

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Date: Monday, 18 February 2019

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Shimkent Room - Daneshill House, Danestrete

Present: Councillors: Lin Martin-Haugh (Chair), Philip Bibby CC (Vice-Chair), Sandra Barr, Jim Brown, Michael Downing, Jody Hanafin, Michelle Gardner, Lizzy Kelly, John Mead, Sarah Mead, Adam Mitchell CC, Robin Parker CC and Sarah-Jane Potter.

Start / End Start Time: 6.00pm
Time: End Time: 7.30pm

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

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillor James Fraser.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 **MINUTES - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 15 JANUARY AND 29 JANUARY 2019**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees held on 15 January and 29 January 2019 are approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 **PART I DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE**

Minutes of the Executive – 23 January 2019

The Committee noted the comments of the Executive.

Minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees

The Committee noted the comments of the Executive.

Final General Fund and Council Tax Setting 2019/20

The Committee noted the discussions at the Executive including the request that the Leader's Financial Services Group give consideration and closely monitor the single person occupancy rate for Council Tax premiums for 2020/21.

Officers referred to an issue that had been raised regarding some recent misinformation which had been discussed at a residents' group in connection with the Council's budget.

Following concerns raised by Members regarding the provision of replacement recycling bins and boxes, officers agreed to request the Assistant Director (Stevenage Direct Services) to write to Members advising them of the current proposal for replacements.

In response to a question regarding staff affected by efficiencies, the Chief Executive advised that steps were in place to ensure that compulsory redundancies were the last resort for the Council.

Members were pleased to note that the Council's digital plan included the issue of accessing committee papers electronically resulting in the reduction in printing costs.

Final Capital Strategy 2018/19 – 2023/24

The Committee noted the comments of the Executive. Members noted the update on the Capital Programme Investment Strategy.

Annual Treasury Management Strategy Including Prudential Code Indicators 2019/20

The Assistant Director (Finance and Estates) referred to a replacement page 206 of the agenda which had been tabled at the meeting and corrected a figure on page 192 of the report.

In relation to the misinformation which had been provided to residents around the Council's cash reserves, the Assistant Director advised that the £60million referred to in the report had been allocated to various schemes. Members requested that officers ensure that this is clearly communicated where possible to ensure the public was fully informed.

Community Engagement Framework

The Community Development Manager introduced a report summarising the draft development of a Community Engagement Framework which built upon the recommendations from the review into resident engagement undertaken by the Community Select Committee.

The Committee noted the comments of the Executive on the report.

In response to a question, officers advised that the new Community Engagement Framework was still in development but there would be further work around engagement with Councillors to ensure ward Members were introduced to the Resident Involvement/Neighbourhood Wardens and Community Development Officers working in their areas. Officers advised that the role of the Community Development Service would be to support and encourage residents groups and attend resident meetings in their allocated areas through a practical framework and toolkit approach.

In relation to Diversity and Inclusion, Members were interested in how the Council reached out to minority groups around the Town. The Community Development Manager agreed to contact Councillor Michelle Gardner when looking to undertake any work around resident involvement for the Council in building diversity in groups and services.

In terms of locality working, Members were concerned with the thinking behind the initial breakdown of areas but was advised that these areas could change once other Business Units within the Council came on board with locality working.

Members thanked the Community Development Officer and the wider team for their work in this area.

4 **URGENT PART 1 DECISIONS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

None.

5 **URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

None.

6 **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 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 outweighed the public interest in disclosure.

7 **PART II DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE**

The Committee noted the comments of the Executive.

8 **URGENT PART II DECISIONS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

None.

9 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

North Hertfordshire College

The Chief Executive updated the Committee on matters regarding North

Hertfordshire College.

CHAIR