

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**CABINET
MINUTES**

Date: Wednesday, 5 June 2024

Time: 2.00pm

Place: Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

Present: Councillors: Richard Henry (Chair), Sandra Barr, Lloyd Briscoe, Jackie Hollywell, Conor McGrath, Loraine Rossati and Simon Speller

Start / End Start Time: 2.00pm
Time: End Time: 3.10pm

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

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Jeannette Thomas.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 **MINUTES - 13 MARCH 2024**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 13 March 2024 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

3 **MINUTES OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY AND SELECT COMMITTEES**

The Leader thanked the Chairs and members of the three Scrutiny Committees for their work during the past year which had added real value to the operation of the Council and residents of the Town.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following Minutes of meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees be noted –

Overview & Scrutiny Committee 13 February 2024
Environment & Economy Select Committee 27 February 2024
Community Select Committee 29 February 2024
Environment & Economy Select Committee 6 March 2024
Overview & Scrutiny Committee 19 March 2024
Environment & Economy Select Committee 27 March 2024
Community Select Committee 3 April 2024

4 **LOCAL PLAN REVIEW AND REVISED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME**

The Cabinet was presented with a report considering the first stage of the Stevenage Local Plan Review, and which highlighted the next steps in the planning process with the Local Development Scheme and Statement of Community Involvement.

It was noted that the review was limited to factual and necessary changes i.e. those which were related to key drivers of change since the Plan was adopted in 2019. Other wider changes would be considered for the next stage which would constitute a full review of the Plan, from 2025.

Officers advised that The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was a statutory document which set out how Stevenage Borough Council would involve the community and other stakeholders in the preparation, alteration and review of local planning policy and decisions on planning applications. Members were pleased to note that the updated SCI would highlight the use of technology in consultation and gave consideration to the need to improve the way the Council engaged with communities in the planning process.

Officers advised that due to the announcement of the forthcoming General Election, the consultation on the Local Plan had been delayed and would now run between 5 July and 15 August 2024.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the progress with and content of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan – Partial Review and Update be noted.
2. That the Stevenage Borough Local Plan – Partial Review and Update for public consultation in July 2024, for not less than 6 weeks be approved.
3. That a revised Local Development Scheme and the timescales for a Local Plan Review be approved.
4. That a revised Statement of Community Involvement be approved.
5. That the comments of the Planning & Development Committee and the Environment & Economy Select Committee had been sought and both Committees had given broad agreement to the report.
6. That it be noted that delegated authority will be given to the Assistant Director: Planning & Regulation in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder, to make changes to the Stevenage Borough Local Plan – Partial Review and Update, prior to going out to public consultation.
7. That it be noted that informal engagement with key stakeholders will continue, ahead of and during public consultation on the Stevenage Borough Local Plan – Partial Review and Update.

Reason for Decision: As contained within the report

Other Options considered: As contained within the report

5 **CORPORATE PERFORMANCE - QUARTER 4 2023/24**

The Executive considered a report in respect of Corporate Performance for Quarter 4 of 2023/24 providing the final update on delivery of the Future Town, Future Council Corporate Plan using both quantitative and qualitative information to provide

a complete picture of how the Council was performing.

It was noted that in July, the Cabinet would be presented with the Annual Report, which sets out the Council's performance across the entire year. This would be accompanied by the new performance suite for 2024/25, which was aligned with the new making Stevenage Even Better (MSEB) Corporate Plan.

Members were advised that also in July, the Cabinet would receive the findings of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) perception survey and management data. In addition, the Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report, which will include the annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman Service revised Complaints Handling Code would also be submitted for consideration.

The Chief Executive then gave a presentation summarising Quarter 4 performance highlighting FTFC related achievements and performance in relation to the 12 Community Measures as selected by Members.

The Chief Executive advised that there were 12 green measures, 2 amber and 3 red. In relation to the red indicators, it was noted that:

- Number of Private Homes – 35 provided against a target of 50 – The Courtlands scheme had been delayed due to prolonged adverse weather and unplanned works to divert electricity cables. It was now anticipated that the handover would take place in Quarter 2 2024/25;
- Percentage of Homes for which legionella risk assessments have been carried out – 96.65% against a target of 100%. This followed the introduction of new Technical Guidance published by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) which effectively widened the Compliance Team's work programme beyond Independent Living Schemes. It was noted that the Council was now back to 100% compliance.
- Number of Voids returned by Contractor – 135 against a target of 173. The planned move away from a single contractor had improved the performance and the Voids Improvement plan would be presented to Cabinet in July

The Chief Executive reported on some of the FTFC Performance Highlights and Community Measures as follows:

- Transforming Our Town – a wide range of school and community engagement undertaken conducted through outreach and town centre tours; enabling works on SG1 Plot A (Swingate House); public realm works were completed for the Marshgate Biotech scheme including 44 car parking spaces.
- More Social and Good Quality Affordable Housing – 12 homes had been delivered through the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF); 88 homes delivered to conclude in Phase 1 of the Kenilworth Close Scheme.
- Co-operative Neighbourhoods – the SBC Making Stevenage Even Better Corporate Plan had been agreed at the Council meeting in February 2024; £25,000 had been allocated to five priority neighbourhood centres.
- Balancing the Budget – digital service improvements including commercial waste bookings, Stevenage Day bookings and an increase in online

transactions.

- A Clean, Green, Safe and Thriving Town – new EV charging facilities installed in 7 neighbourhood centres; Cycle hire scheme to be launched in July 2024; Climate Community Change Fund completed with a total of 8 projects approved; ongoing support for the Herts Sports and Physical Activity Partnership;
- Anti-Social Behaviour – a 50% decrease in ASB cases in comparison to the same period last year; 16 cases of flytipping compared to 167 cases in the same period last year; additional flytipping deterrents.
- Climate Change and Provision and Maintenance of Homes – 58% of housing stock had an EPC rating of C or above; 495 new homes since 2014 against a target of 485.
- Good Local Services – over 20,000 visits from children to SBC's Everyone Active managed facilities; 91.9% of complaints responded to within deadline; 99.67% of residential bins collected.

Members were pleased to note that the regeneration of play spaces would include play equipment for all, including children with additional needs, allowing all families to access the spaces to play together.

In relation to the reduction in flytipping cases, a Member suggested that a contributory factor could be the increase in opening hours of the Household Recycling Centre.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the service performance against 34 corporate performance measures and delivery of key milestones in Quarter 4 2023/24 through the Future Town Future Council Programme (Appendix A) be noted.
2. That the performance challenges in relation to voids (section 4.4.3) be noted, and the planned measures to improve performance be endorsed.
3. That delegated authority for approval of all new and existing Housing policies in response to the RSH Consumer Standards and following consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holder (section 4.6.1) be given to an Officer (Strategic Director).
4. That the Council's performance as demonstrated through the 12 Community Measures (Appendix B) be noted.
5. That the strategic risk updates (section 4.8) be noted.

Reason for Decision: As contained within the report

Other Options considered: As contained within the report

6 **URGENT PART I BUSINESS**

None.

7 **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 involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in Paragraphs 1 – 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.
2. That the reasons for the following reports being in Part II were accepted, and that the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

8 **IMPROVEMENT TO ACCESS LINKS BETWEEN OLD AND NEW TOWN**

The Cabinet considered a Part II report in respect of improvement to access links between Old Town and New Town, and leasehold property disposal of land at King George V Playing Field

It was **RESOLVED** that the recommendations set out in the report be approved.

Reason for Decision: As contained within the report

Other Options considered: As contained within the report

9 **COUNCIL TAX AND SUNDRY DEBT WRITE OFFS GREATER THAN £10,000**

The Cabinet considered a Part II report in respect of Council Tax and sundry debt write off greater than £10,000.

It was **RESOLVED** that the recommendations set out in the report be approved.

Reason for Decision: As contained within the report

Other Options considered: As contained within the report

10 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR