advertising the market to townspeople.

It was noted that a number of businesses currently occupying retail premises in the town centre had begun in the market and Members acknowledged the role played by the market in fostering growth within those businesses.

In terms of the scoping document Members requested the following:

- That the background issues be extended to include a more detailed summary of the current issues facing the market, such as what is the market for and who are its customers;
- That issues with the multi-storey car park, such as cleanliness and state of repair, be raised during the witness interview with the CCTV and Car Parking Manager;
- That stall holders and customers be included as witnesses.

The Committee was advised that Peter Turvey of the National Association of British Market Authorities (nabma) would be interviewed as a 'critical friend' and it was requested that nabma be asked to undertake further market research for the Council prior to the interview.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report is noted.

6. ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME AND MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2017-2018

The Committee considered its proposed workplan for 2017/2018.

Members indicated that they would welcome a 'one-off' meeting with the Bus User Group to discuss local service provision.

In response to Members concerns about the facilities and cleaning of footpaths at Fairlands Valley Park the Strategic Director Environment undertook to raise the issues with the Leisure Services Manager and feedback directly to the Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report is noted.

7. URGENT PART I BUSINESS

None.

8. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Not Required.

9. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.

CHAIR