

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, 19 August 2020

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Virtual (via Zoom)

Present: Councillors: Lin Martin-Haugh (Chair), Philip Bibby CC (Vice-Chair), Sandra Barr, Laurie Chester, Michael Downing, Michelle Gardner, Andy McGuinness, Adam Mitchell CC, Claire Parris and Simon Speller

Start / End Start Time: 6.00pm

Time: End Time: 7.05pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors John Mead, Sarah Mead and Robin Parker CC.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES - 14 JULY 2020

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 14 July 2020 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

3 PART I DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

The Committee considered the decisions on the following matters arising from the Executive meeting held on 12 August 2020.

Minutes of the Executive – 8 July 2020

Noted.

Minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees

Noted.

Co-operative Neighbourhoods

A Member raised concerns regarding the nature of engagement with Ward Councillors and the level of Member input that was incorporated into the Co-operative Neighbourhoods programme. Officers clarified that the Pin Green Community Plan of 2017-18 was not directly related to the introduction of Co-operative Neighbourhoods operating model in December 2019. It was noted that the

boundaries agreed by the Executive in 2019 served to optimise staff resources. Officers acknowledged that there were distinct strengths and challenges for each Ward. The Co-operative Neighbourhoods programme focussed on supporting residents and communities in activities that improved neighbourhoods and created opportunities.

The Committee also sought clarification on projected improvements in the first two years of the Co-operative Neighbourhoods programme, implications on staff resources, prioritisation and lessons learned from previous initiatives for localised working. Officers confirmed that the programme had specific key performance indicators for individual Council services. In response to a question, Officers acknowledged that the areas used to set up teams were not necessarily recognisable neighbourhoods. However, the structure would enable staff to work and think more locally and engage with residents on the issues and in localities that were important to them. With regards to the impact of Co-operative Neighbourhoods on staff resources, it was pointed out that the Council would not engage additional staff to support the programme. Officers notified the Committee that the programme would not necessarily deliver improvements to infrastructure in neighbourhoods. Co-operative Neighbourhoods was also expected to improve procedures and reduce the volume of complaints. It was noted that the key lessons learned from past programmes were the need for strong political and management leadership, a clear and measurable purpose and a whole Council approach that sought to empower frontline staff and communities.

Covid-19 Update

In response to a Member's request, Strategic Director (RP) undertook to provide Covid-19 data where applicable that was tailored to Stevenage and Hertfordshire. The Strategic Director reported that officers were discussing with Public Health (Hertfordshire) ways of improving the flow of data from Public Health England and NHS England to the Council. Members were informed that the Council had access to the Covid-19 database that was recently launched by Public Health Hertfordshire.

Co-operative Commercial and Insourcing Strategy 2020-2023

A Member was concerned that some tenants would be priced out of their garages as a consequence of the Commercial Strategy. Officers indicated that the Council's differential pricing policy offered tenants choice in terms of cost and garage specification. With regards to the Garage Improvement Programme (GIP), the Commercial Manager informed the Committee that the programme had increased the number of garages in circulation. It was anticipated that the GIP would contribute towards neighbourhood improvements and reduction in anti-social behaviour. Officers advised that the policy of bringing newer and better garages back onto the market would help to ease parking issues in neighbourhoods.

Urgent Part I Business

Noted.

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

None.

5 **URGENT PART I BUSINESS**

None.

6 **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 involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1 to 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 item 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**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II decisions of the Executive meeting held on 12 August 2020 be noted.

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

None.

9 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR