STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, 21 July 2026
Time: 6.00pm
Place: Council Chamber - Daneshill House, Danestrete

Present:	Councillors: Ellie Plater (Chair), Matthew Hurst CC (Vice-Chair), Jim Brown, Philip Bibby, Jeff Bullock, Leanne Brady, Peter Clark, Claire Parris, Jackie Hollywell, Ricki Rands, Jade Woods and Tom Wren
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 Councillor Andy McGuinness.
Councillor Parris declared an interest in Agenda item 3 as they are a St Nicholas ward Councillor.

Councillor Hurst declared an interest in Agenda item 3 as they are the Stevenage Borough Council representative on the St Nicholas Community Association.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 15 June 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 PART I DECISION OF THE CABINET - ST NICHOLAS PRIDE IN PLACE FUNDING: BOARD ESTABLISHMENT AND PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The Committee received an update on the Government Pride in Place funding for the St Nicholas project. A report had been considered by Cabinet the previous week and all recommendations had been approved.
In response to a question regarding the governance arrangements, Members were advised that the recruitment process for an independent Chair of the Board had been completed, although the appointment remained subject to pre-appointment clearances before it could be announced. It was further reported that approximately 15 applications had been received for Board membership. The Board would comprise 51% local residents, together with the Member of Parliament and up to two ward councillors.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Committee noted the decisions of Cabinet.

4 PART I DECISION OF THE CABINET - OUTTURN Q4 MONITORING REPORT FOR GENERAL FUND, HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT, CAPITAL AND GROUP COMPANIES

The Committee received an update on the Council's 2025/26 Final outturn report, which had been considered by Cabinet. It was noted that the report covered the final outturn position for the General Fund, the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), and the Council's subsidiary companies. Members were advised that Cabinet had approved all 17 recommendations contained within the report.
The Committee also noted that Cabinet had approved the allocation of £200,000 from the General Fund underspend to fund public realm improvements in support of the town's 80th anniversary celebrations.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Committee noted the decisions of Cabinet.

5 PART I DECISION OF THE CABINET - CORPORATE PERFORMANCE QUARTER 4 2025/26, ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26 AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE SUITE 2026/27

The Committee received a report presenting the Council's 2025/26 performance, the Annual Report for 2025/26, and the Corporate Performance Suite for 2026/27. It was noted that the Annual Report reflected the Council's strategic priorities for the current year and that Cabinet had approved the report and the Corporate Performance Suite. The Officer highlighted key achievements and progress against the Corporate Plan, including the successful securing of approximately £1 million of external funding to expand the STEM Futures programme in partnership with Mission 44, North Hertfordshire College and other partners. Cabinet had concluded that the Council had delivered a strong overall performance during 2025/26 despite a challenging operating environment.

Members discussed the continued challenges relating to voids turnaround times. Officers acknowledged that this remained a longstanding issue and advised that a comprehensive voids improvement plan was in place, with early signs of improvement. It was explained that performance was being closely monitored by the Strategic Leadership Team and would be reported through the Quarter 1 performance report.

Officers also outlined that poor property condition on hand back, increased regulatory responsibilities and the need to maintain quality standards had all contributed to delays. Members were advised that rechargeable repairs were applied where appropriate and that tenancy audits and pre-void inspections were being strengthened to improve property standards before tenancies ended.

The Committee also discussed improvements to the Council's repairs service. Officers advised that new specialist contractors had been appointed, contract management arrangements had been strengthened, management capacity within the service had increased, and improvements had been made to the way repairs were assessed and allocated through the Customer Service Centre.

It was noted that tenant satisfaction with the repairs service was showing a positive trend and that a repairs improvement plan was being implemented alongside preparations for the introduction of further requirements under Awaab's Law. Officers emphasised that there was no single solution to improving the service, but that a range of measures were being introduced across the entire customer journey, with particular focus on the initial point of contact and end-to-end service delivery.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Committee noted the decisions of Cabinet.

6 **PART I DECISION OF THE CABINET - DRAFT TENANCY STRATEGY 2026 - 2031**

The Cabinet considered a report presenting the draft Tenancy Strategy, as recommended by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Housing Development. It was noted that comments from the Community Select Committee had been considered during the development of the strategy, and the three recommendations contained within the report were approved.

Members were also advised that a resident-friendly version of the Tenancy Strategy would be produced and published to improve accessibility for residents.

A Member thanked the Cabinet for recognising the importance of tenant engagement within the strategy. It was acknowledged that, although timescale constraints had prevented its inclusion in the main document, assurances had been provided that tenant engagement would be incorporated into the final approach.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Committee noted the decisions of Cabinet.

7 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ACTION TRACKER**

The Committee received a report outlining previous Overview and Scrutiny reviews and provided Members with the opportunity to identify any completed scrutiny work that they wished to revisit or receive an update on.

Members suggested that completed scrutiny reviews should include a review date, with a default period of three years, to ensure that significant pieces of work were automatically brought back to the Committee for reconsideration where appropriate.

In response to a query regarding the Workforce Survey review, officers confirmed that the work had been completed and that the wording in the report required updating. Officers advised that a further update from Human Resources could be arranged if Members wished.

An update was also requested on the implementation of the Member enquiries system. Officers advised that the system was scheduled to go live at the beginning of September following a beta testing phase involving a small number of councillors. It was agreed that a future update on the operation of the Member enquiries system could be brought back to the Committee, together with consideration of introducing a standard three-year review cycle for completed scrutiny reviews.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Committee noted the decisions of Cabinet.

8 **URGENT PART I DECISIONS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

There was no Urgent Part I Decisions authorised by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

9 **URGENT PART I BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Part I Business.

10 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That, under Section 100(A) 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.

11 **PART II MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 15 June 2026 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

12 **PART II DECISION OF THE CABINET - SPORTS AND LEISURE CENTRE**

The Committee received an update regarding the revised budget and revised funding strategy for the Stevenage Sports and Leisure Hub.

The Committee asked a number of questions which officers responded to.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Committee noted the decisions of Cabinet.

13 **PART II DECISION OF THE CABINET - CONTRACT AWARD - MATERIALS SUPPLIER FOR THE REPAIRS AND VOIDS SERVICE**

The Committee received an update regarding the decision of the Cabinet to seek approval to reprocure a materials supplier the Repairs and Voids Service.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Committee noted the decisions of Cabinet.

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

There were no Urgent Part II Decisions authorised by the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

15 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Part II Business.

CHAIR