Welcome to Stevenage Borough Council

Congratulations on being appointed as a councillor for the new town of Stevenage! You join us at an exciting time in the town's history and with the regeneration of the town under way there will no doubt be many topics and opportunities where you can represent the people of Stevenage during your tenure.

This member induction pack is designed to give you a brief introduction to being a councillor and to provide you with some essential information to help you on the start of your journey as a member of the council.

The following figures will give you a sense of scale with regards to the Council's operations:

- 600 to 700 Employees (varies due to seasonal activities)

- £150 million per annum turnover (including Benefits and Housing)

- 120 different services

- Big contributor to the local economy

- Circa 8000 Council owned Homes & 1,500 leaseholders

If you need any help or assistance with any aspect of your role as a councillor, please do not hesitate to get in touch with any of the team at Members' Services – their details can be found in the 'First Essential Steps' section.

CONTENTS

First Essential Steps:

You will receive a brief list of all the things you need to do, or make sure you have in place to start. If you have any problems, or need more information, there is always a dedicated team ready to help you in Members' Services. They can be contacted here:

Members' Services
Stevenage Borough Council
Daneshill House
Danestrete
Stevenage
Herts
SG1 1HN

01438 242278
member.services@stevenage.gov.uk

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL – Councillors & Political make up

Stevenage Borough Council is made up of thirteen 'wards', each ward has three councillors representing it. Since this handbook is part of a new member induction, you will appreciate that the list of Councillors can change from time to time, so publishing a list of all the Councillors details would not be practical here.

You can find the current list of Councillors and the wards they represent at the following link:

https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/political-makeup

As at March 2024, there is a Labour party majority in the Council with twenty four Councillors (or Members), nine Conservative and six Liberal Democrats.

The Members are made up of an overall leader, a deputy leader and there are leaders and deputy leaders for each of the other parties represented.

Stevenage also has a Mayor, who is also a ward Councillor and is the recognised spokesperson and representative on all civic and ceremonial occasions and is the figurehead of the community that the council serves.

The Mayor attends many functions during their time in office and they can be booked to attend a function by submitting the online form on the SBC website. There is also a deputy Mayor and each Mayor that is elected, champions various charities through the Mayor's fund.

The Mayor's office is located in Daneshill House and is administered by Tracey Frost and can be contacted via: tracey.frost@stevenage.gov.uk

THE STRUCTURE OF THE COUNCIL

Stevenage Borough Council is part of a two-tier system with Hertfordshire County Council. Five of our elected Members are also County Councillors, and they are identified by 'CC' after their name in official listings.

The services for which the County Council is responsible include highways, education and social services. Services for which Stevenage Borough Council is responsible include planning, waste collection, housing and leisure. Regeneration and economic development are also large parts of the work of SBC.

There are thirty nine Councillors in Stevenage, three each representing the thirteen wards of the town. A fully illustrated list of our Councillors, with their contact details, can be found here: https://democracy.stevenage.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1

The Stevenage Wards

All councillors meet collectively as the Council usually six times a year. The Council sets the annual budget and the part of the Council Tax charged by Stevenage. (The Council Tax also includes charges set by the County Council and by the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Council also makes decisions on major policies, such as the Corporate Plan and the Local Development Plan. It is also a forum to debate issues relevant to Stevenage.

The Council appoints a 'Council leader' who, in turn, appoints an Executive (or Cabinet). This is made up of eight 'Executive Portfolio holders' including the Council Leader. The Executive makes all the major decisions relating to the following main areas: Regeneration, Communication & Strategic Partnerships, Resources & Transformation, Housing & Housing Development, Economy & Transport, Co-operative Council & Neighbourhood Communities, Community Safety & Equalities, Environment & Performance and Culture, Leisure & Information Technology. The Executive has wide decision-making powers but must operate within the budget and policy framework set by full Council.

Much of the day-to-day decision making is delegated by the Executive to Council officers.

The Council has a Scrutiny Committee and two Scrutiny Panels. They have powers to examine decisions made by the Executive and to hold the Executive to account. They can also take an overview of Council services and issues affecting Stevenage and can

make recommendations. Membership of these committees is drawn from councillors who are not part of the Executive.

The Council also has a number of regulatory and governance committees. Regulatory committees include Planning & Development Licensing. They make decisions on whether to grant statutory consents such as planning permission and licenses for public entertainment and taxis. There are also governance committees, such as the Audit Committee and the Standards Committee, which make sure that the Council operates in a proper manner.

These Committees are appointed at the Annual Council meeting. To give you an idea of the remit of each Committees the Terms of Reference are set out at Appendix 3.

Stevenage has a Mayor who is also a Councillor in their own right. The Mayor functions as the 'first citizen' of the town. This means that they are the recognised spokesperson and representative at all civic and ceremonial occasions and the figurehead of the community that the Council serves.

The Mayor is elected every year and each Mayor has a 'Mayor's Fund' where they nominate beneficiaries or charities that they promote within the community.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As you will be aware, local Councillors are elected by the community to decide how the Council should carry out its various activities. They represent public interest as well as individuals living within the ward that they were elected to serve in.

They have regular contact with the general public through Council meetings, emails, telephone calls or surgeries. Surgeries provide an opportunity for residents to talk to their Councillor face to face.

Councillors can help residents if they have questions concerning a Council service by advising or directing them to someone who can help and can sometimes progress cases on their behalf. This is often done through the advice surgeries where residents can meet with the Councillor for their ward and discuss their problem.

Details of Councillors' surgeries are published on the Council's website, in the Chronicle magazine and the Council provide customised leaflets for some Councillors to use in their wards.

As community leaders a Councillor will put forward proposals to improve their ward, which may include bringing together different community groups to develop a case for change.

Councillors are not paid a salary for their work, but they do receive allowances. By law, all members of the Council are required to complete a declaration of interest form, the details of which are published annually.

Following the implementation of the Local Government Act 2000, the role of Councillors changed and the Executive/scrutiny system was introduced. The Council is run on a system similar to that at central government, with the Leader (with her/his Executive) to make major policies and other Councillors scrutinise or examine these decisions in detail through the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Introduction to the Corporate Plan – making Stevenage 'Even Better'.

The Corporate Plan 'Making Stevenage Even Better' is a key strategic document for the Council and forms part of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Making Stevenage Even Better provides a strategic link between delivery of services, the national and local policy agenda, and the Council's joint-partnership objectives. The strategic priorities inform the Council's budget setting process and direction of travel over the next three years and the focus of Service Plans across the authority.

It is vital that the Council's strategic priorities, as set out in the Making Stevenage Even Better, reflect the challenges and opportunities the Council faces, and that these priorities are based upon the views of residents, business and local community groups. Accordingly, the five strategic priorities set out in 'Making Stevenage Even Better' have been informed by 3,000 responses provided through the Residents Survey (2021), the Tenants Survey (2021), and the Cooperative Neighbourhoods Resident Proptech Survey (2023).

The five strategic priorities of Making Stevenage Even Better are:

1. **Transforming Our Town**
   a. Regeneration
   b. Enterprise & Skills
   c.
2. **More Social, Affordable and Good Quality Homes**
   a. Building New & Sustainable Homes
   b. Maintaining Good Quality Homes
   c.
3. **Thriving Neighbourhoods**
   a. Clean Neighbourhoods & Green Spaces
   b. Community Safety
   c. Culture & Leisure
   d.
4. **Tackling Climate Change**

5. *Balancing the Budget*

The three cross-cutting themes are **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**; **Health and Wellbeing**; and **Technology & Innovation**. The inclusion of cross-cutting themes highlights the need to raise awareness of these areas when designing and delivering services. They reflect important social benefits and demonstrate the importance the Council places on effective partnership working and existing commitments to tackle health inequalities, champion equality, and consider innovative solutions to deliver efficiencies and empower residents when accessing services.

The full Corporate Plan was published on 21 February 2024. For more information on any part of the Corporate Plan, contact Daryl Jedowski, Corporate Policy and Performance Manager – daryl.jedowski@stevenage.gov.uk.

OUR VALUES:

We care passionately about our town and are committed to making a real difference to the lives of all our residents, now, and into the future.

Our approach is driven by our values. These guide and inform everything we do; delivering our services, making Stevenage a great place to live, working with our partners and ensuring our Council is an inspiring place for our staff to work.
Our values are . .

Our values are reflected in our approach when we say "The heart of a town lies in its people" and people are at the heart of everything that we do. . .

- We deliver excellent public services, for the best possible value for money, to the people of Stevenage. Some of those we provide services to are the most vulnerable in our society, and we care deeply about the difference we make to their lives every day.
- We aim to improve the quality of life, life chances, and life choices, for all our residents in Stevenage.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE FOR RESIDENTS – 'HAVE YOUR SAY'

In your induction sessions you will be advised of the 'Have Your Say' procedure which is the process for dealing with issues brought to you by your constituents. Please find details of the process below.

Customers are asked to direct service failure complaints to the specific service in question in the first instance. Having done so, if they remain unhappy with the response received they are asked to contact the Customer Service Centre to make a formal complaint through the Council's Complaint Procedure. Alternatively customers can email yoursay@stevenage.gov.uk, complete an online form on our website https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/have-your-say/compliments-and-complaints or write in to Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage, Herts, SG1 1HN.

To investigate properly we need the facts written down. Residents can also provide us with photos if that helps. The quickest way to do that is online on our website.

If residents are struggling to go online they can come in to Customer Services and we'll help them use one of our computers. They can also call us, but there might be a wait and it can take a while as we'll need to check we've got their complaint correctly recorded.

If we spot residents saying something that sounds like a complaint elsewhere, such as on our social media pages, or face to face with a member of our staff, then we will point them in the right direction to make that complaint.

What we do with your complaint

The Council operates a 2-stage complaints procedure, and if you remain dissatisfied you can refer the issue to the Ombudsman.

To help clarify or resolve your complaint, we may want to talk to you over the phone or in person. If we're able to resolve your complaint over the phone, we will still send you a written response to summarise what was agreed.

Complex complaints and ones that involve more than one service usually take us longer to investigate. We may also need to speak to particular members of staff. If we can't respond to you within the timeline set out below, we will contact you to let you know.

Stage 1 – Formal response by the Service Manager

The complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt, and a written response provided within the following 10 working days.

Your complaint will be investigated by the most appropriate service manager, usually with support from their team.

Stage 2 – Review by Senior Manager

If you are dissatisfied with our stage 1 response then you can ask us to review it by getting in contact within 15 working days.

The complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt, and a written response provided within the following 20 working days.

The review will be carried out by the appropriate senior manager, sometimes with support from our Customer Services team.

If at either stage we need more time to respond to you, we will let you know.

Full details on the process can be found on the internet page:
https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/have-your-say/compliments-and-complaints/complaints-policy

MODERN MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (MMP)

The Modern Member Development programme is a series of events booked monthly throughout the year which aims to provide Councillors with information and updates on all relevant aspects of the business.

These events generally take place on the first Thursday of every month (except July and August) and feature external speakers as well as Council officers presenting on a range of topics that are relevant to the work of the Council, the services, or national trends or legislation. The sessions take place online via Teams.

Typical events regularly include: Safeguarding, Mental Health awareness, Lone working – keeping yourself safe, Data protection updates, Using social media effectively, etc. If you have any particular ideas for an MMP event, then please contact Kirsten Frew, Head of Human Resources, or Raymond Taylor, Learning and Development Admin for possible inclusion in the programme.

iLearn – the SBC eLearning platform

Our eLearning platform (iLearn) is run in conjunction with Herts County Council, who own and administer the system for us. The address for access to the system is:

hertfordshirelearningpool.com/login.

The User Guide is shown in Appendix 2. The system can also be accessed via the intranet.

You will be asked to use this facility as part of your induction as there are a number of matters such as Safeguarding and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) that all Members and Officers are expected to have knowledge. The eLearning platform contains courses for these mandatory topics which, ideally, should be completed during your first week as a Councillor. You can also access the system from your home PC if you like, as the system is entirely independent of the SBC network. The guide also shows a quick guide to setting up your own account. Course lengths will vary and completed courses are logged on your own account.

If you have any technical issues with iLearn, please use the 'Support' link on the homepage which will direct you to an email address for the admin team at HCC.

The front page of the SBC iLearn system after log in. From here you can access the courses from the collective menus represented by the coloured boxes below this image.

The list of mandatory courses to complete are all contained within the 'Induction and Essentials' section of the iLearn catalogue and are listed below:

Welcome to SBC

Health and Safety

Child Protection and Safeguarding

Safeguarding adults

Data Protection awareness

General Data Protection suite

Dignity at work

Ant-fraud & Corruption awareness

Fire Safety and Prevention

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The image above shows how the courses appear on the Induction and Mandatory homepage.

The Local Government Association: Councillor e-learning

The Local Government Association has a free e-learning platform which will deepen your knowledge of local government and help you to build the leadership skills you need to work effectively with communities. You can use the platform to:

- create a bespoke learning programme
- choose the modules most relevant to your individual needs and interests

- fit your learning around all your other commitments.

You need to register to access the learning programme. The link is [Councillor e-learning | Local Government Association](#).

The e-learning platform includes the following modules:

- Audit committees (an introduction)

- Biodiversity for councils

- Building safety

- Children's Services

- Commissioning council services

- Community engagement and leadership

- Corporate parenting

- Councillor Code of Conduct

- Councillor induction

- Economic development

- Equality, diversity and inclusion

- Facilitation and conflict resolution

- Handling intimidation

- Holding council meetings online

- Influencing skills

- Licensing for councillors

- Local government finance

- Performance management

- Planning

- Police and crime panels

- Scrutiny for councillors

- Stress management and personal resilience

- Supporting mentally healthier communities

- Supporting your constituents with complex issues

- The effective ward councillor

- The importance of speech, language and communication in the early years

- UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

'MYVIEW' – THE HR SYSTEM

'MyView' is the HR system through which you can access your Members' Allowances payslips, claiming mileage and subsistence expenses and update personal details.

The address for access to MyView is: myview.stevenage.gov.uk/dashboard

Your user name and password which you use to log in to your hosted desktop is also the access you use to log in to MyView. The front page of MyView looks like this . . .
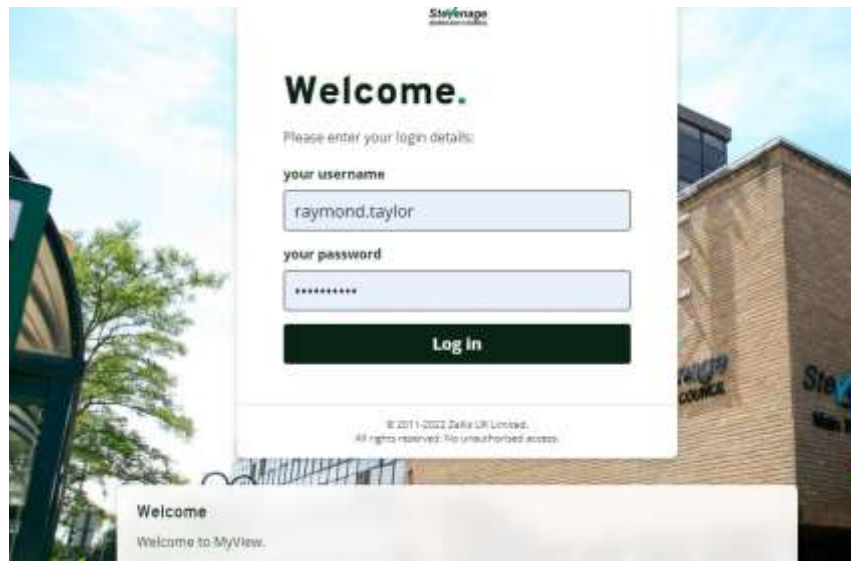
. . . and when you sign in successfully, your homepage will look like this . . .
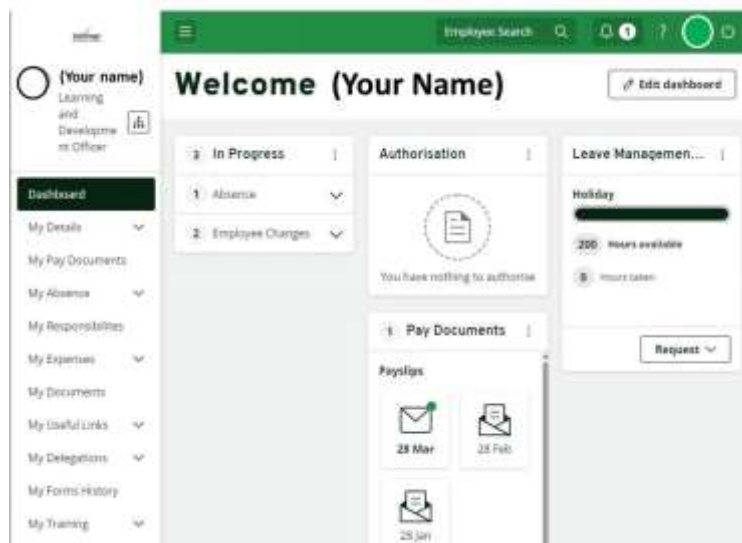
You will be able to change personal details and view your payslips and P60's.

If you have any problems with MyView, or have any password problems etc. please speak to Members Services, or the HR Team.

THE CIVIC SUITE

The main rooms in the Civic Suite are named after the four twin towns that Stevenage has. These are Ingelheim (Germany), Autun (France), Kadoma (Zimbabwe) and Shimkent (Khazakstan).
'Twinning' is a practice that aims to promote good community co-operation, cultural education and support and goodwill between towns in different nations, very often chosen because they are the same size as each other, or perhaps have similar backgrounds or history in their respective nations.

The Ingelheim Lounge

Ingelheim is in the 'Rhineland-Pfalz' region of south-western Germany and at the lower end of the predominantly industrial area of the 'Ruhr Valley', near the towns of Mainz and Koblenz in Germany's industrial heartland.

Ingelheim became a town in its own right in 1939 when three self-administering principalities came together, which makes it a 'new' town similar to Stevenage, although the precise definition of what makes a 'new' town in the UK is different.

Politically, the town is run predominantly by the Christian Democratic Union party (CDU) and as well as being twinned with Stevenage, it is also twinned with another one of our twin towns – Autun, in France.

Just like Stevenage, Ingelheim attracts high-tech industry and is a pharmaceutical base. The Ingelheim lounge is solely used as a base for members to meet and greet visitors, or to catch up with fellow members before and after Council meetings and MMP sessions. You cannot 'book' the Ingelheim lounge as such, for meetings, etc, but any events that are going to use the lounge or require the use of the bar facilities, can be booked through committees@stevenage.gov.uk to ensure there is no clash of events, or anyone using it at the same time as your event.

The Autun Room

Autun is in the heart of France's famous wine growing Burgundy region in the East of the country near Switzerland and is nearby to Dijon and the main TGV fast train route to the Riviera.

Autun was a major Roman settlement which once had a population of up to 60000 people at one time and there are many well-preserved Roman structures and artefacts throughout the town. Two of the most impressive are a Roman gate – the Saint-Andre, and a Roman theatre which once had a capacity for 17000 people. Today, the town population is around 14000. The name 'Autun' comes from a Uranium mineral first discovered here in 1852, called Autunite.

The Autun room is predominantly used as a meeting room and training room and can be booked through committees@stevenage.gov.uk. It can accommodate around 25 people with folding tables in place, and around 40 people with the tables folded away, making it the most flexible room in terms of layout for training, meetings, or committees.

The Kadoma Room

Kadoma (formerly known as Gatooma until 1982) is at the centre of a large mining area, south-west of the Zimbabwe capital Harare.

The mining area is rich in gold, copper and nickel and cotton is also grown. Kadoma was awarded city status in 2000 and has a population of around 120,000 people making it slightly bigger than Stevenage.

Politically, Kadoma is made up of seventeen wards with one Councillor for each. The city is headed by an elected Mayor and the town is run by a Town Clerk and their five directors who are responsible for areas such as Housing, Environmental Health, etc.
The Kadoma room is used for meetings and can accommodate up to 12 people around a fixed set of tables. It can only be booked through committees@stevenage.gov.uk.

The Shimkent Room

Shimkent (sometimes spelt 'Shymkent') is in the southern part of Kazakhstan, near the border of Kyrgystan and Uzbekistan, towards the far eastern part of the former USSR, close to China.

Shimkent is by far the largest of our twin 'towns' with a population of over one million! The millionth resident was born in May 2018.

The city is on a major rail junction on the Trans-Siberian railway and has mainly consisted of heavy industry such as smelting lead, cadmium, etc, but more recently has also developed pharmaceutical industries, petro-chemical refineries and foodstuffs.

The Shimkent Room can accommodate around 18 people around a fixed set of oval tables, board-room style. The Shimkent room can only be booked through committees@stevenage.gov.uk.

Using the Technology in the Civic Suite

The Autun, Shimkent, Ingelheim and Kadoma rooms all have air conditioning and free-to-use tea and coffee machines and water stations. With the exception of the Ingelheim lounge, they also all feature large, flat screen TV's for you to easily access link up your laptop for presentations, etc, via the built in HDMi cable.

To use these facilities, simply switch the TV on and connect your laptop via the HDMi cable. The TV channel should be changed to 'HDMi ONE' from the remote control to access your connected device. There are speakers built in to the TV and volume is raised or lowered using the remote control. If you need to use the full conference facilities with the built in camera, for either the Civic Suite rooms or the Council Chamber, please contact the IT Service Desk.

There are instructions in each of the rooms, but if you have any technical issues, call the IT Service Desk on: 01438 242121 (before 17.00 hours) or email: itservicedesk@stevenage.gov.uk

The rooms also contain Hearing Loop facilities. Look for the sign in the room (usually located near the coffee machines) and follow the instruction on the sign.
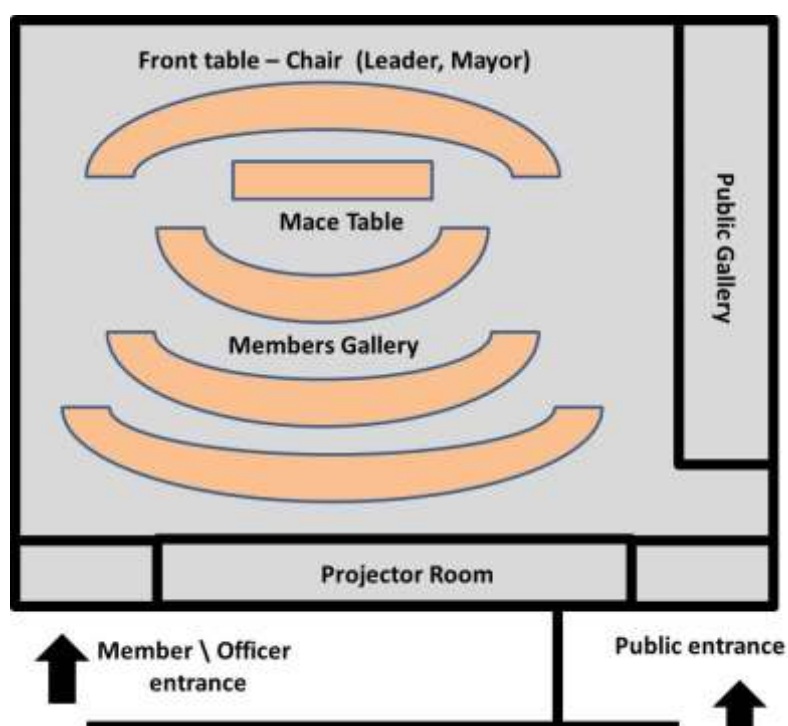
The Council Chamber – Layout

The Council Chamber in Daneshill House is located in the civic suite on the first floor beside all the meeting rooms described above. There are two entrances to it – the 'front' entrance is accessed directly from the main stairs and is used solely by members of the public or visitors. On entry here, the public gallery is situated directly in front of you as you walk in.

The 'rear' entrance is on the other side and is for use only by staff or Members. On entry here, the members' gallery and access to the front table is directly in front. In between the entrances is a projector room, which contains the main PC and projector for any presentations, required during a meeting. The room is locked at all times and the key can be obtained from IT Service Desk or Democratic Services on request. You will need to access your own account to use the PC.

The Council Chamber is fully equipped with an audio system and individual microphones for each Member. Each Member has an allocated seat in the chamber. And there are allocated seats for the Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor as well.

Please feel free to familiarise yourself with the various rooms and the Council Chamber when you arrange your tour of the civic suite with Members' Services – they will explain everything in more detail during your tour.

The Council Chamber layout

For advice and guidance on how to set up and use the broadcasting technology in the Council Chamber, please speak to IT Service Desk or Member Services.

Local Government Association's

Parental Leave Policy for Councils

Introduction

This Policy sets out Members' entitlement to maternity, paternity, shared-parental and adoption leave and relevant allowances.

The objective of the policy is to ensure that insofar as possible Members are able to take appropriate leave at the time of birth or adoption, that both parents are able to take leave, and that reasonable and adequate arrangements are in place to provide cover for portfolio-holders and others in receipt of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) during any period of leave taken.

Improved provision for new parents will contribute towards increasing the diversity of experience, age and background of local authority Councillors. It will also assist with retaining experienced Councillors – particularly women – and making public office more accessible to individuals who might otherwise feel excluded from it.

1.1   Members giving birth are entitled to up to 6 months maternity leave from the due date, with the option to extend up to 52 weeks by agreement if required.

1.2   In addition, where the birth is premature, the Member is entitled to take leave during the period between the date of the birth and the due date in addition to the 6 months' period. In such cases any leave taken to cover prematurity of 28 days or less shall be deducted from any extension beyond the initial 6 months.

1.3   In exceptional circumstances, and only in cases of prematurity of 29 days or more, additional leave may be taken by agreement, and such exceptional leave shall not be deducted from the total 52 week entitlement.

1.4   Members shall be entitled to take a minimum of 2 weeks paternity leave if they are the biological father or nominated carer of their partner/spouse following the birth of their child/children

1.5   A Member who has made Shared Parental Leave arrangements through their employment is requested to advise the Council of these at the earliest possible opportunity. Every effort will be made to replicate such arrangements in terms of leave from Council.

1.6   Where both parents are Members leave may be shared up to a maximum of

24 weeks for the first six months and 26 weeks for any leave agreed thereafter, up to a maximum of 50 weeks. Special and exceptional arrangements may be made in cases of prematurity.

1.7   A Member who adopts a child through an approved adoption agency shall be entitled to take up to six months adoption leave from the date of placement, with the option to extend up to 52 weeks by agreement if required.

1.8   Any Member who takes maternity, shared parental or adoption leave retains their legal duty under the Local Government Act 1972 to attend a meeting of the Council within a six month period unless the Council Meeting agrees to an extended leave of absence prior to the expiration of that six month period.

1.9   Any Member intending to take maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave will be responsible for ensuring that they comply with the relevant notice requirements of the Council, both in terms of the point at which the leave starts and the point at which they return.

1.10   Any member taking leave should ensure that they respond to reasonable requests for information as promptly as possible, and that they keep officers and colleagues informed and updated in relation to intended dates of return and requests for extension of leave.

2. Basic Allowance

2.1   All Members shall continue to receive their Basic Allowance in full whilst on maternity, paternity or adoption leave.

3. Special Responsibility Allowances

3.1   Members entitled to a Special Responsibility Allowance shall continue to receive their allowance in full in the case of maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave.

3.2   Where a replacement is appointed to cover the period of absence that person shall receive an SRA on a pro rata basis for the period of the temporary appointment.

3.3   The payment of Special Responsibility Allowances, whether to the primary SRA holder or a replacement, during a period of maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave shall continue for a period of six months, or until the date of the next Annual Meeting of the Council, or until the date when the member taking leave is up for election (whichever is soonest). At such a point, the position will be reviewed, and will be subject to a possible extension for a further six month period.

3.4   Should a Member appointed to replace the member on maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave already hold a remunerated position, the ordinary rules relating to payment of more than one Special Responsibility Allowances shall apply.

3.5   Unless the Member taking leave is removed from their post at an Annual General Meeting of the Council whilst on leave, or unless the Party to which they belong loses control of the Council during their leave period, they shall return at the end of their leave period to the same post, or to an alternative post with equivalent status and remuneration which they held before the leave began.

4. Resigning from Office and Elections

4.1   If a Member decides not to return at the end of their maternity, paternity, shared-parental or adoption leave they must notify the Council at the earliest possible opportunity. All allowances will cease from the effective resignation date.

4.2   If an election is held during the Member's maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave and they are not re-elected, or decide not to stand for re-election, their basic allowance and SRA if appropriate will cease from the Monday after the election date when they would technically leave office.

iLearn - SBC eLearning portal User Guide

This guide is designed to get you started on your eLearning journey as quickly as possible and to help you navigate your way around a course.

If you have never done eLearning before, you will hopefully find it an easy and intuitive process after reading this guide.

Basics:

Firstly, access the actual site for the eLearning by typing the following into your internet browser:

https://hertfordshire.learningpool.com/login/index.php

The system works best if you use Google **Chrome** as your browser, which is the coloured circle log on the bottom of your screen:

The first page you will see, will look like this . . .

Setting up your account:

In order to access iLearn you need to first set up your account. From the homepage above, click on the blue box – 'Create new account' and you will be asked for your SBC email address (e.g: joe.walsh@stevenage.gov.uk) , a password of your choice and confirmation of the password. The account will take approx. 24 hours to activate.

After your account is acitivated:

Access the site as before, and to avoid typing the address in again next time you visit, you can 'Bookmark' the page, by clicking with your mouse on the 'Star' symbol at the top right hand side of the browser page where the site address is. When you next want to access the site, just find it in your favourites and click on it.

You may also get a message asking if you want Google to remember your password, once you have signed in – click 'yes'.

On the home page (above), click on the **PURPLE** box to access the Stevenage Borough Council site. The Green box is the access to the Herts County Council site only and cannot be accessed via the SBC email address.

You will now be asked for a log in and password with which to access the site and your unique eLearning page. 'Your' site will record all your courses, remember where you left off, if you closed it down before finishing the course and enable you to access the catalogue of courses available:

The log in page will now look like this . . .

Your 'username' is your SBC email address (– e.g: jeff.beck@stevenage.gov.uk) and your password will be the one you set up at the 'Create Account' stage earlier. You may be asked to change the password when you first log in. Please change this to something that will be compatible with all of SBC's IT Security practices and recommendations – if in doubt ask a member of the IT Service Desk.

Please be aware that when you type your password in, it will appear as a series of dots – you won't actually see it, so be careful that you type it in correctly.

Once successfully logged in, the 'Home page' will appear . . .
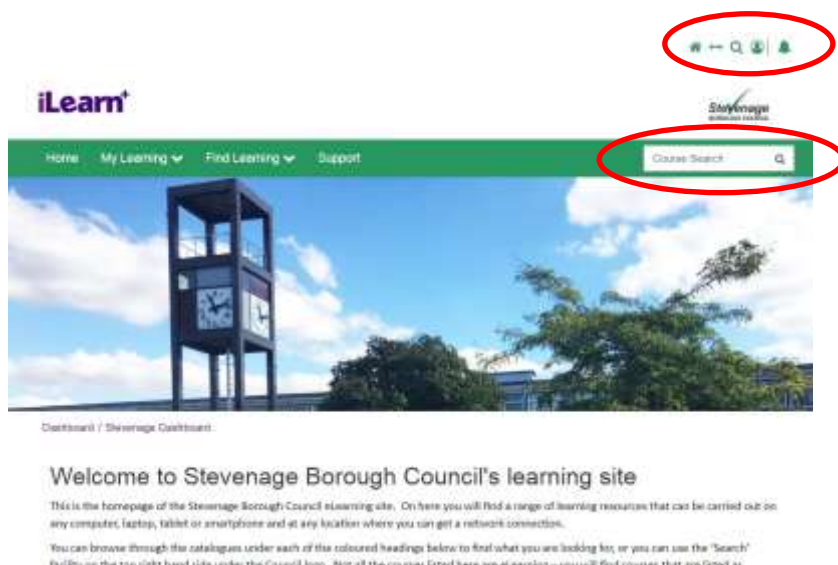
From the top of the page, the small green symbols in the top right corner are (from left to right): Home page, Maximise content region, Course search, Log out \ settings, Notifications.

Working down, the long green bar has a 'Search' function – if you know the name of the course you are looking for, or know some of the key words that the title might contain, then you can type it in here and click on the magnifying glass icon beside it. These functions are marked with the red circle in the picture above.

For example, you might type in 'Safety at work' – the Search facility will list all the courses that contain the words 'Safety' and 'work' in the titles, regardless of what that course will be. You would then choose the one you want from the list.

The rest of the functions in the green bar are (over):-

'Home' – This is actually the page you are on just now. This icon appears on every page.

'My Learning' – Clicking on this will show you your record of learning – all the courses you have done, are halfway through, or have selected but haven't started yet.

'Find Learning' – This is similar to the 'Search' facility mentioned above. It will also give you a list of ALL courses available in the catalogue to browse through.

'Support' – Gives details of who to contact if you gets stuck!

If you scroll down the page, you will now see a range of 'Sections' in coloured boxes where the courses are all grouped together. If you know where your chosen course might be grouped (like the 'Safety at Work' course), then you can just click on the Red box for all health and Safety courses, rather than do the 'Search' function.

When you click on your chosen box (E.g: Health and safety), another page will appear like this . . .


You will notice that you can still log out from here, search for other courses from here, and also access your learning records, etc, as before.

On this page, only the courses that are grouped under the category 'Health and Safety' are contained here and you can use the 'Search courses' function as before to see what course you would like to do.

There are various icons next to each course title. The Purple Mouse icon tells you that the course is an eLearning one, and if you click on it, the course will be ready for you in the next page. Other icons may mean that a course is actually facilitator led and will give you directions as to how to enrol on that particular course, via the Learning and Development team in HR. Click the green 'Enter' button, to start the course.

Suppose we choose the course – 'Working at Heights'. Clicking on the title of it opens up the course page, where you will see the learning outcomes for the course and details of how long it is likely to take you to complete it, and any additional learning you need to do to support it.
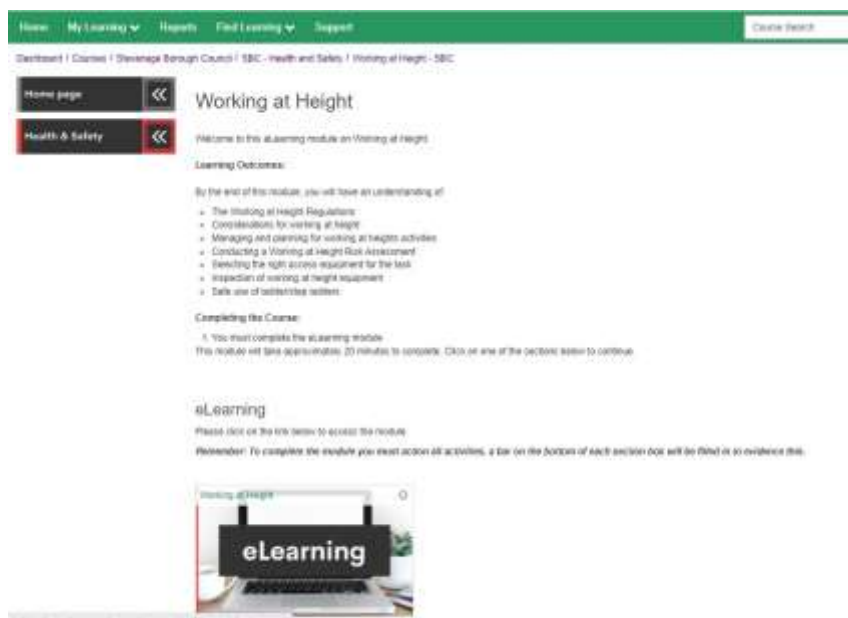
We can now click on the 'eLearning' box icon at the bottom, as instructed and start the course . . .

The front page of the course will now appear and you will see all the different parts of the course in the coloured boxes.

The coloured boxes indicate the sections of the course that you must do to complete the course. The white bar under the title of each is a progress indicator – these will fill up when you have successfully completed them.   Always work from left to right, or follow the numbering, unless instructed otherwise.

Notice that at the top of the course page, there will be a bar at the top, which looks like this . .

If you click on the white arrow in the corner at any time, the course will stop and you will be put back to the page where the learning outcomes were and the yellow icon to restart the course. Keep in mind that the course 'remembers' where you left off, so you won't lose anything you have done, if you accidentally click on this arrow!

Navigating through a course

In this section, we will look in more detail at how to find your way through the course, while ensuring that you complete any questionnaires or assessments along the way.

When we click on a chosen course and a course starts, the front page will typically look like this . .

This course has the introduction at the top, and it has FIVE sections that you must do to complete the course (Fifth course not shown for image clarity). In this image, the sections have all been successfully completed, shown by the blue coloured progress bars. If any white areas are showing on these bars, then this indicates something has been missed in the section.

The sections are usually numbered and you should do these in the number order, unless instructed otherwise. If you have missed anything, just click on the section again and complete it.
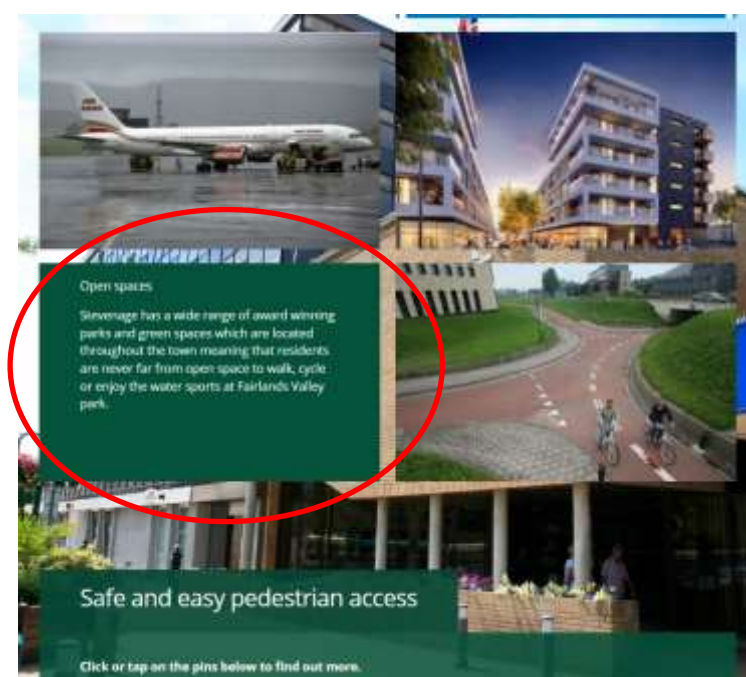
For example, in the page illustrated above, there is a series of images and each one, when clicked on, reveals a text box, as indicated by the red circle, behind the image. If you do not click on every image, the section will be recoded as incomplete.

Scroll down until the end of the page, and you will see the overall progress bar at the top of the page, go completely full, and then click on 'next' at the bottom of the page.
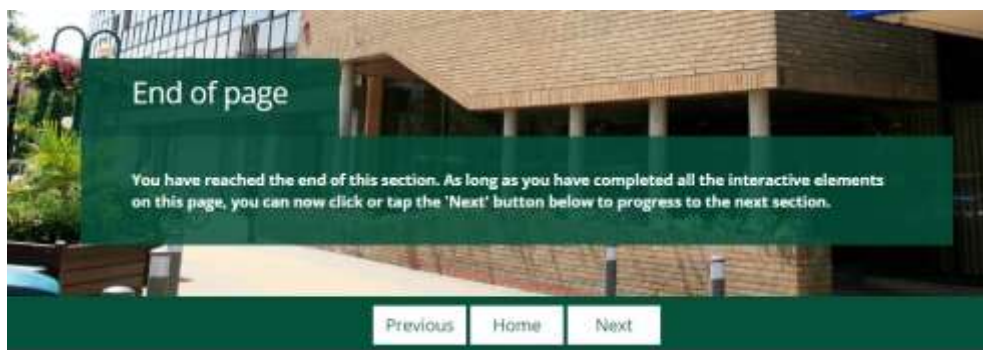
Some pages may only have text to read, videos to watch, or diagrams to look at – unless instructed otherwise, just read the information on the page, and then click 'Next' again, when you get to the bottom of the page.

A video will have an introduction and then all you have to do is click on the arrow in the middle of the frozen image on the video. When the video clip finishes, you will see the green progress bar at the top go completely coloured again, and you can scroll down until you see the 'Next' button again. Click on 'Next' to go to the next page.

Many eLearning courses will have questionnaires or assessments to test your learning. The results of these are recorded on the system, to gauge the effectiveness of the course and helps you to decide if further training on the topic is necessary. All courses will feature some kind of interactivity or exercises, either to find more information or to recap on your knowledge so far. Clicking on the indicated feature reveals the text or the questions . . .
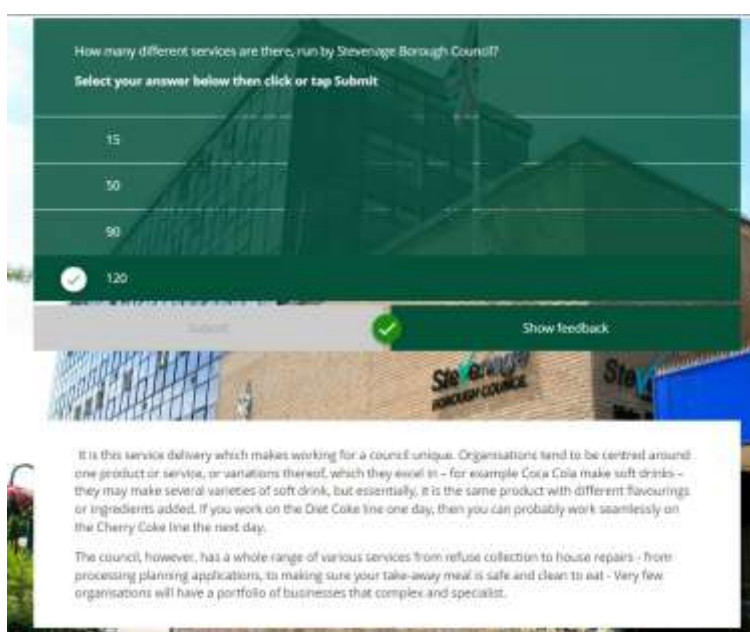
There will be instructions – in the example above, you have to read the question, then click on one of the options given to get the answer. Some courses only offer one shot at this, others may offer two or three attempts. Once you have chosen your answer, there is usually a feedback box underneath to give you some more information or context around the answer.

Once finished the page, click on 'Next' again. The green progress bar at the top will tell you if you are finished or not – remember if it is now a solid colour, you have finished the page, if it has any white areas in it, you haven't completed all the tasks, or clicked on all the diagrams, etc.
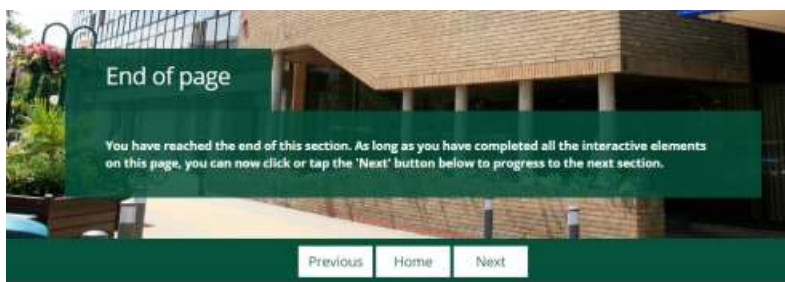
Your results will be recorded in the 'My learning' section in the home page and you can then use this information as part of any Continuing Professional Development diaries you are keeping, part of your PDP, or even as evidence for any further education qualifications you might be undertaking.

Where can I get help with access to the site or other issues?

Help and Support is available on the home page along the green bar at the top, by clicking on the 'Support' section.

Access to the system is by a user name and password as in most systems. The most common issue with anyone not being able to log on is the wrong password. The password is not generally shown when you type it in, so it is easy to type in a wrong character! Please ensure you have the correct password before requesting a reset.

The other most common password error is the CAPS lock being left on, usually accidentally, and it's very easy to miss that – especially on tablets.

If you can't access the system at all, send an email to iLearn@hertfordshire.gov.uk to get in contact with the administration team. Remember to include your phone number in the email in case they have to call you to talk you through a process while you are online.

What if I can't get my chosen eLearning course to work?

Can't access iLearn at all?

Check that you have a good internet connection if you are using a remote device. If your connection is good, check that you can access other appropriate websites – for example BBC news, Amazon, something like that.

If you **CAN** access these other sites, email ilearn@hertfordshire.gov.uk as there may be a problem with the iLearn site.

If you **CANNOT** access any other internet site, as well as iLearn, then check your home broadband connection. If your internet connection is good, but you cannot access your SBC

desktop via VmWare or other connection, then contact SBC IT Action Desk on itservicedesk@stevenage.gov.uk as there may be an issue with the wider SBC system.

On the intranet you will also find the various policies regarding IT Security and Internet \ email policy, which you need to be familiar with, if you haven't already read them.

APPENDIX 3: COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL – TERMS OF REFERENCE – 2022/2023

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

a. To consider the activities of the Executive and to have responsibility to reconsider any executive decision that has been subject to call-in, in accordance with the provisions of the Scrutiny provisions as set out in the Council's Constitution.

b. Responsibility for the scrutiny of all initial proposals for the development of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework provisions in the Council's Constitution.

c. To determine a Scrutiny work programme to examine the spending, policies and administration of the Council's services within the direct purview of the Assistant Director (Digital & Transformation), Assistant Director (Finance) and those of a Corporate and/or Council wide nature and relationships with partners and external agencies involved with these areas, together with a timetable and method of study for each topic.

d. To determine formal recommendations in relation to scrutiny studies undertaken for reporting to the Council, Executive, other Committees, Officers and / or partner agencies as appropriate.

e. To review the Forward Plan of Key Decisions in relation to services within the direct purview of the Assistant Director (Digital & Transformation), Assistant Director (Finance) and those of a Corporate and/or Council wide nature, considering if it wishes to make any input to policy issues contained in the Plan and if so, how. In undertaking this work the Committee may call upon the relevant Executive Member and/or the Assistant Director to provide a briefing or take part in discussion.

f. That in respect of policy development of matters that fall within the remit of this Committee, to meet with the relevant Portfolio Holder to comment on individual draft policies that are scheduled to be considered to the Executive.

g. To work with other Select Committees, as appropriate when considering cross-cutting scrutiny studies and policy development when both Committees have so agreed.

h. To consider matters referred to the Committee under the procedure for the Councillor Call for Action in relation to matters within the direct purview of the Assistant Director (Digital & Transformation), Assistant Director (Finance) and those of a Corporate and/or Council wide nature.

i. In accordance with the Petitions Scheme, consider Petitions, Petition Reviews and interview Senior Council Officers (as requested by a Petition) in relation to matters within the direct purview of the Assistant Director (Digital & Transformation), Assistant Director (Finance) and those of a Corporate and/or Council wide nature.

j. In conjunction with the Select Committees; responsibility for the on-going development of the Scrutiny function of the Council.

k. To report to the Executive, other committees or Council, as appropriate.

Community Select Committee

a. To determine a Scrutiny work programme to examine the spending, policies and administration of the Council's services within the purview of the Operations Director (Housing and Investment & Communities and Neighbourhood) and relationships with partners and external agencies involved with these services, together with a timetable and method of study for each topic.

b. To determine formal recommendations in relation to scrutiny   studies undertaken for reporting to the Council, Executive, other Committees, Officers and / or partner agencies as appropriate.

c. To review the Forward Plan of Key Decisions in relation to services within the purview of the Operations Director (Housing and Investment & Communities and Neighbourhood), considering if it wishes to make any input to policy issues contained in the Plan and if so, how. In undertaking this work the Committee may call upon the relevant Executive Member and/or the Assistant Director to provide a briefing or take part in discussion.

d. To act as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee, meeting in that capacity a minimum of once each year (by including Crime and Disorder on the agenda at least once each year).

e. That in respect of policy development of matters that fall within the remit of this Committee, to meet with the relevant Portfolio Holder to comment on individual draft policies that are scheduled to be considered to the Executive.

f. To work with the other Select Committee or the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, as appropriate when considering cross-cutting scrutiny studies and policy development when both Committees have so agreed.

g. To consider matters referred to the Committee under the procedure for the Councillor Call for Action in relation to matters within the purview of the Operations Director (Housing and Investment & Communities and Neighbourhood).

h. In accordance with the Petitions Scheme, consider Petitions, Petition Reviews and interview Senior Council Officers (as requested by a Petition) in relation to matters within the purview of the Assistant Director (Housing and Investment) and the Assistant Director (Communities and Neighbourhood).

i. In conjunction with the other Select Committee and Scrutiny Overview Committee, Operations Director responsibility for the on-going development of the Policy Development and Scrutiny function of the Council.

j. To report to the Executive, other committees or Council, as appropriate.

Environment & Economy Select Committee

a. To determine a Scrutiny work programme to examine the pending, policies and administration of the Council's services within the purview of the Assistant Director (Regeneration), Assistant Director (Stevenage Direct Services), Assistant Director (Housing Development) and Assistant Director (Planning & Regulatory) and relationships with partners and external agencies involved with these services, together with a timetable and method of study for each topic.

b. To determine formal recommendations in relation to scrutiny studies undertaken for reporting to the Council, Executive, other Committees, Officers and / or partner agencies as appropriate.

c. To review the Forward Plan of Key Decisions in relation to services within the purview of the Strategic Director (Environment), considering if it wishes to make any input to policy issues contained in the Plan and if so, how. In undertaking this work the Committee may call upon the relevant Executive Member and/or the Strategic Director to provide a briefing or take part in discussion.

d. To consider any policy issues within the remit of the Select Committee referred by the Executive and raising any other issues it considers appropriate.

e. To work with the Community Select Committee or the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, as appropriate when considering cross- cutting scrutiny studies and policy development when both Committees have so agreed.

f. To consider matters referred to the Committee under the procedure for the Councillor Call for Action in relation to matters within the purview of the Strategic Director (Environment).

g. In accordance with the Petitions Scheme, consider Petitions, Petition Reviews and interview Senior Council Officers (as requested by a Petition) in relation to matters within the purview of the Strategic Director (Environment).

h. In conjunction with the Community Select Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, responsibility for the on-going development of the Policy Development and Scrutiny function of the Council.

i. To report to the Executive, other committees or Council, as appropriate.

Audit Committee

To advise or comment as appropriate on:

a. Internal Audit matters, including:

   1. The Annual Internal Audit Plan;

   2. The adequacy of management responses to Internal Audit reports and recommendations;

   3. The Auditor Partnership Manager's Annual Report and Opinion; and . . .

   4. To consider summaries of specific internal audit reports, as requested.

b. External Audit matters, including:

   1. External Auditors' plans for auditing and inspecting the authority;

   2. The Annual Audit and Inspection Letter from the External Auditor;

   3. The report to those charged with governance;

   4. Proposals from the National Audit Office over the appointment of the External Auditor;

   5. The scope and depth of External Audit work.

c. Arrangements made for the co-operation between Internal Audit, External Audit and other bodies.

d. Anti-Fraud & Corruption issues including the Council's policies on Anti-Fraud and Corruption, 'whistle-blowing'.

e. The Council's Statement of Annual Governance Statement.

f. The Council's Constitution in respect of Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

g. The Council's Risk Management arrangements.

h. The Council's arrangements for delivering value for money.

i. The Statement of Accounts and related Capital Determinations.

j. The Council's Treasury Management Strategy

Planning & Development Committee

a. To advise the Leader/Executive on the following:

1. Identification of consumer needs for services related to planning and development services and facilities functions of the Committee, and recommendations on the development of services and facilities to meet them, including:
Land use plans and policy, including local plans
Employment and economic development
Development management services and advising the Leader / Executive / Council accordingly;

2. Management and maintenance of planning and development related facilities and services in item (i), including employment and training facilities and services;

3. Monitoring and review of performance in relation to the provision and development of planning and development services and facilities, including employment and training facilities and services, whether provided by the Development and Regeneration Division, other Council Service Delivery Units, or outside contractors and advising the Leader/Executive/Council accordingly;

4. The promotion of the economic development of Stevenage, and of specific industrial/commercial land and premises within Stevenage, as to use and development and, where appropriate, about monitoring negotiations for development and redevelopment;

5. Development and encouragement of local businesses, employment and training initiatives, with co-ordination and implementation by the Leader / Executive as appropriate.

6. The allocation and monitoring of grant aid and loans to local employment and training initiatives.

b. Responsibility for Development Management, including Listed Building Control - determination of planning applications, and enforcement matters under planning regulations.

c. Responsibility for Building Control - determination of applications under the Building Regulations, and enforcement matters under planning and building legislation.

d. Responsibility for the determination of Countryside Management and Tree Preservation matters, including the making of Tree Preservation Orders and related matters, and including consultation with appropriate outside bodies.

e. Matters imposed or permitted by legislation in relation to the functions of the Committee.

f. Insofar as they are not already referred to in these terms of reference, those relevant powers set out in Schedule 1 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) , Regulations as amended (see Table 2 of Part 3 of this Constitution);   as clarified by regulations, subject to them being dealt with, as appropriate, by officers under delegated powers. This is to include the making of charges for any approval, licence or registration etc., in relation to the powers referred to.

g. Insofar as they are not already referred to in these terms of reference, those local choice functions set out at Table 3 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution.

h. Any other appropriate matter referred.

Standards Committee

a. The promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the Council.

b. To consider and dispose of allegations that a member is in breach of the Council's Code of Conduct in accordance with the Arrangements adopted by the Council under Section 28 Localism Act 2011.

c. To depart from the Arrangements in b. above in the circumstances described in paragraph 12 of those Arrangements.

d. To consider and, if necessary, recommend changes to the Code of Conduct, the arrangements under which allegations can be investigated and decisions on allegations can be made or any other aspects of the Standards Regime to the Council.

e. To grant dispensations under Section 33 Localism Act 2011.

Appointments Committee

The appointment and dismissal of the Chief Executive and Strategic Directors, subject to the requirements of the Local Government Act 2000, Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001, and the Officer Employment Rules contained in the Constitution

Statement of Accounts Committee

To approve the Statement of Accounts and related Capital Determinations in accordance with the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011.

Licensing Committee

To consider and determine applications under the Licensing Act 2003 where representations have been made, in respect of the following cases:

1. Personal Licences;

2. Premises Licences/Club Premises Certificates;

3. Provisional Statements;

4. Variation of Premises Licences/Club Premises Certificates;

5. Minor variations of Premises Licences/Club Premises Certificates;

6. Variation of Designated Premises Supervisors;

7. Transfer of Premises licence;

8. Interim authorities;

9. Review premises licences/club premises certificates;

10. Issue of Counter Notice following Police objection to a Temporary Event Notice.

To consider and determine applications under the Gambling Act 2005 (where representations have been made and not withdrawn) in respect of the following cases:

1. Premises Licences;

2. Variation to a Licence;

3. Transfer of a Licence;

4. Provisional Statements;

5. Review of a Premises Licence;

6. Club Gaming/Club Machine Permit;

7. Cancellation of a Club Gaming/Club Machine Permit.

General Purposes Committee

To consider matters in accordance with the Council's policies in respect of the following:

(i)   the grant, approval, review, refusal, revocation, renewal, transfer or variation of any licence, registration, certificate, consent, permit, approval or permission, except where such function falls within the terms of reference of another committee or where the matter has been delegated to officers of the Council; and

(ii)   consideration and determination of such applications for licences, registrations, certificates and consents that the Head of Environmental Health Services feels necessary, owing to the nature of the application concerned.

The designation of public places where the consumption of alcohol is to be prohibited.

To consider and determine certain matters where a right of appeal exists against the decision of a Members body or an officer, including:

(i)   further reviews under the relevant Regulations by applicants for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefits.

(ii)   appeals in relation to housing needs assessment.

These terms of reference shall exclude the hearing and determination of:

(i)   Appeals by officers against dismissal or disciplinary action;

(ii)   Grievances from officers under the final stage of the grievance procedure;

which shall be dealt with either in accordance with the terms of reference for the Appeals/Grievance Panel or in accordance with the delegations to officers.
Insofar as they are not already referred to in these terms of reference, those relevant powers set out in Schedule 1 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations as amended (see Table 2 of Part 3 of the Constitution) (subject to them being dealt with as appropriate by Officers under delegated powers).

Insofar as they are not already referred to in these terms of reference, those 'local choice' functions set out at Table 3 of Part 3 of the Constitution.

In addition to overseeing the direction of SBC, the Strategic Directors also have sponsored areas, and these are:

Comms and Marketing - Tom Pike
Democratic Services - Richard Protheroe
Estates & Facilities - Clare Fletcher

They are supported by a team of Assistant Directors (see over):-

Assistant Directors at SBC

Denise Lewis
Assistant Director
Building Safety and Housing Property Services

Jonathan James
Assistant Director
Digital and Transformation

Steve Dupoy
Assistant Director
Stevenage Direct Services

Matt Canterford
Assistant Director
Strategic ICT Partnership

Dave Wells
Assistant Director
Regeneration

Kerry Clifford
Assistant Director
Housing and Neighbourhoods

Ash Ahmed
Assistant Director
Housing and development

Clare Davies
Head of HR & OD
Human Resources and OD

Zayd-Al Jawad
Assistant Director
Planning and Regulatory

Kirsten Frew
Head of HR & OD
Human Resources and OD

Simon Pugh
Interim Borough Solicitor & Monitoring Officer
Legal Shared Services

Brian Moldon
Assistant Director
Finance

Appendix 5

MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME AND OTHER ASSISTANCE

This section provides Councillors with a clear guide to the Members' Allowances Scheme and other provisions and facilities to ensure that there is clarity and avoidance of doubt and to prevent inconsistency in application.

<u>**STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL**</u>

<u>**MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME**</u>

<u>**EFFECTIVE FROM 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025**</u>

Stevenage Borough Council has made the following Members' Allowances scheme under the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

1. This scheme may be cited as the Stevenage Borough Council Members' Allowances Scheme, and shall have effect for the year 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

2. In this scheme,

   "Councillor" means a Member of the Stevenage Borough Council who is a Councillor; "year" means the period ending on 31 March 2025.

3. <u>Basic Allowance</u>

   A basic allowance shall be paid to each Councillor from 1 April 2024.

4. <u>Special Responsibility Allowances</u>

   1) For each year a special responsibility allowance shall be paid to those Councillors who hold the special responsibilities in relation to the authority that are specified in the schedule to this scheme.

   2) Subject to paragraph 6, (part year entitlements) the amount of each such allowance shall be the amount specified against that special responsibility in that schedule.

   3) Members are only able to claim one SRA.

5. <u>Renunciation</u>

   A Councillor may by notice in writing to the Chief Executive elect to forego any part of their entitlement to an allowance under this scheme.

6. <u>Part-year Entitlements</u>

   Payment of Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances will be pro-rata where Councillors do not serve for a full year on the Council.

7. <u>Payments</u>

Payments shall be made on a regular monthly basis. Claims for dependent carer's allowances and travel and subsistence allowance shall be made within two months of being incurred.

8. Suspension of Payments

The Council will withhold all allowances to any Councillor who is suspended for misconduct and will require Councillors to repay any allowance already paid during a period of suspension.

Basic Allowances

Basic Allowance   Paid to All Members   £8,819

Special Responsibility Allowances

(i)	Leader of the Council	£24,756
(ii)	Executive Members	£12,124
(iii)	Chair of Planning and Development Committee	£12,124
(iv)	Chair of Overview & Scrutiny Committee	£10,888
(v)	Chair of Licensing Committee	£4,952
(vi)	Chairs of Select Committees	£6,189
(vii)	Chair of Audit Committee	£4,952
(viii)	Leader of the Opposition	£3,988 (£443.06 per Member)
(ix)	Leader of minority opposition party(ies)	£2,658 (£443.06 per Member)

Payment to Specific Co-opted Members

Independent Member - Audit Committee   £1,497
Independent person who must be consulted on alleged breaches of a code of conduct
£1,497

Carer's Allowance

The following amounts may be claimed for Councillors attending approved duties.

Childcare   Maximum of £12.36 per hour
Dependant care   Maximum of £28.26 per hour

Payment to relatives that live in the same household as the Councillor will not be admissible and there will be a maximum annual allowance of 360 hours (with the Leader having discretion to increase the maximum allowance where demonstrably necessary). Receipts will need to be provided.

Travel, Subsistence and Other Allowances

The allowances for travel and subsistence will be the same as those fixed for employees of the Council from time to time. Claims to be submitted within 2 months of the date to which they relate.

ICT Equipment

The Council's ICT team will provide you with a laptop when you take Office, with the relevant applications installed and training provided. The Council's E. Government and Business Systems Unit provides Members with support in identifying appropriate network solutions, hardware and software; installation of hardware and software; fault diagnosis and resolution; and training. A dedicated, unique email address is supplied together with access to the Council's systems. Councillors may use PCs in the Civic Suite for official Council business.

Members are required to access all Committee Papers using the Modern.gov system. This is accessed via a unique password login and provides access to all committee papers. For any queries regarding the modern.gov system, please contact the Democratic Services section committees@stevenage.gov.uk

Car Park Season Tickets*

Access to the Town Centre or Old Town Car Parks when on official Council business is available by emailing debtor.invoicing@stevenage.gov.uk, we will need your numberplate which can be added to the ANPR database for entry to the relevant Car Parks. Personal use of season tickets is not permitted and may jeopardise the tax-free status of this facility.
A list of 'Council Business' for which claims may be made under the Scheme is set out at below.

Hotel Accommodation / Overnight Expenses

Provision for hotel accommodation / overnight expenses when on official Council business is in line with that allowed for Council employees. When required to stay overnight somewhere on Council business, accommodation should be booked in advance through Members' Services. Note: Accommodation will be no more than four-star rated.

Where meals are provided in the cost of the accommodation, claims will not be accepted for alternative meals, for example, if breakfast is provided in the accommodation cost, an additional claim for breakfast would not be paid. Otherwise, the subsistence allowance, as detailed in the Members' Allowances Scheme, see section 1 above, may be claimed.

The costs of any personal items or services purchased, for example, newspapers, snacks from the mini bar, will not be reimbursed, nor will the purchase of alcoholic drinks.

Travel costs to and from the venue are covered by the Members' Allowances Scheme, see section 1 above. Reimbursement will not be paid for any travel costs incurred whilst staying away from home unless the trip is made as part of official business undertaken.

Conferences and Courses

Members can request to attend any outside conference or course, and this is then forwarded for approval. Members are required to complete a request form, available on the internet or from Members' Services, provide details of the course or conference (organiser, subject matter, venue, and cost) and their personal objectives in attending the event. If approved, the Member is notified and attendance is to be booked and arranged by the Members' Services Section so that any related expenditure may be accounted for centrally.

The relevant sections concerning travel, subsistence and hotel accommodation / overnight expenses, set out elsewhere in this guide, will apply as appropriate.

Hospitality

The Members' Code of Conduct requires Councillors to declare any gifts or hospitality with an estimated value of £50 or more. A link to an online declaration form is available below for this purpose which is then reviewed by the Council's Monitoring Officer:

[Members – Gifts and Hospitality Registration Form](#)

Members' Library

The Members' Library is situated in the Civic Suite and is for use by Councillors only. There are two PCs, telephone and tea and coffee facilities for your use.
There is a small reference library and copies of recent agendas and other publications are available together with the Municipal Journal and Local Government Chronicle. No other periodicals or newspapers are purchased as in the main; these can be viewed online.
As this room is a facility for all Members, it should not be used for meetings.

Group Rooms

Each political Group has their own small room for meetings, use of telephone, PCs etc.

Members' Leave

Members are asked to provide Members' Services with their planned leave/holiday dates and this is then recorded in the Members Services Calendar.

Members' Expenses – Record Keeping

Democratic Services maintain an electronic record of allowances paid and both expenses claimed personally by individual Members and expenditure incurred on their behalf, for example, travel warrants or accommodation. At any time, individual members may request a copy of their own record of expenditure.

Details are published on the Council's website at the end of each quarter.

Parental Leave

At the Council meeting in February 2019, the Council agreed to introduce a Parental Leave Policy for Councillors, which is shown in **Appendix 1** in the Induction Guide.

Mayoral Activities

The allowance paid to the Mayor is not included within the formal published Members' Allowances Scheme. The 2024 / 2025 budget includes provision for the Mayor's Allowance and Hospitality Budget.

The Mayor's Allowance is £12,124 per annum, paid monthly on a pro-rata basis and is subject to tax and National Insurance, where appropriate. This allowance covers all incidental expenses incurred on Mayoral engagements, such as raffle tickets and collections. Members' Services holds a further budget per Mayoral term of office for use for hospitality and arranging events. The Mayor will be provided with details of expenditure and commitment against this budget on a monthly basis.

The Deputy Mayor receives an Allowance of £6,189 per annum, also paid monthly on a pro-rata basis and is also subject to tax and National Insurance, where appropriate. It should be noted however, that the rule in relation to an individual only receiving one Special Responsibility Allowance (see section 1 b. above) applies.

It is accepted that a Mayor and Mayoress / Consort may, from time to time, need to purchase appropriate clothing to undertake their mayoral duties. The Mayor may claim up to £1,500 over their term of office. Reimbursement for individual expenditure will be paid on production of a relevant receipt(s). No more than £250 will be reimbursed for any one garment or suit.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are expected to self-drive to and from engagements. However, the personal circumstances of individuals holding the office of Mayor / Deputy Mayor will be taken into consideration and when it is considered that self-drive is not appropriate a taxi or hire car may be provided.

The Mayor may claim mileage for attending engagements. Whilst mileage is claimed and calculated in the same way as mileage claimed under the Members' Allowances Scheme, payment for mileage for mayoral engagements is not accounted for as part of that Scheme.
It is advised that 'Occasional Business Use' must be included on the car insurance of the Mayor / Deputy Mayor (or Mayoress' / Consort's) as appropriate). Any additional premium incurred may be reimbursed by the Council.

26. Categories of 'Business'

The categories of business for which travelling, and subsistence allowances may be claimed are set out in the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 – Section 8. These categories also apply to use of the car parking season ticket.
Under the provisions of Section 8 (1) (a) (b) (c) & (d) Travel and Subsistence Claims may be submitted following the attendance at any of the following:

• Council
• The Cabinet and formally appointed Sub-Committees thereof
• All Committees, Sub-Committees and Joint bodies listed in the Constitution
• Outside Bodies to which appointments are made by Council

Under the provisions of Section 8 (1) (h) the following are recognised as approved duties for the purpose of, or in connection with, the discharge of the functions of the authority or any of its Committees:
• Modern Member Activities and formal Member training
• All Member Seminars
• Approved Conferences and Seminars
• Scrutiny site visits
• Informal meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees
• Meetings convened by the Council, Committee or Panel, or by a Chief Officer, provided that members from at least 2 political groups are invited
• Attendance by a Cabinet Member, or Chair or Vice-Chair of a Committee or Scrutiny Body at discussions with officers in connection with duties arising from those appointments, including briefings
• Group Meetings when discussing Council Business
• Group Leaders (including Deputy Leaders when deputising) meeting with officers for the purpose of dealing with Council business
• Attendance by a Cabinet Member for the purposes of undertaking the business of the Council and to represent the Council
• Attendance at formal engagements where a Member has been invited by position
• Attendance at a meeting of any body, or of any Committee or Sub-Committee thereof, where a member is appointed by the Council, or through the Regional or National political process
• Attendance at Councillors surgeries