

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, 13 October 2020

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Virtual (via Zoom)

Present: Councillors: Lin Martin-Haugh (Chair), Philip Bibby CC (Vice-Chair), Laurie Chester, Michelle Gardner, Andy McGuinness, John Mead, Sarah Mead, Adam Mitchell CC, Robin Parker CC and Claire Parris.

Start / End Time: Start Time: 6.00pm
End Time: 6.35pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sandra Barr, Michael Downing and Simon Speller.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES - 23 SEPTEMBER 2020

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 September 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 6 October 2020.

Minutes of the Executive – 16 September 2020

Noted.

Covid-19 Update

In response to a series of Members' questions, officers advised:

- The intention to publish material recording the contribution of black people to the life and growth of Stevenage was to mark Black History Month. The Council would be inviting Councillor Michelle Gardner, amongst others, to inform and contribute to what would become a legacy document for the town; and
- Black History Month was designed to recognise and celebrate the various contributions of black people, rather than the wider BAME community. The Strategic Director (RP) was asked to provide Members with further information.

Workforce Strategy 2020 – 2023

In reply to a Member's question regarding the meaning of the terms in the graphs set out in the Workforce Profile section of the Strategy, the Senior Human Resources Manager confirmed that "Customer" referred to those staff employed in the business units such as Communities & Neighbourhoods and Housing & Investment; "Place" to those staff employed in the business units such as Stevenage Direct Services and Planning & Regulation; and "Transformation and Support" to those staff employed in the business units such as Corporate Services, Finance & Estates and Digital & Transformation. The Senior Human Resources Manager explained that these terms had arisen from the 2016 Senior Management Review. She undertook to incorporate a key in the Strategy document to define these terms, and to supply Committee Members with a full written answer on this matter.

Corporate Performance – Quarter 1 2020/21

In reply to a number of Members' questions and queries, officers commented:

- The Strategic Director (TP) would request the Assistant Director (Housing Development) to respond to Longmeadow Ward Councillors with details of the draft newsletter regarding the Malvern Close element of the Kenilworth Close Development, if possible prior to it being sent to local residents;
- The performance statistics for the time taken by the Customer Service Centre (CSC) had not been available for Quarter 1 due to the significant change of IT system for the CSC just prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the subsequent re-direction of CSC focus towards the provision of services during the pandemic. The statistics would be monitored for future Quarters; and
- The presentation of the performance statistics relating to website satisfaction would be reviewed, as the figures bore no relation to a defined scale (such as a numerical figure or a percentage figure). The Strategic Director (TP) stated that the figures related to the GovMetric system which measured satisfaction of the website. He undertook to arrange for Committee Members to be provided with details of the performance system used by the Council, including its cost to the Council.

In terms of website satisfaction, a Member commented that such statistics could be misleading, as invariably if users were dissatisfied, they would probably exit the website rather than remaining to complete a level of satisfaction request.

Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency (HHIA) – 24 Month Review

Noted.

Council Tax Support Scheme 2020/21

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 100A 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 - 23 SEPTEMBER 2020

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 23 September 2020 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

8 PART II DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

Part II Minutes – Executive – 16 September 2020

Noted.

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

None.

10 URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.

CHAIR