

# STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

## COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Thursday, 7 July 2022

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete

**Present:** Councillors: Sarah Mead (Chair), Alex Farquharson (Vice-Chair), Adrian Brown, Jim Brown, Nazmin Chowdhury, John Duncan and Wendy Kerby.

**Start / End Time:** Start Time: 06:00 pm  
End Time: 06:54 pm

### 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Stephen Booth and Anne Wells.

There were no declarations of Interest.

### 2 TERMS OF REFERENCE - COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE

It was **RESOLVED** that the Terms of Reference be noted.

### 3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS 16 MARCH & 29 MARCH 2022

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of Community Select Committee meetings held on Wednesday 16 March 2022 and Tuesday 29 March 2022 be approved as correct record and signed by the Chair.

### 4 COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2022-23

The Scrutiny Officer presented the Committee's Work Programme for Municipal year 2022/23. The Work Programme was a flexible working document that was subject to change as new issues arose. Members were encouraged to suggest items to be included in the Work Programme at any time. Members discussed and debated the following items currently on the Work Programme for 2022/23:

- Housing Repairs and Voids - Members were informed that Housing Repairs and Voids Standards came in red in the Performance Indicator. The Committee agreed that a review would need to focus on a particular area of the Voids standard as Voids and Repairs were too wide an area to scrutinise. It was agreed that Stevenage Direct Services should provide an update on the repairs performance describing their process; how they are measuring performance; their digital solutions and their time scales for implementing their new processes.

- Crime and Disorder- The Committee expected to have the Chief Inspector of the Police in attendance for that meeting to present a full picture of their day-to-day operations. Chief Executive Matt Partridge as Chair for the Responsible Authorities Group would be invited to the meeting. Members also questioned the effectiveness Police Priorities meetings.
- Public Health - There had been major changes in the health governance process with a new NHS Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Core Board replacing the East & North Herts Clinical Commissioning Group from 1 July 2022. Members were keen to have an update. Members indicated that they valued the session with the HCC Director of Public Health. Members agreed to prepare specific evidence-based questions for the meeting. Cllr Maureen McKay regularly updated Members on health issues as she was Stevenage's representative on the Health Scrutiny for the County.
- Local Community Budgets – This item would be covered on 9 January 2023 meeting as a one-off update on the Local Community Budgets. The committee expected to interview Operations Director and the Executive Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods. Members raised concerns about some repeat requests for funding from the same groups year on year which was therefore supporting core funding for these groups.
- Housing Allocation – Members were interested to know the process and how the housing allocation works. An update from the Operations Direction and an interview with the Executive Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Older People would be arranged for this meeting. Members questioned people's access and understanding of the bidding process. Members also considered that some people did not understand how the criteria was applied, particularly on supply and demand issue. The Operations Director advised Members that it was a good opportunity to review the document now, as it was due to be reviewed by the Executive later this year.
- A Portfolio Holder's Advisory Group (PHAG) on Community Centres – Members noted that it was a good opportunity for the Committee Members and the Executive Portfolio to meet and discuss the future plans for Community Centres as part of Locality plans being led by Estates.
- A PHAG on Service Charges for residents - Members raised concerns on the increased service charges for the residents who could not afford it. A Member advised that the Committee perhaps could look at the recent census data to evaluate the changes in the community.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Work Programme document for 2022/23 be noted.

## 5 **COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE ACTION TRACKER**

The Scrutiny Officer presented the Action Tracker document to the Committee. The Action tracker contained useful information to track the progress of items that the Committee had previously scrutinised.

A Member raised concern over the resident engagement that many people under the age of 35 had not participated in the resident surveys and suggested to the Committee to look at the resident survey again to find out causes of under participation in younger generation. The Operations Director advised Members that resident surveys were now more focused and could be used to target a specific demographic. He suggested to disband small group representation and connect to the wider population in the community. However, people who used to sit on the Housing Management Advisory Board could still be involved in the scrutiny of the policies and other activities in the wider community.

The Scrutiny Officer advised Members that a response was not received from Executive on the New Town Heritage Centre recommendations in the regular two months' time period in the normal way, as this was undertaken as a piece of Policy Development work. He suggested that an updated report on the progress made so far could be provided to the Committee

It was **RESOLVED** that the Committee noted the Action Tracker.

**6 URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

None.

**7 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Note required.

**8 URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

**CHAIR**