

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Date: Wednesday, 21 October 2020

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Virtual (via Zoom)

Present: Councillors: Sarah Mead (Chair), Margaret Notley (Vice-Chair), Sandra Barr, Stephen Booth, Adrian Brown, Alex Farquharson, John Mead, Claire Parris and Loraine Rossati.

Start / End Time: Start Time: 6.00pm
End Time: 6.51pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no apologies for absence.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES - 4 MARCH 2020

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Community Select Committee held on 4 March 2020 be approved as a correct record.

3 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee considered a report in respect of its Terms of Reference.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Terms of Reference for the Community Select Committee, as approved at the Annual Council meeting on 20 May 2020, be noted.

4 WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

The Committee considered a report detailing its proposed Work Programme for 2020/21.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Community Select Committee's Work Programme for 200/21 be approved.

5 SPORTS AND LEISURE REVIEW REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee considered a report in respect of the final report and recommendations of the Sports and Leisure Scrutiny Review. Members' attention was drawn to the revised Officer assessment of the recommendations in the light of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic which had been circulated as a supplementary agenda.

In response to a Member's concern regarding the introductory paragraph on the reasoning for the revised Officer assessment of the recommendations, officers confirmed that, whilst a number of these were clearly due to the Covi-19 pandemic, a number of others (such as the cost subsidy items) were within the context of 10 years of Local Government financial cuts and would have been included regardless of the pandemic.

The Chair conducted a vote on the above matter, the outcome being that the revised Officer assessment of the Review recommendations, as set out in the supplementary agenda document, was accepted.

In relation to Members' questions, officers responded as follows:

- Recommendation 4.13 – Cycle Hub – it was confirmed that a new Community Interest Company (involving members of Stevenage CTC) had been established and would, at a future date to be determined, take over the running of the Hub; and
- Recommendation 4.1 – Leisure Management procurement position – it was likely that a Portfolio Holder Advisory Group meeting would be held in early 2021 to commence this process, in order to consider how service would be delivered from 2023. Wider consultation with a variety of other groups would take place, including the leisure community, young people and other stakeholders. Part of this would allow consideration to be given to potential capital projects to deliver new leisure facilities.

In respect of Recommendation 4.4 – Aqua Park, and following contributions from a number of Members, it was noted that a new Aqua Park had opened in Welwyn Garden City (WGC). The SBC Aqua Park was currently closed, and so the impact on its use once it re-opened of the new one in WGC would be difficult to forecast. However, it was acknowledged that the SBC facility had free parking, whilst there was a parking charge associated with the use of the WGC facility.

It was **RESOLVED** that the revised Officer assessment of the Sports and Leisure Scrutiny Review recommendations, as set out in the supplementary agenda document, be accepted.

6 REVIEW OF MEMBER COMPLAINTS YOUR SAY

The Committee was informed that the Chair had requested that this issue be reviewed following representations made to Business Units throughout the period of the Covid-19 pandemic on behalf of local residents in the community.

The Chair commented that it would be helpful for Members to be supplied with information regarding the policy for response times to both Member and public complaints.

The Assistant Director (Digital & Transformation) gave a brief presentation on the work of the Customer Focus Team. She commented that, from April to September 2020, the average turnaround time for responses to Stage 1 complaints was 7 days,

against a target of 10 days. A small number of cases had taken significantly longer, due to various reasons, and it was accepted that these needed to be followed up in a more timely manner. There had been an element of lenience introduced regarding response times throughout the Covid-19 pandemic period.

Following the presentation, the following issues were raised:

- Members were not always kept informed of the position with complaints, once the 10 day response time target was passed;
- It was noted that an improved digital solution for complaints (expected to be in place by April 2021 at the latest) would help to track responses to ensure that target times were met;
- The Assistant Director (Digital & Transformation) undertook investigate the position with regard to Members being advised when complaints cases were closed.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Assistant Director (Digital & Transformation) arrange for Members of the Community Select Committee and the other Scrutiny Chairs to be provided with data in respect of how the Customer Focus Team operates, including policy response times and relevant statistics on performance.

7 URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS

None.

8 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Not required.

9 URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.

CHAIR