

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, 22 May 2019

Time: 7.00pm

Place: Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete

Present: The Mayor (2018/19) Councillor Margaret Notley and Councillors Doug Bainbridge, Sandra Barr, Philip Bibby CC, Stephen Booth, Lloyd Briscoe, Rob Broom, Adrian Brown, Jim Brown, Teresa Callaghan, Laurie Chester, David Cullen, Michael Downing, Alex Farquharson, John Gardner, Michelle Gardner, Jody Hanafin, Liz Harrington, Richard Henry, Jackie Hollywell, Lizzy Kelly, Graham Lawrence, Mrs Joan Lloyd, John Lloyd, Sarah-Jane McDonough, Adam Mitchell CC, Maureen McKay, Lin Martin-Haugh, John Mead, Sarah Mead, Robin Parker CC, Claire Parris, Loraine Rossati, Graham Snell, Simon Speller, Sharon Taylor OBE CC, Jeannette Thomas and Tom Wren

Start / End Time: Start Time: 7.00pm
End Time: 9.15pm

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A McGuinness.

There were no declarations of interest.

The Mayor announced that she had accepted as urgent the report at Item 10 on the agenda – Constitutional Issues, as without consideration of this report the Council would not have a political decision making structure for 2019/20.

2 **MINUTES - 27 FEBRUARY 2019**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 27 February 2019 are approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

At this juncture, the outgoing Mayor informed Members that it was a privilege serving as Mayor of Stevenage. She had carried out over 261 engagements ranging from visiting new-born babies at Lister hospital, meeting residents of care homes and interacting with faith groups within Stevenage. The Mayor had also attended events in support of other Mayors and Chairmen. Other highlights of the mayoral term included:

- Raising more than £13,000 for the Mayor's Charities
- Visiting Autun, France for the annual Town Twinning Reunion
- Inaugural Mayoral Garden Party

- Quiz Night
- Carol Service
- Mayoral Charity Concert
- Mayoral Civic Service
- Big Girls Don't Cry Show
- Mayoral May Ball
- Stevenage Pride Awards

The outgoing Mayor thanked the Mayoress (Cllr Laurie Chester), the Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayoress (Simon and Bridy Speller), Hilary Spiers, Tracey Frost (Mayor's PA), Maureen Nicholson, Mervyn Terrett (Chaplain), Andy Smith, Roy Nicholson, Ashley Mansfield (Elvis impersonator at Stevenage Pride Awards), Stevenage Male Voice Choir, Mayor' charities (Stevenage District Scouts , Carers in Hertfordshire and TRACKS Autism), SBC Communications and Member Services teams, officers, family and friends and SBC Councillors for their support.

On behalf of Members, the Leader of the Council thanked the outgoing Mayor for a successful year in office, and her commitment to the role and the Borough.

3 **ELECTION OF MAYOR**

The Mayor asked for nominations for the Office of Mayor for 2019/20.

Councillor S Taylor OBE CC nominated Councillor Simon Speller for the Office of Mayor. Councillor Taylor highlighted Councillor Speller's vast knowledge of local government as an officer and a Member and huge interest in the history of Stevenage, volunteering, scouting and sports.

The nomination was seconded by Councillor L Martin-Haugh.

There being no other nominations a vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Simon Speller be elected as a Mayor for the 2019/20 Municipal Year. Councillor Speller then made the statutory declaration of office.

The Mayor announced that Bridy Speller would be the Mayoress for 2019/20.

Councillors P Bibby CC and R Parker CC congratulated the new Mayor and echoed similar sentiments to those expressed by the mover and seconder of the nomination.

In his speech the Mayor indicated that it was a special privilege to serve two terms as Mayor of Stevenage. The Mayor announced that the theme of his term was to engage and empower young people and promote their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. He announced that Stevenage District Scouts would be the partner for the year and his charities for the year would be the Stevenage Community Trust, Stevenage and North Herts Child Contact Centres, Stevenage Haven for the Homeless and Just Be a Child. The Mayor challenged Members to support the chosen charities, young people, schools and local arts and sports groups.

The Mayor then presented awards to the following Members:

- For 20 years' service – Councillor G Snell
- For 35 years' service – Councillor R Parker CC
- Life Vice-Presidents of Stevenage District Scouts – Councillors M Notley and L Chester

4 **ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR**

The Mayor asked for nominations for the Office of Deputy Mayor for 2019/20.

Councillor Loraine Rossati nominated Councillor Jim Brown for the Office of Deputy Mayor. Councillor Rossati cited Councillor Brown's work in local government and active participation in the cycling, marathon running and community activities.

The nomination was seconded by Councillor Mrs J Lloyd.

There being no other nominations a vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Jim Brown be appointed Deputy Mayor for the 2019/20 Municipal Year.

Councillor Brown then made the statutory declaration of acceptance of office. The Deputy Mayor announced that Penny Schenkel would be his Deputy Mayoress for the 2019/20 Municipal Year.

5 **APPOINTMENT OF YOUTH MAYOR**

The Mayor thanked the outgoing Youth Mayor, Ugonna Umunnakwe, for his work as a representative for the young people of Stevenage and as an ambassador for the town. Ugonna Umunnakwe thanked Councillors, Member Services officers, the Youth Council, family and friends for their support. He informed Council that some of the highlights of his term were the visit to twin town of Autun, Stevenage Cycling Festival and judge at the Pride of Stevenage.

Councillor Richard Henry thanked the outgoing Youth Mayor for his work. He informed Members that he was proud that Stevenage had an active Youth Council and was the only authority in Hertfordshire that had a Youth Mayor. Councillor Henry announced that the Youth Council had recently introduced a number of initiatives including formal meetings, debating sessions, a new logo and an increase in online presence.

The Leader thanked the outgoing Youth Mayor. She commended the Youth Council for highlighting mental health of young people.

Council was informed that following an election the Youth Council had nominated William Sarenden as the 2019/2020 Youth Mayor.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that William Sarenden be elected as Youth Mayor for the 2019/2020 Municipal Year.

William Sarenden then signed the declaration of acceptance of office. In his acceptance speech the Youth Mayor thanked those that had supported him during

his campaign. He added that he would focus on mental health awareness and anti-bullying.

6 **APPOINTMENT OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that Councillor Sharon Taylor OBE CC be appointed Leader of the Council for 2019-2023.

In her speech of thanks Councillor Taylor informed the Council that Councillor Mrs Joan Lloyd would be the Deputy Leader and that she would also be the Portfolio Holder for Resources.

The other Members of the Executive and their Portfolios would be as follows:

- Councillor Mrs Joan Lloyd – Resources
- Councillor Jackie Hollywell – Communities, Community Safety and Equalities
- Councillor Richard Henry – Children, Young People and Leisure
- Councillor John Gardner – Environment and Regeneration
- Councillor Lloyd Briscoe – Economy, Enterprise and Transport
- Councillor Rob Broom – Neighbourhoods and Co-operative Working
- Councillor Jeannette Thomas – Housing, Health and Older People

Councillor Taylor thanked the now retired former councillor Ralph Raynor, who had represented St Nicholas Ward, and had served as Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Transport. The Leader also paid tribute to Scott Crudgington (former SBC Chief Executive), the Senior Leadership Team, Gill Harrison (Leader's PA) and Member Services officers.

7 **BOROUGH COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2019**

Council considered a report that detailed the results of the Borough Council Elections that were held on 2 May 2019.

The Leader thanked Matt Partridge (Returning Officer), Luke Fattorusso (Local Land Charges and Electoral Services Manager) and the elections team for the excellent and smooth management of the Election process. She also thanked local police officers for their reassuring presence on polling days. Councillor Taylor criticised some political activists for distributing campaign leaflets that contained inaccurate information about Council finances.

Councillor R Parker CC thanked the elections team for the efficient running of the elections. He also reiterated the criticism of the use of inaccurate information for campaign purposes and the failure by political parties to correct the inaccuracies.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the results of the Stevenage Borough Council Elections 2019 be noted.

8 **APPOINTMENT OF LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION**

The Interim Chief Executive advised the Council that the Leader of the Opposition

would be Councillor Phil Bibby CC and that Councillor Graham Lawrence would be his deputy.

9 **APPOINTMENT OF LEADERS AND DEPUTY LEADERS OF THE POLITICAL GROUPS ON THE COUNCIL**

The Interim Chief Executive advised the Council that Councillors Sharon Taylor OBE CC, Phil Bibby CC and Robin Parker CC had been appointed as Leaders of the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups respectively. It was noted that Councillors Mrs Joan Lloyd, Graham Lawrence and Andy McGuinness would be Deputy Leaders of the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat Groups respectively.

10 **CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES**

Council considered a report relating to the Member level decision making structure of the Council and the Council's Constitution for the 2019/20 Municipal Year which had been circulated on the Supplementary Agenda.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED:**

1. That the Terms of Reference, as detailed in the appendices to the report; and the size and political composition for the following bodies that form the non-Executive Member level decision making structure of the Council be approved subject to the rules of proportionality where appropriate for the 98 Committee places where applicable (relevant Committees are identified thus*) –
 - Overview and Scrutiny Committee* (Appendix A) – 14 Members (10 Labour Group, 2 Conservative Group, 2 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - Community Select Committee* (Appendix B) – 10 Members (7 Labour Group, 2 Conservative Group, 1 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - Environment and Economy Select Committee* (Appendix C) – 11 Members (7 Labour Group, 3 Conservative Group, 1 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - Planning & Development Committee* (Appendix D) – 13 Members (8 Labour Group, 3 Conservative Group, 2 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - Licensing Committee (Appendix E) – 14 Members (9 Labour Group, 3 Conservative Group, 2 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - General Purposes Committee* (Appendix F) – 14 Members (9 Labour Group, 3 Conservative Group, 2 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - Appointments Committee* (Appendix G) - 8 Members (6 Labour Group, 1 Conservative Group, 1 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - Standards Committee* (Appendix H) – 8 Members (6 Labour Group, 1 Conservative Group, 1 Liberal Democrat Group)

- Audit Committee* (Appendix I) – 8 Members (6 Labour Group, 1 Conservative Group, 1 Liberal Democrat Group) + 1 Co-opted non-elected member
- Statement of Accounts Committee* (Appendix J) – 8 Members (6 Labour Group, 1 Conservative Group, 1 Liberal Democrat Group)
- Joint Consultative Committee* (Appendix K) – 4 Members (3 Labour Group, 1 Conservative Group)

* Indicates where those bodies covered by the rules of proportionality for the purposes of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups), Regulations 1990 – total Committee places being 98

2. That the dates for Council meetings for the Municipal Year, as shown at Paragraph 4.4 of the report, are approved, and that the draft dates for other meetings, as shown at Appendix L to the report, are noted
3. That 5 Members be appointed to the Housing Management Advisory Board (4 Majority Group, 1 Opposition Member)
4. That the amendments to the Constitution detailed in Paragraphs 4.10 - 4.11 of the report be approved

11 APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL

Details of the individuals nominated to serve on each Committee had been circulated at the meeting. It was stated that where no Vice-Chair was appointed, the appointment would be made at the first meeting of the Committee.

The Interim Chief Executive advised of an error in the order of business for this item which quoted the “2018/19 Municipal Year” when, of course it should read “2019/20 Municipal Year”.

During the debate, Councillor R Parker CC acknowledged the appointment of Committee Vice-Chairs as indicated on papers that were circulated to Members. He noted with concern that in recent years there had been a departure from the practice of allocating at least one Select Committee Vice-Chair position to a Member from the Liberal Democrat Group. The Leader of the Council advised Councillor Parker CC to discuss this issue with the Leader of the Opposition.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED:**

1. That the membership of Committees, together with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs, where detailed, are appointed for the 2019/20 Municipal Year as follows:

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
14 Members - (10-2-2)

Councillors – L Martin-Haugh (Chair), P Bibby CC (Vice-Chair), S Barr, J Brown, L Chester, M Downing, M Gardner, J Mead, S Mead, A McGuinness, S-J McDonough, A Mitchell CC, C Parris, R Parker CC

COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE

10 Members - (7-2-1)

Councillors – S Mead (Chair), M Notley (Vice-Chair), S Booth, A Brown, T Callaghan, A Farquharson, L Harrington, J Mead, C Parris and L Rossati

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE

11 Members - (7-3-1)

Councillors – M Downing (Chair), A Mitchell CC (Vice-Chair), D Bainbridge, S Barr, S Booth, A Brown, J Brown, T Callaghan, D Cullen, J Hanafin and L Rossati

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

13 Members – (8-3-2)

Councillors – D Cullen (Chair), D Bainbridge, S Barr, M Gardner, J Hanafin, L Harrington, L Kelly, G Lawrence, J Lloyd, S-J McDonough, M McKay, G Snell and T Wren

LICENSING COMMITTEE

14 Members – (9-3-2)

Councillors – L Chester (Chair), D Bainbridge, S Barr, J Brown, M Downing, J Hanafin, L Harrington, R Henry, G Lawrence, J Lloyd, M McKay, A McGuinness, L Rossati and G Snell

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

14 Members – (9-3-2)

Councillors – L Chester (Chair), D Bainbridge, S Barr, J Brown, M Downing, J Hanafin, L Harrington, R Henry, G Lawrence, J Lloyd, M McKay, A McGuinness, L Rossati and G Snell

APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

8 Members – (6-1-1)

Councillors – S Taylor OBE, CC (Chair), P Bibby CC, M Downing, J Gardner, R Henry, Mrs J Lloyd, R Parker CC and J Thomas

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

8 Members – (6-1-1)

Councillors – Mrs J Lloyd (Chair), T Callaghan, M Downing, L Martin-Haugh, J Mead, M Notley, L Rossati and T Wren

AUDIT COMMITTEE

8 Elected Members – (6-1-1) + 1 Independent Co-opted Member (G Gibbs)

Councillors – M McKay (Chair), S Barr, S Booth, L Chester, D Cullen, J Gardner, L Kelly and G Lawrence

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

8 Members – (6-1-1)

Councillors Mrs J Lloyd (Chair), P Bibby CC, R Broom, L Chester, J Hollywell,

J Mead, S Mead and G Snell

2. That 5 Members (4 Majority Group, 1 Opposition Member) be appointed to the Housing Management Board as agreed at Minute 10, resolution 3, as follows:

Councillors L Harrington, L Kelly, J Lloyd, L Martin-Haugh and M Notley

12 **APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

Council considered the list of individuals nominated to serve on Outside Bodies which had been circulated at the meeting.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the following individuals are appointed to represent the Council on the various bodies detailed below for one year, unless otherwise stated:

COUNCIL FOR THE PROTECTION OF RURAL ENGLAND THE
HERTFORDSHIRE SOCIETY – Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration

EAST OF ENGLAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION – The Leader of the
Council

EAST OF ENGLAND REGIONAL PLANNING - Portfolio Holder for Environment and
Regeneration

HCC JOINT WASTE MANAGEMENT GROUP - Portfolio Holder for Environment
and Regeneration

HERTFORDSHIRE INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING AND POLICY GROUP -
Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration

HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL AUTHORITIES LEADERS GROUP – The Leader of the
Council

HERTFORDSHIRE SUPPORTING PEOPLE COMMISSIONING BODY MEMBERS
OVERVIEW GROUP – Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Older People

HERTFORDSHIRE SUSTAINABILITY FORUM STEERING GROUP - Portfolio
Holder for Environment and Regeneration

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION - The Leader of the Council

RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY GROUP (COMMUNITY SAFETY) – Portfolio Holder
Communities, Community Safety and Equalities

SOSTEVENAGE PARTNERSHIP - The Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader

STEVENAGE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP - Portfolio Holder
Communities, Community Safety and Equalities

STEVENAGE LEISURE LIMITED – The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder
Children, Young People and Leisure

AGE CONCERN STEVENAGE – Councillor J Lloyd

BEDWELL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION – Councillor L Harrington

BRAGBURY CENTRE – Councillor J Lloyd

CHELLS MANOR COMMUNITY CENTRE – Councillor A McGuinness

CROSSROADS CARE (tbc) – Councillors J Gardner and Mrs J Lloyd

DOUGLAS DRIVE SENIOR CITIZENS ASSOCIATION – Councillor J Lloyd

HOME-START STEVENAGE – Councillor J Gardner

KADOMA LINK ASSOCIATION – Councillor J Gardner and G Snell

LIVING ROOM PROJECT – Councillor J Hollywell

OLD STEVENAGE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION – Councillor J Brown

OVAL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION – Councillor L Briscoe

PIN GREEN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION – Councillor J Thomas

SHEPHALL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION – Councillor J Mead

ST. NICHOLAS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION – Councillor S Barr

STEVENAGE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU – Councillor M Downing

STEVENAGE COMMUNITY TRUST – Councillors R Henry and M McKay

STEVENAGE CREDIT UNION LIMITED – Councillor L Chester

STEVENAGE FURNITURE RECYCLING SCHEME – Councillor J Lloyd

STEVENAGE HAVEN – Councillor R Broom

STEVENAGE / AUTUN / INGELHEIM ASSOCIATION – Councillors R Henry and S
Speller

STEVENAGE WORLD FORUM FOR ETHNIC COMMUNITIES – Councillor J
Gardner

SYMONDS GREEN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION – Councillor L Chester

TIMEBRIDGE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION – Councillor J Hollywell

TURN THE TIDE – Councillor L Kelly

EAST OF ENGLAND LGA IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY PANEL – Councillor R Henry

HCC HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – Councillor M McKay

LOCAL GOVERNMENT INFORMATION UNIT – Councillor J Brown

LUTON AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE – Councillor J Gardner

STEVENAGE CONSOLIDATED CHARITIES (FOUR YEAR PERIOD) – One vacancy; C Latif (to 2020), Councillors M McKay and J Mead (both to 2021)

13 **STEVENAGE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN: ADOPTION**

The Council considered a report seeking the adoption of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan.

The Interim Chief Executive advised that this matter had been discussed by both the Executive and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a number of occasions. The options before the Council were to adopt the Local Plan as submitted or to not adopt it – there was no provision to make any amendments.

Councillor J Gardner moved the recommendations. He informed Council that the holding direction on the Stevenage Borough Local Plan was lifted on 25 March 2019 by Secretary of State for Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) after being in place for more than 400 days. It was indicated that the process to adopt the Plan was initiated in 2012 and was followed by several phases of internal and external consultation. Members were informed that the holding direction was lifted after Stevenage Borough Council had launched Judicial Review proceedings to address the delay and obtain a clear response from the government.

Councillor M Downing seconded the recommendations. He pointed out that one of the objectives of the Local Plan was to provide more housing while protecting the environment.

The following points were raised during the debate:

- There was a huge demand for housing in Stevenage
- The local Member of Parliament was instrumental in recommending the issuing of the holding direction
- The Liberal Democrat Group broadly supported the Local Plan though it had minor reservations about some parts of the Plan
- SBC had followed all procedures required for the approval of a Local Plan
- In October 2017, an independent Planning Inspector had concluded that, subject to the Main Modifications proposed, the Stevenage Borough Local Plan was sound and capable of being adopted

- The holding direction had resulted in missed opportunities for the Town and unnecessary legal costs
- Any concerns about the environmental impact of the Local Plan would be addressed. This was due to the fact that Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust had a strong aim to influence policy and planning decisions to ensure positive outcomes for local wildlife
- The Council must review Community Infrastructure Levy rates so as to ensure that developers and landowners were charged at least the market rate

Members thanked the substantive and Interim Assistant Directors of Planning and Regulation and all officers who had worked on the Stevenage Local Plan. Councillor J Gardner indicated to Council that all issues raised during the debate would be taken on board.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the outcomes of the Main Modifications (and associated Sustainability Appraisal) consultation be noted (responses summary attached as Appendix A to the report)
2. That the content of the Inspector's Report be noted (attached as Appendix B to the report)
3. That the firm proposal of Executive, having had regard to the outcomes following consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, be noted
4. That the Inspector's recommendation to adopt the Stevenage Borough Local Plan, incorporating main and minor modifications (attached as Appendix C to the report), and associated Policies Map, be accepted, and that the District Plan Second Review 2004 (BD1) be revoked

14 **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 they involve 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.

15 **FUNDING FOR A WHOLLY OWNED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT COMPANY**

The Council considered a Part II report in respect of the recommendations made by the Executive surrounding General Fund finances and loans required to set up the wholly owned housing development company to enable it to purchase properties, as

set out in its Business Plan.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the recommendations set out in the report are approved.

CHAIR