

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**COUNCIL  
MINUTES**

Date: Wednesday, 22 May 2024

Time: 7.00pm

Place: Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

**Present:** Councillors: Myla Arceno (Mayor), Jim Brown (Deputy Mayor), Julie Ashley-Wren, Sandra Barr, Philip Bibby CC, Stephen Booth, Robert Boyle, Leanne Brady, Lloyd Briscoe, Rob Broom, Kamal Choudhury, Forhad Chowdhury, Nazmin Chowdhury, Peter Clark, Akin Elekolusi, Alistair Gordon, Lynda Guy, Richard Henry, Jackie Hollywell, Coleen Houlihan, Mason Humberstone, Conor McGrath, Andy McGuinness, Sarah Mead, Robin Parker CC, Claire Parris, Tom Plater, Ellie Plater, Ceara Roopchand, Loraine Rossati, Graham Snell, Simon Speller, Jeannette Thomas, Carolina Veres, Anne Wells, Nigel Williams, Jade Woods and Tom Wren

**Start / End** Start Time: 7.00pm  
**Time:** End Time: 8.35pm

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

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lin Martin-Haugh.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 **MINUTES - 21 FEBRUARY 2024**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 21 February be approved as a record and signed by the Mayor.

3 **ELECTION OF MAYOR**

The Mayor presented a Long Service Award to Councillor Robin Parker in recognition of his 40 years of service to the Town and the Council.

The Mayor then welcomed all Members, in particular the newly elected Members, to the meeting. She then gave a speech thanking the Council for a wonderful year in office, during the 50th anniversary year for the Council. She informed Council that it had been a great honour to have been able to serve the Town as its Mayor and she recounted some of the highlights of her year, which included Chairing the Council meetings

The Mayor then thanked her son John Arceno who had been her Consort for the year, her husband Joseph for his support along with work colleagues from the NHS and the many community groups she had dealt with during the course of the year. The Mayor then thanked colleagues across the Council and the Council Officers who had helped her throughout her year in office, particularly the Mayor's PA Tracey Frost and Members' Services officer Sheila Scrivens. The Mayor reminded Council that she had undertaken 366 engagements during the course of the year and had raised £11,500 for her charities. The Mayor was pleased to advise that she would continue to be a Dementia Champion for the Council and ensure Stevenage remained a dementia friendly Town.

The Mayor then asked for nominations for the Office of Mayor for 2024/25.

Councillor Richard Henry nominated Councillor Jim Brown for the Office of Mayor. In nominating Councillor Brown, Councillor Henry informed the Council that Cllr Brown was a keen runner and cyclist and had run more than 60 marathons. He was also a board member of Cycling UK and had been a Governor at Marriotts School for almost thirty years.

The nomination was seconded by Councillor Simon Speller.

There being no other nominations, a vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Jim Brown be elected as Mayor for the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

Councillor Jim Brown then made the statutory declaration of office.

The Mayor then announced that Penny Schenkel would be the Mayoress for 2024/25.

The Mayor thanked the Council for his election and all his guests for their attendance at the meeting. He particularly mentioned the diverse make-up of the Council following the recent elections. He then gave an inaugural speech, including the announcement that his chosen charities for the year were about sport and active recreation; the arts and music; and social inclusion:

- Stevenage Arts Guild;
- Hertfordshire Sports Partnership and
- People for People.

#### 4 **ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR**

The Mayor asked for nominations for the Office of Deputy Mayor for 2024/25.

Councillor Ellie Plater nominated Councillor Nazmin Chowdhury. The nomination was seconded by Councillor Conor McGrath. In nomination and seconding of Councillor Chowdhury, she was described as an advocate for her residents and a beacon of hope for the community.

There being no other nominations, a vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Nazmin Chowdhury be appointed Deputy Mayor for the 2024/25

Municipal Year.

Councillor Nazmin Chowdhury then made the statutory declaration of office. The Deputy Mayor announced that her husband Keir Williams would be her Consort for the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

## 5 **APPOINTMENT OF YOUTH MAYOR**

The outgoing Youth Mayor, Ella Lacey, thanked the outgoing Mayor, Councillors, Officers, family and friends for their support over the year. She outlined some of the highlights of her year in office and wished the incoming Youth Mayor every success in the role.

It was then moved by Councillor Conor McGrath, seconded by Councillor Sandra Barr and **RESOLVED** that Lahaina Sutherland be elected as Youth Mayor for the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

Lahaina Sutherland then signed the declaration of office. In her acceptance speech, the new Youth Mayor thanked the Council for her election. She further thanked the outgoing Youth Mayor and outlined a number of initiatives including public transport, safety, inclusivity and opportunities for young people as areas she would focus on during her year in office. She then announced that Frankie Duncan would be her Deputy Youth Mayor for the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

## 6 **BOROUGH COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2024**

The Council considered a report that detailed the results of the Borough Council Elections that were held on 2 May 2024.

The Leader thanked the Chief Executive and the Senior Leadership Team and in particular Luke Fattorusso and the Elections Team for their organisation and professionalism in running the all-out elections this year. The Leader welcomed the twelve new Labour Members to the Council and congratulated them on their election. He referred to the talent and diverse nature of the Labour Group following the Election.

The Leader then paid tribute to the outgoing Councillors, including Baroness Taylor, Mrs Joan Lloyd, Michael Downing and Maureen McKay who had over 100 years service between them to Stevenage residents and the Town.

The Leader also paid tribute and thanked former Conservative Councillor and twice Mayor Margaret Notley who had lost her seat by the narrowest of margins and drawn lots.

Councillor Phil Bibby expressed concern regarding material placed on Social Media during the lead up to the Borough Election and how this had impacted on him personally.

A number of Members spoke and agreed the importance of mutual respect.

7 **APPOINTMENT OF LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION**

The Chief Executive advised that the Leader of the Opposition would be Councillor Stephen Booth and that Councillor Robin Parker CC would be his Deputy.

8 **APPOINTMENT OF LEADERS AND DEPUTY LEADERS OF POLITICAL GROUPS ON THE COUNCIL**

The Chief Executive advised the Council that Councillors Richard Henry and Stephen Booth had been appointed as Leaders of the Labour and Co-operative and Liberal Democrat Groups respectively.

It was noted that Councillors Jeannette Thomas, and Robin Parker CC would be Deputy Leaders of the Labour and Co-operative, and Liberal Democrat Groups respectively.

**CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES**

Council considered various matters relating to the Member level decision making structure of the Council and the Council's constitution for the forthcoming Municipal Year.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED**:

- 1 That the Terms of Reference, as detailed in the appendices to the report; and the size and political composition for the following bodies that form the non-Executive Member level decision making structure of the Council be approved subject to the rules of proportionality where appropriate for 100 Committee places where applicable (relevant Committees are identified thus\*) -

Overview and Scrutiny Committee\* (Appendix A) – 14 Members (11 Labour Members, 2 Liberal Democrat Group, 1 Conservative Member)

Community Select Committee\* (Appendix B) – 10 Members (8 Labour Members, 2 Liberal Democrat Members)

Environment and Economy Select Committee\* (Appendix C) – 11 Members (9 Labour Members, 2 Liberal Democrat Members)

Planning & Development Committee\* (Appendix D) – 14 Members (12 Labour & Co-operative Members, 2 Liberal Democrat Members)

Licensing Committee (Appendix E) – 14 Members (12 Labour Members, 2 Liberal Democrat Members)

General Purposes Committee\* (Appendix F) – 14 Members (12 Labour Members, 2 Liberal Democrat Members)

Appointments Committee\* (Appendix G) - 8 Members (7 Labour Members, 1

Liberal Democrat Members)

Standards Committee\* (Appendix H) – 8 Members (6 Labour Members, 1 Liberal Democrat Member, 1 Conservative Member)

Audit Committee\* (Appendix I) – 10 Members (8 Labour Members, 1 Liberal Democrat Member, 1 Conservative Member) + 1 Co-opted non-elected member

Statement of Accounts Committee\* (Appendix J) – 8 Members (7 Labour Members, 1 Liberal Democrat Member)

Joint Consultative Committee\* (Appendix K) – 3 Members (2 Labour Members, 1 Liberal Democrat Member)

\* Indicates where those bodies covered by the rules of proportionality for the purposes of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups), Regulations 1990 – total Committee places being 100

2. That, in accordance with a proposal from the Leader of the Council, the name of the “Executive” be changed to “Cabinet”.
3. That the Borough Solicitor be authorised to make consequential amendments to the Constitution to reflect the proposal set out in Resolution 2 above.
4. That the membership of the Cabinet and the individual Portfolios, as set out below, be noted including the addition to the Housing Portfolio of the “Member responsible for complaints”, in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman’s and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman’s recently published Complaints Handling Code:

Councillor Richard Henry – Leader, Transforming Stevenage  
Councillor Jeannette Thomas – Deputy Leader, Resources & Transformation  
Councillor Sandra Barr – Co-operative Council and Neighbourhoods  
Councillor Lloyd Briscoe – Economy, Skills and Transport  
Councillor Jackie Hollywell – Housing  
Councillor Conor McGrath – Stronger Communities  
Councillor Loraine Rossati – Culture, Leisure and Wellbeing  
Councillor Simon Speller – Environment and Performance

3. That the various Cabinet bodies appointed by the Leader, detailed in Paragraph 4.4 of the report and the relevant Terms of Reference for each body set out in Appendix L to the report, be noted.
4. That the dates for Council meetings for the Municipal Year 2024/25, as shown at Paragraph 4.9 of the report, be approved, and that the calendar of formal meetings shown at Appendix M to the report, be noted.

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## **APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL**

Details of the individuals nominated to serve on each Committee, together with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of those Committees, where stated, had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Council noted that in relation to the membership of the Joint Consultative Committee, Councillor Tom Plater should replace Councillor Ceara Roopchand.

Councillor Richard Henry moved and Councillor Jeannette Thomas seconded the appointment of Committees. Councillor Richard Henry moved and Councillor Jeannette Thomas seconded the appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs to the Committees.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the membership of Committees, together with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs, where detailed, are appointed for 2024/25 Municipal Year as follows:

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

14 Members (11-2-1)

Councillors – L Martin-Haugh (Chair), R Parker, CC (Vice-Chair), P Bibby, CC, M Arceno, S Booth, R Broom, F Chowdhury, P Clark, L Guy, S Mead, T Plater, C Roopchand, C Veres and A Wells

**COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE**

10 Members (8-2-0):

Councillors – S Mead (Chair), J Ashley-Wren (Vice-Chair), S Booth, L Brady, K Chowdhury, A Elekolusi, A Gordon, L Guy, M Humberstone and J Woods

**ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE**

11 Members (9-2-0):

Councillors – R Broom (Chair), A McGuinness (Vice-Chair), L Brady, F Chowdhury, A Gordon, S Mead, C Parris, E Plater, G Snell, N Williams and J Woods

**PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

14 Members (12-2-0)

Councillors – C Parris (Chair), N Chowdhury (Vice-Chair), J Ashley-Wren, R Broom, F Chowdhury, K Choudhury, P Clark, A Elekolusi, L Guy, C Houlihan, E Plater, G Snell, C Veres and A Wells

Substitutes - S Booth

+ 6 Labour substitutes (tba)

**LICENSING COMMITTEE**

14 Members (12-2-0)

Councillors – E Plater (Chair), S Barr (Vice-Chair), M Arceno, R Boyle, P Clark, A Elekolusi, A Gordon, C Houlihan, M Humberstone, L Martin-Haugh, C Parris, G Snell, A Wells, T Wren

Substitutes - S Booth

A McGuinness

+ 6 Labour substitutes (tba)

## **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

14 Members (12-2-0)

Councillors – E Plater (Chair), S Barr (Vice-Chair), M Arceno, R Boyle, P Clark, A Elekolusi, A Gordon, C Houlihan, M Humberstone, L Martin-Haugh, C Parris, G Snell, A Wells, T Wren,

Substitutes - S Booth  
A McGuinness  
+ 6 Labour substitutes (tba)

## **APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE**

8 Members (7-1-0)

Councillors – R Henry (Chair), S Booth, M Humberstone, L Martin-Haugh, L Rossati, S Speller, J Thomas and N Williams

## **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

8 Members (6-1-1)

Councillors – J Hollywell (Chair), M Arceno (Vice-Chair), P Bibby, CC, C McGrath, C Roopchand, L Rossati, N Williams and T Wren.

Independent Person who must be consulted on alleged breaches to the Code of Conduct – Dr. Robert Cawley

## **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

10 Members (8-1-1) + 1 Independent Co-opted Member (S Uddin)

Councillors – C Veres (Chair), L Briscoe (Vice-Chair), P Bibby, CC, R Boyle, L Guy, M Humberstone, T Plater, C Roopchand, A Wells and T Wren

## **STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

8 Members (7-1-0)

Councillors – J Thomas (Chair), S Barr (Vice-Chair), M Arceno, L Brady, K Choudhury, A Elekolusi, R Parker, CC and S Speller.

## **JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

3 Members (2-1-0)

Councillors – Jackie Hollywell (Employer Side Chair), R Parker CC and T Plater.

## 11 **APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

Council considered a list of individuals nominated to serve on Outside Bodies which had been circulated before the meeting.

It was moved by Councillor Richard Henry, seconded by Councillor Jeannette Thomas and **RESOLVED** that the following individuals are appointed to represent the Council on the various bodies detailed below for one year, unless otherwise stated:

COUNCIL FOR THE PROTECTION OF RURAL ENGLAND: THE

HERTFORDSHIRE SOCIETY - Portfolio Holder for Environment and Performance

EAST COAST MAINLINE AUTHORITIES (ECMA) CONSORTIUM – Portfolio Holder for Economy Skills and Transport

EAST OF ENGLAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION - The Leader of the Council

EAST OF ENGLAND REGIONAL PLANNING - Portfolio Holder for Environment and Performance

HERTS WASTE MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP - Portfolio Holder for Environment and Performance

HERTFORDSHIRE GROWTH BOARD – The Leader of the Council

HERTFORDSHIRE INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING AND POLICY GROUP - Portfolio Holder for Environment and Performance

HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL AUTHORITIES LEADERS GROUP - The Leader of the Council

HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP – The Leader of the Council

HERTFORDSHIRE CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY PARTNERSHIP - Portfolio Holder for Environment and Performance

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION - The Leader of the Council

SOSAFE PARTNERSHIP - Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, and Equalities

STEVENAGE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP - Portfolio Holder for Stronger Communities

STEVENAGE DEVELOPMENT BOARD - The Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader

AGE CONCERN STEVENAGE – Jeannette Thomas

BEDWELL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION – Conor McGrath

CHELLS MANOR COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION - Andy McGuinness

CROSSROADS CARE – Anne Wells

DOUGLAS DRIVE SENIOR CITIZENS ASSOCIATION – Myla Arceno

HOME-START STEVENAGE – Coleen Houlihan



KADOMA LINK ASSOCIATION - Graham Snell and Mason Humberstone

LIVING ROOM PROJECT - Jackie Hollywell

OLD STEVENAGE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION – Nigel Williams

OVAL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION - Lloyd Briscoe

PIN GREEN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION - Jeannette Thomas

SHEPHALL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION – Sarah Mead

ST NICHOLAS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION - Sandra Barr

STEVENAGE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU – Rob Broom

STEVENAGE COMMUNITY TRUST – Lorraine Rossati and Nigel Williams

STEVENAGE CREDIT UNION LIMITED – Carolina Veres

SPRUSE – Lin Martin-Haugh

HAVEN FIRST – Mason Humberstone

STEVENAGE/AUTUN/INGELHEIM ASSOCIATION – Sandra Barr and Simon Speller

STEVENAGE WORLD FORUM FOR ETHNIC COMMUNITIES – Forhad Chowdhury and Mason Humberstone

SYMONDS GREEN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION – Jackie Hollywell

TIMEBRIDGE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION – Tom Wren

TURN THE TIDE – Nazmin Chowdhury

EAST OF ENGLAND LGA IMPROVEMENT AND EFFICIENCY PANEL - Richard Henry

HCC HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – Alistair Gordon

LOCAL GOVERNMENT INFORMATION UNIT – Jim Brown

LUTON AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE – Akin Elokolusi

**CHAIR**