

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MINUTES

Date: Monday 17 July 2017

Time: 14.00 hrs.

Place: Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Stevenage SG1 1HN

Present: Councillors S Taylor OBE CC (Chair), R Henry, J Hollywell, Mrs J Lloyd, R Raynor, S Speller and J Thomas

Start/End Time: Start Time: 14.00 hrs.
End Time: 15.50 hrs.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Gardner. There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES – EXECUTIVE – 24 MAY 2017

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2017 are approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

3. MINUTES – OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Concerning the minutes of the Community Select Committee on 20 July in relation to the issue of rough sleepers, Members felt that the Select Committee minutes did not accurately reflect the position concerning the belongings of rough sleepers in the town centre. Officers confirmed that an action plan had been produced which would help ensure that those sleeping rough in the town centre received the advice and support they needed.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the following meetings be noted –

A. Community Select Committee – 20 June 2107

B. Overview & Scrutiny Committee (sitting as a Select Committee) – 28 June 2017

4. BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2017-2022

The Executive received a presentation from the Environmental Performance and Development Manager.

Members were advised that Stevenage was the only district in Hertfordshire to have produced a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). Officers were pleased to report that green space volunteers had attended 30 BAP

related training sessions and collectively giving over 2000 hours towards activities.

It was reported that the BAP identified those sites which were considered to be important for biodiversity and which required protection and those sites where biodiversity could be improved through habitat creation and linkages.

Members welcomed the report and stressed the importance of ensuring that appropriate media was used to promote the Council's Biodiversity activities and initiatives.

Officers agreed to look at the possibility of installing information boards around the pond behind the Towers to explain the scheduling of the work that was happening to the pond.

It was **RESOLVED**

1. That the Stevenage Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2022 be approved.
2. That Officers be requested to ensure there is positive media coverage for the Plan through the Comet and also through the use of Social Media

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report.

Other Options Considered: As contained in the report.

5. COMMUNITY SAFETY PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The Executive received a report which provided a high level overview in relation to the key individual crime types and how the Council was working in partnership through the Responsible Authorities Group (RAG) to reduce the offending of individuals involved in crime and anti-social behaviour.

In presenting the report, the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Safer Communities and Equalities advised Members that recommendations 2.2 and 2.3 of the report should be withdrawn because it was considered that the Council should not fill the funding void resulting from a decision that had been made by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).

Members were advised that officers would continue to bid for PCC funding as and when the bidding rounds took place and would also continue to seek to attract other external funding noting the previous successes outlined within the report.

The Portfolio Holder also agreed to ask that the RAG assesses the impact of the PCC's withdrawal of core funding at its next meeting on 24 July.

It was **RESOLVED**: That future strategic crime and anti-social behaviour

reports be considered by the Stevenage Together Partnership when requested. The Executive will continue to receive crime and ASB updates through the quarterly performance reports.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report.

Other Options Considered: As contained in the report.

6. 2016/17 ANNUAL REPORT AND PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW

The Executive considered a report that recommended the content of the Council's draft Annual Report 2016/17 together with arrangements for final publication. Additionally, the report highlighted the Council's performance across a number of key themes and priorities during 2016/17.

The Executive Leader presented the report and was pleased to highlight a number of key successes that had been achieved in 2016/17 including:

- £31m regeneration of town centre
- Public realm improvements
- New community centre at Hampson Park
- Opening of the new Haven
- Award of 3 green flags at Hampson Park, Town Centre Gardens and Fairlands Valley Park
- Play area renovation
- 3 new neighbourhood wardens
- 2000 people through the healthy hub
- National award for the Play Team

It was agreed that the new format of the Annual Report represented a substantial improvement on previous reports and officers were asked to look at the possibility of producing a special edition of the Chronicle to ensure the Council's achievements and key performance data were shared with residents and staff.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the progress on the delivery of Future Town, Future Council programme be noted together with the overall performance and achievements of the Council during 2016/17.
2. That the content and publication of the Council's draft Annual Report 2016/17 at Appendix A be approved

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report.

Other Options Considered: As contained in the report.

7. QUARTER 4 MONITORING REVENUE REPORT GENERAL FUND AND

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA).

The Portfolio Holder for Resources presented a report that updated Members on the 2016/17 outturn position for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account and that sought approval for revisions to 2017/18 revenue budgets as a result of the 2016/17 pre-audited actual spend.

The Portfolio Holder was pleased to report that officers had met the revised deadline of 31 May for the closure of the accounts 12 months ahead of schedule.

In relation to Housing Benefit overpayments, Members asked officers to enquire if the issue of collection methods for overpayment was being addressed as a scrutiny item.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the 2016/17 actual net expenditure on the General Fund of £8,958,347 is noted, subject to the 2016/17 audit of the Statement of Accounts.
2. That new carry forward requests totalling £449,950 are approved for the General Fund (paragraph 4.1.1 of the report refers).
3. That the removal of 2017/18 General Fund base budget net savings totalling £159,550 (including HRA saving), which will contribute towards the Council's Financial Security objectives for 2018/19 (paragraph 4.2.1) is approved.
4. That the increase of £4,000 to the 2017/18 working budget one year only pressures (£14,000) and one year only savings (£10,000) are approved.
5. That the 2016/17 actual in year surplus on the HRA of £2,794,487 is noted, subject to the 2016/17 audit of the Statement of Accounts.
6. That new carry forward requests totalling £273,720 are approved for the HRA.
7. That the removal of 2017/18 HRA budget net savings of £31,060 which will contribute towards the Council's financial security objectives for 2018/19 and one off budget reductions of £81,540 for 2017/18 are approved.
8. That the Finance team be congratulated for meeting the revised deadline of 31 May for the closure of the accounts 12 months ahead of schedule.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report.

Other Options Considered: As contained in the report.

8. QUARTER 4 MONITORING CAPITAL PROGRAMME REPORT GENERAL FUND AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA).

The Portfolio Holder for Resources presented the report updating Members on the capital outturn position on the 2016/17 capital programme. In presenting the report she advised of the urgency of recommendation 5 below and the agreement of the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny to the recommendation.

Members highlighted the need for officers to give greater consideration to Equality and Diversity Implications when drafting reports in the future ahead of them being brought to the Executive.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the 2016/17 General Fund capital expenditure outturn of £4,829,306 is noted, (subject to the 2016/17 external audit of accounts).
2. That the 2016/17 HRA capital expenditure outturn of £19,402,180 is noted (subject to the 2016/17 external audit of accounts).
3. That the funding applied to the 2016/17 General Fund capital programme is approved as summarised in paragraph 4.2.4. of the report.
4. That the funding applied to the 2016/17 HRA capital programme is approved as summarised in paragraph 4.5.1. of the report.
5. That the 2017/18 General Fund capital programme net changes of £4,024,160 are approved as summarised in paragraph 4.3.7 of the report, including the additional expenditure above the amount delegated to the Executive for the reasons outlined in paragraph 4.3.6. of the report. This decision to be taken as a matter of urgency in accordance with the Budget & Policy Framework rules set out in the Constitution, following agreement of the Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and submitted to the Council meeting in October for information.
6. That the 2017/18 HRA capital programme total increase of £2,557,700 is approved as summarised in paragraph 4.6.1 and detailed in Appendix B to this report.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report.

Other Options Considered: As contained in the report.

9. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

The Executive Leader reminded Members of the all Member Briefing on Fire Safety that had been arranged for Wednesday 19 July. She was pleased to report that the Council had responded to the implications of the Grenfell Fire tragedy in a professional way and that all enquiries had been dealt with quickly and efficiently. The Leader paid tribute to the Housing Officers who had been working directly on this issue in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Older People.

10. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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 it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1-7 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 items being in Part II it be determined that maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

11. PART II MINUTES – 24 MAY 2017

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 24 May 2017 are approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

12. PROCUREMENT OF REPAIRS & VOIDS SUPPLY CHAIN

The Executive considered a Part II report that set out the process for procuring a sub-contract supply chain which was a project within the 'Enhancing Our Repairs Service' that was approved by the Executive in January 2016.

It was **RESOLVED** that the recommendations in the report are approved.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report

Other Options Considered: As contained in the report.

13. WRITE OFF OF BUSINESS RATES

The Executive considered a Part II report that sought approval to write off Business Rates deemed irrecoverable.

It was **RESOLVED** that the recommendations in the report are approved.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report
Other Options Considered: As contained in the report.

14. THE PROCUREMENT OF BUILDING COMPLIANCE AND MAINTENANCE SERVICES FOR HOUSING AND CORPORATE PROPERTIES

The Executive considered a Part II report that set out a proposal for the collaborative procurement of building compliance and maintenance services from April 2018 for both Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and General Fund (GF) physical assets.

In presenting the report, the Executive Member moved an additional recommendation which was agreed.

It was **RESOLVED** that the recommendations in the report with the additional recommendation are approved.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report
Other Options Considered: As contained in the report.

13. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None

Chair