

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Date: Wednesday, 23 September 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, Sarah Mead, Adam Mitchell CC, Robin Parker CC and Claire Parris.

Start / End Time: Start Time: 6.00pm
End Time: 7.20pm

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

Apologies were received from Councillors John Mead and Simon Speller.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 **MINUTES - 19 AUGUST 2020**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 August 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 16 September 2020.

Minutes of the Executive – 12 August 2020

Noted, subject to the inclusion of Councillor Robin Parker, Observer at the meeting being included in the list of apologies.

Minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees

Noted.

Local Development Scheme (LDS)

In response to a question, Officers advised that the LDS was a Planning Policy Document which gave a snapshot of the work the Council would be doing this year. They agreed that a key to the number of acronyms used in the document would be considered in the future.

Parking Provision and Sustainable Transport Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

The following issues were raised during the debate:

- It was noted that the document gave the Council power to insist on higher standards for sustainable transport;
- Members expressed concern that despite the ambition to adopt the Sustainable Transport Policy, the domination of the car continued to grow.
- In response to a question regarding how the policy would be reviewed in the future, the Assistant Director (Planning and Regulation) advised that following adoption, the document would be monitored by the Environment and Economy Select Committee and the Planning and Development Committee;
- Members were concerned regarding the general reduction in parking spaces including the reduction in the number of required visitor spaces. Officers advised that spaces would be reduced if they were in the Town Centre or other accessible areas. The need for spaces would be balanced with the accessibility to other available forms of transport;
- It was confirmed that the provision of disabled parking spaces would be protected and remain the same as it was now; and in relation to the County Council, officers advised that on adopted highway the rules would continue to apply;
- In response to a question regarding the boundaries of accessibility zones, officers advised that the case officer dealing with an application would take into account if an application was on the border of a zone;
- Members agreed that in relation to the requirement of developers to contribute towards sustainable transport methods, the Policy should go some way towards strengthening this requirement;
- In response to a question regarding unallocated electric charging points, officers advised that a pool of spaces would allow greater flexibility and be more accessible for residents. The enforcement of the spaces would be the responsibility of the individual development.

Stevenage Borough Council Climate Change Strategy Adoption and Engagement Consultation Update

The following issues were raised during the debate:

- It was confirmed that the Citizens' Panel would consist of a cross-section of residents who were not covered by existing engagement processes. 26 over 18's would be randomly selected by an external consultant;
- In response to a question, officers advised that the consultation on the Strategy had been carried out on-line and face to face but had been limited by a number of events not being held due to the pandemic;
- Officers advised that young people would be engaged via the Youth Council and also through schools once the accessibility to schools had improved.
- Members were keen to ensure that those recruited to the Panel reflected the diversity of the residents of the Town

Covid-19 Update

Noted.

Annual Treasury management Review of 2019/20 and Prudential Code

In response to a question regarding Essex House, the Assistant Director (Finance & Estates) advised that the lease for the property in the Meadway Technology Centre had just been renegotiated with the current tenant.

General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy Update (2020/21 – 2024/25)

Officers gave an update on the representations that were being made by the Council to the Government in terms of Council funding and the expenses accrued as a result of the Pandemic, including Homelessness costs, spending review submissions and the resulting funding gap.

It was noted that the work of the Leaders Financial Security Group would continue once the financial situation was fully known.

Quarter 1 Monitoring Report 2020/21 (Capital) – General Fund and Housing Revenue Account

Noted.

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 MINUTES - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 19 AUGUST 2020**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 19 August 2020 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

8 **PART II DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE**

Minutes of the Executive – 12 August 2020

Noted, subject to the deletion of Councillor Robin Parker, Observer at the meeting from the attendees list.

Locality Review land and Site Disposal Report

The site disposals identified as part of the Locality Ward Asset and land Reviews were considered in the Part II section of the meeting.

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

None.

10 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR