

Public Document Pack



EXECUTIVE

Date: Wednesday, 14 September 2022

Time: 2.00pm

Location: Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

Contact: Ian Gourlay (01438) 242703

committees@stevenage.gov.uk

Members: Councillors: S Taylor OBE CC (Chair), R Henry (Vice-Chair), S Barr, L Briscoe, J Hollywell, Mrs J Lloyd, S Speller and J Thomas.

AGENDA

PART I

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. MINUTES - 12 JULY 2022

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 12 July 2022 for signature by the Chair.

Page Nos. 5 - 18

3. MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND SELECT COMMITTEES

To note the following Minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny and Select Committees –

Environment & Economy Select Committee – 23 June 2022

Community Select Committee – 7 July 2022

Environment & Economy Select Committee – 13 July 2022

Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 19 July 2022

Page Nos. 19 - 40

4. GARAGES INVESTMENT BUSINESS CASE

To consider the proposed Garages Investment Business Case.

Page Nos. 41 - 56

5. STATION GATEWAY AREA ACTION PLAN - PREFERRED OPTIONS REPORT FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

To consider the Preferred Options report for public consultation in respect of the Station Gateway Area Action Plan.

Page Nos. 57 - 252

6. CONFIRMATION OF TWO ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS TO REQUIRE CHANGES OF USE FROM CLASS E(G)(I) (OFFICES) AND CLASS E(G)(III) (LIGHT INDUSTRIAL) TO CLASS C3 (RESIDENTIAL) TO OBTAIN PLANNING PERMISSION

To consider the proposed confirmation of two Article 4 Directions to require Changes of Use from Class E(g)(i) (Offices) and Class E(g)(iii) (Light Industrial) to Class C3 (Residential) to obtain planning permission.

Page Nos. 253 - 304

7. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE - QUARTER 1 2022/23

To consider Corporate Performance for Quarter 1 of 2022/23.

Page Nos. 305 - 344

8. GENERAL FUND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE (2022/23 - 2026/27)

To consider an update of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (2022/23 – 2026/27).

Page Nos. 345 - 384

9. FIRST QUARTER REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2022/23 - GENERAL FUND AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

To consider the First Quarter Revenue Budget 2022/23 monitoring report (General Fund and Housing Revenue Account).

Page Nos. 385 - 398

10. ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW OF 2021/22 INCLUDING PRUDENTIAL CODE

To consider the Annual Treasury Management review of 2021/22, including Prudential Code.

Page Nos. 399 - 420

11. URGENT PART I BUSINESS

To consider any Part I business accepted by the Chair as urgent.

12. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

To consider the following motions –

1. That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in Paragraphs 1 – 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.
2. That Members consider the reasons for the following reports being in Part II and determine whether or not maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

13. PART II MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 12 JULY 2022

To approve as a correct record the Part II Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 12 July 2022 for signature by the Chair.

Pages 421 - 422

14. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

To consider any Part II business accepted by the Chair as urgent.

NOTE: Links to Part 1 Background Documents are shown on the last page of the individual report, where this is not the case they may be viewed by using the following link to agendas for Executive meetings and then opening the agenda for Wednesday, 14 September 2022 –
<http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/have-your-say/council-meetings/161153/>

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STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, 12 July 2022

Time: 3.00pm

Place: Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

Present: Councillors: Sharon Taylor OBE CC (Chair), Richard Henry (Vice-Chair), Sandra Barr, Lloyd Briscoe, Mrs Joan Lloyd, Simon Speller and Jeannette Thomas.

Start / End Time: Start Time: 3.00pm
End Time: 5.32pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Jackie Hollywell.

Councillor Lloyd Briscoe declared a personal interest in respect of Item 14 – Write Offs, in view of his role in connection with one of the organisations mentioned in the report. He advised that he would leave the meeting for the duration of the Executive's debate and vote on this item.

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Brian Moldon, the new Assistant Director (Finance & Estates).

The Chair announced the sad news that Alderman Ann Webb had recently passed away. Ann had been a long-serving SBC and HCC Councillor, and had been the Executive Portfolio Holder for Housing for a considerable number of years. The Chair thanked Ann for her years of dedicated service to the Council, and expressed her deepest condolences to her family and friends on their loss.

2 MINUTES - 15 JUNE 2022

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 15 June 2022 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

3 MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND SELECT COMMITTEES

The Executive considered the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 21 June 2022.

In connection with Minute 4(5) – Climate Change Update: June 2022, the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change announced that he had met with the Chairs of the Overview & Scrutiny, Planning & Development and Environment & Economy Select Committees and had received their support to the establishment of

a Corporate Climate Change Programme Group, an informal Member/Officer group to progress Climate Change actions. He had enlisted the support of the Portfolio Holders for Culture, Leisure, Children & Young People; Economy, Enterprise & Transport; and Communities, Neighbourhoods & Co-operative Council in this endeavour, with the aim of delivering the Council's ambition to be net carbon zero by 2030.

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

Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 21 June 2022

4 HOUSING FIRST BUSINESS PLAN

The Executive considered a report in respect of a proposed Housing First Business Plan.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing & Housing Development advised that the report outlined the Housing First Approach for rough sleepers until the end of 2023/24, when the current fixed-term funding streams ended. Since April 2020, 106 individuals had been assisted through the Council's Housing First Service. These were all clients who were rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping in Stevenage. As a positive consequence, there had been a notable reduction in rough sleeping across the town.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing & Housing Development stated that the Housing First provision would seek to maintain between 25-30 units to mitigate the risk of under occupancy and the associated costs that came with this, whilst continuing to meet demand. The remaining units not utilised for Housing First would be re-purposed to help offset the increasing need for Temporary Accommodation and reduce reliance on expensive hotel accommodation.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing & Housing Development commented that longer-term provision would be kept under review, dependent on demand and the status of ongoing Government funding availability.

The Executive supported an addition to the recommendations instructing that a review of the Housing First Service Model be undertaken in 12 months' time and reported back to the Executive.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the progress of the Stevenage Housing First approach to date in delivering sustainable outcomes for rough sleepers across the town be noted.
2. That the funding secured from the Department of Levelling Up Housing & Communities and Hertfordshire County Council in supporting the Housing First approach in Stevenage be noted.
3. That a revised Housing First Service Model based on 25-30 accommodation

units through to March 2024, to help mitigate the risk of under occupancy and the associated costs that come with this, be approved, and that a review of this Model be carried out in 12 months' time and reported back to the Executive.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

5 CONSULTATION ON TWO ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS TO REQUIRE CHANGES OF USE FROM CLASS E(G)(I) (OFFICES AND CLASS E(G)(III) (LIGHT INDUSTRIAL) TO CLASS C3 (RESIDENTIAL) TO OBTAIN PLANNING PERMISSION

The Executive considered a report seeking approval for consultation purposes of two revised Article 4 Directions to remove the permitted development rights in relation to changes of use from office and light industrial uses to residential use in Gunnels Wood and Pin Green.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment & Climate Change advised that Stevenage New Town had been designed with a clear separation between employment/industrial use areas and residential areas. The proposed Article 4 Directions sought to maintain that separation by safeguarding the Gunnels Wood and Pin Green Employment Areas for employment use.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that consultation on the two Article 4 Directions would take place with the Secretary of State, Hertfordshire County Council, landowners and developers between 20 July 2022 and 17 August 2022. It was intended that the Directions would be brought back to the Executive in September 2022 for confirmation, to come into effect from 1 October 2022.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the proposed Article 4 Directions, and the areas they will cover (as detailed in Appendices C and D to the report), be approved.
2. That consultation be agreed on the making of the Article 4 Directions under Article 4 (I) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended), to remove permitted development rights in relation to changes of use from Use Class E(g)(i) and E(g)(iii) to Use Class C3 (as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended)).
3. That, following a minimum of 28 days consultation on the serving of the notice of the Directions, the Executive receive a further report in order to decide whether or not to confirm the Article 4 Directions.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

6 OVERVIEW PROPOSAL FOR THE UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND

The Executive considered a report in respect of an overview proposal for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

The Leader of the Council advised that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) was the Government's domestic replacement for the European Structural and Investment Programme (ESIF) which the UK would continue to participate in until 2023. The UKSPF provided £2.6 Billion of new funding for local investment by March 2025, with all areas of the UK receiving an allocation from the Fund via a funding formula rather than a competition. As part of this, SBC had received an allocation of £1,000,000 of the £13,379,087 total pot given to District & Borough Councils throughout Hertfordshire.

The Leader added that, following the delivery of the UK Community Renewal Fund, which saw Stevenage secure over £700,000 to lead the Hertfordshire wide development of an aligned Community Wealth Building approach. The Government had designed the UK Community Renewal Fund as a pilot for the UKSPF and to take lessons from these pilots in the delivery of the longer-term replacement for European funds. This report provided a proposed approach to the creation and submission of the Local Investment Plan and the subsequent delivery of the funding between 2022 and 2025 for consideration and approval by the Executive.

The Leader commented that the plans represented a significant investment in all three of the Fund's priority areas: Communities & Place, Supporting Local Business and People & Skills. They were aligned with the Council's ongoing strategic priorities and had been shaped by engagement with key stakeholder groups throughout Stevenage and Hertfordshire. A Stevenage Together workshop would take place to allow for further engagement with key partners before the end of July 2022. The Investment Plan would be submitted by 1 August 2022, with the related funding expected to be received in the Autumn. The key elements of the SBC submission were:

- Co-operative Neighbourhoods (£230k): Local interventions to be developed via the six Cooperative Neighbourhoods programme areas; and a proportion of the funding would be prioritised to the more deprived parts of Stevenage (method to be agreed with the Leader and Portfolio Holder);
- Regeneration & Culture (£100k): Plan to implement and extend impact of the emerging programme and schemes in the town centre;
- Countywide Business & Skills (£385k): Implementing targeted schemes for skills, access to jobs and those furthest from the jobs market, advice and support to businesses (and as required by Government to continue the impact of previous EU structural funds);
- Community Wealth Building (£120k): To embed the ongoing wealth building programme, extend impact, the response to the cost of living crisis and build local capability, and a skills strategy and plan; and
- Skills, Wealth Building & Prosperity Programme Manager (£120k): To ensure delivery of the UKSPF programme and full implementation of the Wealth Building programme.

The Leader asked officers to ensure that relevant data was collected to measure outcomes of the effectiveness of the use of UK Shared Prosperity Fund monies, and she hoped that some of monies could be used as match-funding when bidding for other sources of grant/support funding.

In reply to Members' questions:

- The Chief Executive confirmed that he had written to the local MP and had offered to meet to discuss the UKSPF submission; and
- The Strategic Director (TP) stated that Intervention E3 in the UKSPF document - Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces – was referenced as being applicable to some of the projects that could feature under the “Co-operative and Neighbourhoods” Theme set out in the report.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the proposed approach and outlined interventions of the UKSPF Local Investment Plan, as set out in the report, be approved for submission to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
2. That delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director (TP), to make final amendments to the required Stevenage Investment Plan submission ahead of the 1 August 2022 deadline, having consulted with the Leader of the Council.
3. That delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director (TP), having consulted the Portfolio Holder for Community, Neighbourhoods and Co-operative Councils and the Leader of the Council, to establish an appropriate method for allocating funding to support interventions within the Co-operative Neighbourhoods Programme.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

7 APPROVAL TO RE-CONFIRM THE DELEGATED BUILDING CONTROL POWERS

The Executive considered a report seeking approval to confirmation of the delegation of certain Building Control approval powers, from SBC to other shareholder local authorities in the Hertfordshire Building Control (HBC) partnership; and to extend the current Services Agreement with Hertfordshire Building Control and to delegate approval of a revised contract in the months ahead.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment & Climate Change advised that the Hertfordshire Building Control operated building control services on behalf of 8 Hertfordshire Districts and also offered commercial services. The way the service had operated was through the District and Boroughs formally delegating the approval and provision of local authority building control service to Three Rivers District Council (TRDC). In managing this process, TRDC received £125,000

funding to conduct a Quality Assurance and sign off process. There was a robust approval process in place within the building control company (HBC), and then a checking function managed by TRDC before recommending approval to a Director signatory. It had always been the expectation of the partnership that, over time, this function would rotate to different authorities.

The Assistant Director (Planning & Regulation) added that TRDC had given notice they no longer wished to operate the delegated sign off process. They had proposed to continue to offer the LA1 quality assurance service, with all authorities re-adopting their own sign off. In response, all local authority partners were proposing that a single authority should operate the checking and approval function via a suitably qualified role holder (BC Surveyor), to approve signatures, until the end of the 2022/23 Financial Year. As this takes place, all partners would be working through a plan to move LA1 and the functions delegations to a single authority (potentially Dacorum).

The Assistant Director (Planning & Regulation) stated that Extensive legal advice had been taken on the options available using HBC colleagues, but jointly employed as LA Officers, returning delegation and checking to all 8 authorities, to manage processes as they were at present. The deadline from TRDC to terminate the sign off process was 31 July 2022. The report sought approval for the Council to delegate the sign off functions to an agreed partner authority, most likely East Hertfordshire District Council, until 31 March 2023. The extra cost to SBC was expected to be around £3,000. There had been a lot of engagement at senior officer level to seek to agree a mutually agreeable, compliant and effective route forward.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That it be confirmed that, so far as is permitted by law, the functions carried out by the Council's Building Control team, which are not transferred to Hertfordshire Building Control (HBC), may be provided by one or more of the Member Authorities (of HBC) acting under powers contained in Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972.
2. That the current Services Agreement with Hertfordshire Building Control be extended until 31st March 2023, and that authority be delegated to the Strategic Director (TP), in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change, and statutory officers, to agree future extensions.
3. That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director (TP) to agree any final and outstanding legal, technical, financial and operational matters to be concluded in effecting the proposed extension of contract.
4. That the appointment of Three Rivers District Council to perform the LA1 contract management function and the audit and issue of statutory notices, as per the current arrangements, be continued.
5. That East Hertfordshire District Council be appointed to perform the statutory notice LA1 function until 31st March 2023.

6. That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director (TP), following consultation with the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change, Monitoring Officer and Strategic Director (CF), to agree and finalise any future arrangements for statutory Building Control, including the LA1 function, beyond 31st March 2023.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in the report.

8 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE QUARTER 4 2021/22: ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22; AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE SUITE FOR 2022/23

The Executive considered a report in respect of Corporate Performance for Quarter 4 2021/22; the proposed Annual Report 2021/22; and the Corporate Performance suite for 2022/23.

The Leader of the Council reminded Members that the Executive closely monitored performance throughout the year against the Council's key priorities and indicators, in order to ensure that there was evidence of delivery in relation to the corporate Future Town Future Council (FTFC) programme ambitions and service delivery.

The Leader advised that the report shows the position at the end of Quarter 4 for 2021/22 and highlighted achievements across the whole year. The Council had made significant progress towards delivering its ambitions under our co-operative Future Town Future Council programme. Overall performance this year had once again been very good with circa two-thirds of indicators meeting or exceeding their targets. However, there would be a continued focus on four areas of performance, namely Temporary Accommodation, Housing Voids, Garages and Customer Services.

In respect of the Annual Report for 2021/22, the Leader advised that a new approach had been taken, using a mix of infographics and photographs as well as text. She believed this helped to make the report more visually appealing, easier to digest and more engaging for both Members and, most importantly, for SBC residents. A benefit of the inclusion of infographics is that the Council would use these in other forms of media.

The Leader stated that, in addition to outlining achievements across the range of Council services and the FTFC programme, the Annual Report also summarised the Council's key priorities for 2022/23. These priorities were agreed at the 15 June 2022 Executive meeting, and would form the basis of quarterly reporting to the Executive concerning both FTFC programme delivery and service performance throughout the coming year.

The Leader commented that the report also proposed the Corporate Performance Suite for 2022/23. The measures outlined and their associated targets had been fully reviewed to ensure they remained relevant. There were currently no significant changes planned in relation to the measures proposed for 2022/23, reflecting the Council's continuing focus on the priorities set by local people.

The Chief Executive gave a presentation concerning the Quarter 4 (January to March 2022) Corporate Performance report 2021/22. As at Quarter 4, he advised that, of the 46 Corporate Performance Indicators, 29 were at Green status; 3 were at Amber; and 14 were at Red.

The Chief Executive referred to the focus on the Temporary & Emergency Accommodation; Voids/Repairs; Garage Voids; and Customer Services service areas, and set out the key action taken since Quarter 3, together with the next steps aimed at performance improvement. He also referred to the performance clinics that had been held regarding these areas of focus during 2021/22.

The Chief Executive then drew attention to the Future Town Future Council (FTFC) performance highlights throughout 2021/22, under the headings of Transforming Our Town; More Social and Affordable Housing; Co-operative and Neighbourhoods; Making Your Money Count; and a Clean, Green, Safe and Thriving Town. He concluded by outlining the 2022/23 FTFC priorities under the above five headings, as well as the Corporate and Service Priorities for the year.

In response to Members' questions, officers confirmed that the Training audit relating to staff effectiveness in dealing with Temporary/Emergency Accommodation was underway, and could be shared with Members if they wished to view it post-completion. It was further confirmed that the budget to tackle the backlog of fencing repairs across the Borough was being increased from £250,000 to £750,000.

A discussion arose on the quality of the SBC website, and the difficulties experienced by some residents in its navigation. Members felt that a clearly defined single point of entry for raising issues/complaints should be incorporated into the front page of the website. Officers agreed that website useability was important and understood the desire for a single point of entry, although it would need to be designed to ensure that the correct information was captured when a resident interacted with the Council. The Executive was pleased to hear that a new Web Officer would shortly be joining the Council to assist in this process.

A Member questioned the use of the term "Community Plan" in relation to Co-operative Neighbourhoods (CN). He felt that the existing plans operated by the CN Teams were akin to Programme Action Trackers/Action Plans on issues already identified. However, he felt that these would form a good basis for the development of what he felt would be Community Plans formulated through consultation with, and the involvement of, residents.

The Leader asked the Chief Executive to arrange for the slides used in his presentation to be uploaded to the Council's website, and he agreed to ensure that the name of a contact officer, with contact details, was included on the slides pertaining to the Council's priorities for 2022/23.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the draft Annual Report 2021/22 (Appendix 1 to the report) and summary action plan (Appendix 2 to the report) be agreed, subject to any changes

discussed at the meeting, and with final sign off delegated to the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Leader of the Council.

2. That the significant progress in the delivery of priorities which form the Future Town, Future Council Programme and strong performance of the Council across the key themes for Quarter 4 2021/22, together with the latest achievements, be noted (see Appendix 3 to the report).
3. That the performance challenges in relation to housing voids, garages, homelessness services and customer service be noted, and the planned measures to improve performance be endorsed (as set out in Appendix 4 to the report).
4. That the proposed Corporate Performance Suite 2022/23 (as set out in Appendix 6 to the report) be agreed.
5. That the Executive Action Tracker, as set out at Appendix 7 to the report, be noted.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

9 4TH QUARTER REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2021/22 - GENERAL FUND AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

The Executive considered a report in respect of 4th Quarter Revenue Budget Monitoring 2021/22 for both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

The Portfolio Holder for Resources and IT advised that the 2021/22 accounts were being finalised, with a view to the publication of the draft Statement of Accounts by the statutory deadline of 31 July 2022.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources and IT stated that the General Fund budget outturn for 2021/22 was better than forecast due to a surplus that had been added to balances, rather than in previous years when balances had been used to bolster the budget. There were, however, a number of carry forwards, including £60,000 for Co-operative Neighbourhoods.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources and IT explained that the future financial risks associated with the General Fund were set out in the report, including the unknown level of the annual staff pay award. A 1% pay increase equated to approximately £150,000 added to the budget. Utilities inflation costs of £160,000 was a further risk. Fees and Charges could also come under pressure as residents were impacted by cost of living increases.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources and IT commented that the recent announcement about Base Rates meant that borrowing costs were also increasing. Car parking income had not returned to pre-Covid levels. For 2022/23, the homelessness bed and breakfast costs were forecast to be higher than the budgeted

figure.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources and IT advised that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) position for 2021/22 had also improved in comparison to the budget. This was partly due to slippage in the capital programme, which had resulted in a reduced need for capital funding and lower borrowing costs. There had also been a reduction in cyclical maintenance and building safety works.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources and IT stated that HRA carry forwards were also requested. The HRA balances of £28Million at year end was high, but these would be required to pay outstanding loans (including the £199Million paid to the Government in 2012 for the return of the Housing stock).

The Assistant Director (Finance) confirmed that there was a £1.3Million underspend on the 2021/22 General Fund. This would enable the Council to add a further level of resilience in the medium term in relation to the financial pressures which could be encountered during 2022/23.

In respect of the HRA 2021/22, the Assistant Director (Finance) advised that there was an underspend of £2.8Million, which would be fed into the revised HRA Business Plan to be submitted to the Executive later in the year.

It was **RESOLVED:**

General Fund

1. That the 2021/22 actual General Fund net expenditure of £9.692Million be noted, subject to the 2021/22 audit of the Statement of Accounts.
2. That the 2021/22 actual core resources of £10.198Million be noted, subject to the 2021/22 audit of the Statement of Accounts (as per Paragraph 4.7 of the report).
3. That carry forward requests totalling £653,660 be approved for the General Fund (as per Paragraph 4.6.1 of the report).
4. That the Transfer from reserves of £1.328Million be approved for the General Fund (as per Paragraph 4.10.2 of the report).
5. That the changes to the 2022/23 General Fund budget savings totalling £180,840 be approved for the General Fund (as per Section 4.9 of the report).
6. That the inflationary pressures outlined in Paragraph 4.9.4 of the report be noted.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

7. That the 2021/22 actual in year HRA surplus of £2.813Million be noted, subject to the 2021/22 audit of the Statement of Accounts.

8. That new carry forward requests totalling £972,910 be approved for the HRA (as per Paragraph 4.15.1 of the report).
9. That the Transfer to reserves of £165,000 be approved for the HRA (as per Paragraph 4.17.2 of the report).
10. That the changes to the 2022/23 HRA budget savings totalling £1.037Million be approved for the HRA (as per Paragraph 4.16.5 of the report).
11. That the HRA inflationary pressures outlined in Paragraph 4.9.4 and Paragraphs 4.16.3 - 4.16.4 of the report be noted.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

10 2021/22 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE OUTTURN

The Executive considered a report in respect of the Capital Expenditure Outturn for 2021/22 (General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA)).

The Portfolio Holder for Resources and IT advised that there were underspend in the HRA Capital Programme, which were scheduled to be carried forward. Whilst there may be capital grant monies left at the end of 2021/22, much of this was ring-fenced for specific purposes, such as Towns Fund projects.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources and IT stated that, with carry the forwards, there was £83,000 of contingencies. This would be added to the 2022/23 Deferred Works Reserve of just over £1.1Million. The contingencies could be used to fund the increased programme costs or for priority works that arose during the year.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources and IT explained that a number of capital pressures were emerging which may need to draw on the contingencies or capital receipts gained during the year. This could include remedial works to garages, the commitment to carbon zero by 2030, and the digital intervention to support transformation.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources and IT advised that 40 Council houses had been sold in 2021/22, raising capital receipts of £4Million. £4.4Million had been spent in-year, leaving the Council with £9Million to fund any new build schemes, such as the continuing Kenilworth Close and Symonds Green projects.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources and IT stated that, as part of the HRA Business Plan, there was a need to borrow £85Million between 2019/20 and 2024/25 to fund these capital works. To date, the Council had borrowed £23Million (and had internally borrowed £30Million). At some point the Council would need to borrow the remaining £62Million externally. Unfortunately, interest rates had increased since the adoption of the latest HRA Business Plan and work was therefore being carried out to assess the associated impact.

The Assistant Director (Finance) advised that the capital carry forwards would be fed into the 2022/23 Quarter 1 Capital Monitoring report to be submitted to the September executive meeting. Officers would also be looking at the content of the next four years of the Capital Programme to identify any further potential scheme slippage.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the 2021/22 General Fund capital expenditure outturn (£24.106Million), as summarised in Paragraph 4.1.1 of the report, be noted (subject to the completion of the 2021/22 external audit of accounts).
2. That the 2021/22 HRA capital expenditure outturn (£36.727Million), as summarised in Paragraph 4.4.1 of the report, be noted (subject to the completion of the 2021/22 external audit of accounts).
3. That the funding applied to the 2021/22 General Fund capital programme, as summarised in Paragraph 4.2.1 of the report, be approved.
4. That the funding applied to the 2021/22 HRA capital programme, as summarised in Paragraph 4.5.1 of the report, be approved.
5. That the 2022/23 General Fund capital programme increase of £4.776Million, as set out in Paragraph 4.3.1 of the report, be approved.
6. That the 2022/23 HRA capital programme increase of £6.867Million, as set out in Paragraph 4.6.1 of the report, be approved.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

11 URGENT PART I BUSINESS

None.

12 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in Paragraphs 1 – 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.
2. That the reasons for the following reports being in Part II were accepted, and that the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

13 PART II MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 15 JUNE 2022

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 15 June 2022 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

14 WRITE OFFS

[Prior to the consideration of this item, Councillor Lloyd Briscoe withdrew from the Chamber.]

The Executive considered a Part II report in respect of Write offs.

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

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

15 URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.

CHAIR

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STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Thursday, 23 June 2022

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present: Councillors: Rob Broom (Chair), Adam Mitchell CC (Vice-Chair), Julie Ashley-Wren, Stephen Booth, Adrian Brown, Jim Brown, Michael Downing, Bret Facey, Claire Parris and Loraine Rossati.

Start / End Time: Start Time: 6.00pm
End Time: 7.45pm

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Matt Creasey.

There were no declarations of interest.

At this juncture, the Chair welcomed new Member Councillor Bret Facey and returning Member Councillor Jim Brown to the Committee and thanked the outgoing Chair Councillor Michael Downing for the work already undertaken by the Committee. The Chair advised that he hoped to continue the progress achieved by the Committee to date.

2 **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Terms of Reference for the Environment and Economy Select Committee, as agreed at Annual Council on 25 May 2022 be noted.

3 **MINUTES - 23 MARCH 2022**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee held on 23 March be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 **UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE ZERO CARBON LAB REPORT FOR SBC**

The Committee received the report of Lubo Jankovic Professor of Advanced Building Design and Director of the Carbon Zero Lab from the University of Hertfordshire. The Professor's report focussed on potential carbon emission reduction scenarios with a view to informing the Council's Climate Emergency Response and net zero ambitions for 2030.

David Thorogood, Environmental Sustainability Co-ordinator for Stevenage Borough Council and East Herts District Council, addressed the Committee and provided

context as to how the report could be interpreted to help shape the Council's ambitions.

The following conclusions were made in the report:

- A number of interventions for reducing baseline emissions were identified. It was found that the different interventions had varying degrees of success in emissions reduction:
 - Internal temperature adjustment from 21 degrees to 19 degrees;
 - Retrofit of the domestic housing sector;
 - Transport electrification;
 - Purchasing renewable electricity;
 - Tree planting – would have a cumulative effect on gradual reductions over time depending on the number of trees to be planted, their age, species and the variety of the tree stock.
- The results were based on a series of assumptions and scenario calculations as supplementary materials;
- A more in-depth study was required in order to address details of many of the high level actions including all new homes to net zero with immediate effect; retrofitting of non-residential buildings; quantifying the effects of water savings and waste recycling;
- The collaboration between SBC and the University should continue and to seek strategic funding for developing methods and tools for the management of carbon emissions.

Members raised the following comments/questions:

- Concern was expressed regarding the issue and the cost of refitting homes and how to get people engaged particularly during the cost of living crisis. It was noted that there were a range of grants available for home upgrade, boiler replacement etc. It was agreed that key to the improved sustainability of the housing stock was the level of insulation in the properties;
- It was agreed that a modal shift was required to reduce the need to travel, it was suggested that the shift to electric vehicles also had implications dependant on the type of energy used to charge those vehicles;
- It was suggested that adaptation was not covered substantially anywhere in the report;
- Officers advised that although the baseline data reported was from 2018, this was the most recent available but a further data release was expected later this year;
- The Assistant Director (Planning and Regulation) informed the Committee that one of the Council's aspirations was to include sustainability requirements in all its planning policy measures. In relation to those major planning developments approved by the Council, where the biodiversity net gain could not be achieved by the developer, an amount would be charged to the developer which the Council would then use towards biodiversity purposes;
- A Member suggested that the Professor's report had been useful in outlining the size of the task before the Council but did not provide the answers as to

how this was going to be achieved. It was also asked how this would feed into next year's budget process. Officers advised that work was being undertaken to ensure climate change was considered as part of the Budget planning process;

- A Member suggested that the Council should be more realistic in its aspirations as to when it would reach net zero;
- In relation to a question asked about the preferred species of trees, officers advised that the Forestry Commission had advised that every tree stored an individual level of carbon and that different size plots of land would be required for the planting of trees depending on the species;
- A 2 for 1 tree replacement scheme was in place for any tree lost as part of an approved planning development in the town;
- It was noted that Councillor Simon Speller, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change would be reaching out to schools to ensure the message of the climate change emergency was spread widely including to school children.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted subject to the comments above.

5 **CLIMATE EMERGENCY REVIEW UPDATED MAPPING EXERCISE DOCUMENT**

The Scrutiny Officer introduced the Climate Emergency Review updated mapping exercise document. He advised Members that Councillor Speller, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change was keen to meet with the Committee and this would be timetabled in for a future meeting.

It was also noted that a number of other Executive Members including the Leader, Councillor Mrs Joan Lloyd (Resources), Cllr Richard Henry (Culture, Leisure, Children and Young People), Jackie Hollywell (Community Safety, Equalities, Health and Older People) and Councillor Sandra Barr (Communities, Neighbourhoods and Co-operative Council) would be meeting the Committee to talk about the implications within their own Portfolio areas.

Members commented on the positive progress in several areas and the need to improve communication messages to share some of this progress more widely.

Members expressed concern regarding how well the emergency was embedded throughout the organisation and a member commented on the perceived lack of partnership working with organisations such as Friends of the Earth and Green Peace. Officers noted engagement was underway with the Friends of the Earth and that they would be invited to share information as part of the Scrutiny Review. It was noted that valuable work had continued with HEART (Hertfordshire for Enabling and Adapting for Resilience Together) as a critical friend to the Council. It was advised that HEART had been challenging and had focussed on what the Council was doing.

The Chair informed the committee that he was of the view that the work with these expert organisations should be balanced alongside views from the community and local residents. It would also be helpful for the Committee to see benchmark information against best practice in other local authorities.

The Chair stated that due to the complexity of this review there would have to be additional meetings for Members of the Committee. The Scrutiny Officer suggested that subject to the availability of Members, he could arrange informal meetings for them including desk top exercises and interviews to obtain evidence in between the formal Committee meetings.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Mapping Exercise be noted subject to the comments above.

6 **E&E SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2022-23**

The Scrutiny Officer presented the Environment and Economy Select Committee Work Programme for 2022-23 that had been previously agreed at its meeting on 23 March 2022.

The Chair advised Members that he would be adding to the work programme a review on the Cost of Living crisis in the New Year alongside work to be undertaken regarding the issue of serious delays in fencing repairs which many Members were being contacted about by local residents.

In response to a question regarding the Bus Interchange, the Strategic Director (TP) advised this would be kept under review by the Regeneration Working Group but there would also be an All Member Briefing arranged on the progress of all regeneration projects including the Bus Interchange.

A Member suggested a topic for the work programme related to how local people were able to access new opportunities particularly in relation to STEM job opportunities and training etc. The Strategic Director advised that this could be included as a sub-theme within the Cost of Living Review at Members' discretion or via a separate meeting, subject to capacity within the Committee's Work Programme.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Work Programme be agreed with the addition of a review on the Cost of Living Crisis.

7 **ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE ACTION TRACKER**

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

8 **URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

None.

9 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Not required.

10 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR

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STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Thursday, 7 July 2022

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete

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

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

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

There were no declarations of Interest.

2 TERMS OF REFERENCE - COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE

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

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

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

4 COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2022-23

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

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

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

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

5 **COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE ACTION TRACKER**

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

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

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

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

6 **URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

None.

7 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Note required.

8 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR

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STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, 13 July 2022

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete

Present: Councillors: Rob Broom (Chair), Adam Mitchell CC (Vice-Chair), Julie Ashley-Wren, Stephen Booth, Adrian Brown, Matt Creasey, Michael Downing, Bret Facey and Claire Parris.

Start / End Start Time: 06:00 pm

Time: End Time: 08:12 pm

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jim Brown and Loraine Rossati.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 **MINUTES - 23 JUNE 2022**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Economy Select Committee held on Thursday 23 June 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 **INTERVIEW WITH THE LEADER AND THE EXECUTIVE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR RESOURCES & IT**

The Chair welcomed Councillor Sharon Taylor the Leader of the Council and Councillor Mrs Joan Lloyd Executive Member for Resources and Information Technology. The Leader of the Council and the Executive Member for Resources and Information Technology were invited to meet with the Committee regarding their Portfolio area and the climate emergency scrutiny review. The Leader of the Council thanked the Committee Members for the work the Committee had done on the climate change emergency. She provided the following answers to the Committee:

- The Science was getting clearer on climate change and in 2018 there seemed to be a tipping point for influencing people and the figures were more alarming for lowering of the world temperature. The Council like many other Councils across the country declared a climate emergency. The Council had a unique role to influence residents and businesses to deliver the Council's net zero target for 2030.
- The Council faced financial challenges and needed more funding to deliver on the net zero target. In addition to reducing local authorities core funding

Central Government have so far seemed reluctant to fund Climate Change initiatives at the level that is required to sufficiently address it.

- The leader thanked Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) for supporting the Council's £13m bid for electric buses for Stevenage and helped the Council to develop plans for a combined cycle and car multi-story car park.
- The Council was working closely with HCC and partners including Herts Sustainability Action Plan and the Herts Growth Board with a programme on the climate change. The Leader advised that the partnership was important for shared goals. The Leader mentioned that all partners were also facing funding issues including the NHS.
- The Council would need to set good examples with transport and housing in the community to help promote the climate change emergency.
- The Council saved 1.7 tonnes of CO2 without the Transformation Programme by printing 400k less papers last year. The Council had bid for £1 million to help convert 400 social housing to a low energy by providing them with solar panels and insulation.
- The Leader regarded community engagement as important, and by having a community forum which represented the wider community this would in turn help raise awareness on climate change. The Council needed to work with Stevenage and Hertfordshire wide partners to ensure all were working in the same direction for shared goals.
- The Council had built energy efficient houses on Pine Tree Way, and although they cost more to build, the running costs were less than a standard built home, and by using less energy they also produce less CO2.
- Regarding the COP26 conference in 2021, the Leader mentioned that there was a lack of collective action on the 2050's net zero targets. Absence of the Leaders of the countries such as China and Russia had made it harder on any collective action. However, the Leader noted that there were some encouraging signs including the use of clean technology.
- The Council had a number of priorities over the last couple of years, including dealing with a two-year pandemic and a current cost of living crisis, and a housing crisis. The Leader hoped that the climate emergency would move-parallel with other emergencies.
- The Leader regarded public engagement as vital for going forward and achieving net zero targets for 2030.

In response to a question from a Member, the Leader of the Council advised Members that even if the Council were to use all of its non-statutory spend, that would still not be enough to deliver the whole of the climate agenda, therefore, the targets would be difficult to achieve if external funding were not received, thus, the Council would continue to lobby for funding support.

Members noted that there were challenges for achieving net zero as there were people in the community that were in denial about climate change or those that did not see any urgency in the context of the challenges, they already face on a day to day basis, and it would be more challenging to engage with them. Members highlighted that the lack of any significant Central Government funding was one of the core challenges the Council faced in achieving its climate change targets for 2030. Members supported wider engagement with the school children and agreed to invite the Youth Mayor to a future Environment & Economy Select

Committee meeting.

The Leader reiterated that the Council was treating this as an emergency and that the Executive had refreshed the approach it was taking by creating a specific Executive Portfolio Holder area for Climate Change and providing extra senior officer support in this area. The Council was very much at the centre of partnership working, focusing on things it had influence over including engagement with the local community and was getting on with what it can to plan for the major challenges ahead. Underlying all of this work was the need for significant support financially from Central Government to give local government the tools to make it happen.

The Chair thanked the Leader of the Council for attending the meeting and answering all the questions regarding the climate change emergency in detail.

The Chair invited the Executive Portfolio Holder for Resources and I.T to answer the questions submitted to her. The Executive Portfolio Holder for Resources and I.T thanked Members for inviting her to the Committee and advised that she was from a science background and understood the logic regarding the technology and improvement that needed to be brought forward. Cllr Mrs Lloyd provided the following update to the Committee:

- that Central Government needed to provide sustainable funding for climate change emergency. There were several areas where Cllr Mrs Lloyd could influence toward shared climate goals. As part of her portfolio, Cllr Mrs Lloyd worked with the Herts Property Partnership to bring forward projects that could improve housing emissions and to secure funding to build new energy efficient houses.
- Cllr Mrs Lloyd recognised the cost of moving to net zero was a significant challenge. It would require a substantial amount of funding from the government and a robust plan for the use of the funding whenever it is received to tackle the climate change targets. It was estimated that to decarbonise the Council's housing stock of 8,000 homes would cost in excess of £204m to retrofit each property. There were several areas for the Council to focus on net zero targets. This included moving the social housing to a high standard, moving to energy efficient heat pumps, improved insulation, solar panels and any new technology that would help improve emissions.
- The Council would need to look at improving emissions for commercial buildings and improve their EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) to at least category C in the future. Also, there was a need to improve how the Council was processing waste and recycling.
- Cllr Mrs Lloyd mentioned that funding was needed to build more efficient buildings and facilities like the newly built bus interchange.
- The Council had provided the opportunity for the Council staff to work hybrid and flexibly which helped in reducing their carbon footprint. The Council had also removed some printers from the building as part of its digital drive.
- The Council had encouraged the use of bus and other sustainable transport.
- Cllr Mrs Lloyd was encouraged by the outcomes from COP26 which had brought new awareness, and now people could better understand the need to work collectively on climate change, to produce the greatest impact.

- Cllr Mrs Lloyd regarded engagement with people in the community as vital, but it was challenging to keep everyone on board. Cllr Mrs Lloyd mentioned that the more awareness people in the community had, there would be a better chance of tackling it.

A Member asked if the Executive were making provision for a small part of the budget for areas such as estates, housing, fleet etc. to be set aside for a seed fund for each to be able to use to research and bid for funding streams as and when they become available. The Leader said that this was a good idea and could be in part addressed when the HRA business plan and General Fund budget is looked at again in November.

In response to a question about the provision of EV parking spaces available in Stevenage compares to other districts in Hertfordshire, Cllr Lloyd stated that part of the problem was the 'new town' design of Stevenage and more charging points were being provided in communal car parks.

In response to a question from a Member, the Assistant Director for Planning and Regulatory advised Members that the Planning and Development Committee had granted permission for 41 new fast charging points at the West of the A1M development, as well as new EV charging points in some of the neighbourhood shopping areas which would encourage electric vehicles use in the town.

It was **RESOLVED** that the update from the Leader of the Council and the Executive Portfolio Holder for Resources and I.T be noted.

4 **UPDATED MAPPING EXERCISE DOCUMENT FOR THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY REVIEW**

The Committee received the Mapping Exercise Document for the Climate Emergency Review. The document contained useful information for tracking the progress of the Climate Change Emergency review detailing, what had been achieved so far, and showing any outstanding data or interviews still to be undertaken. Members were invited to provide feedback on the Mapping Exercise Document.

The Committee previously interviewed Councillor John Gardner former Executive Member for Environment and Climate Change and would arrange to interview Councillor Simon Speller the Executive Member for the Environment and Climate Change. Councillor Speller would share his work on how he was engaging with the wider community.

The Committee would also interview Councillors Sandra Barr the Executive Member for Communities, Neighbourhoods and Co-operative Council, Councillor Jackie Hollywell the Executive Member for Community Safety, Equalities, Health and Older People and Councillor Richard Henry the Executive Member for Culture, Leisure, Children and Young People, in October 2022.

The Committee considered links with the Youth Council and suggested that a

representative group of Members could attend their meeting or Members of the Youth Council could be invited to the Committee's meeting, which could be a useful exercise. Alternatively, a Zoom meeting could be arranged for Members and Members of the Youth Council.

The Committee would invite Cllr Phil Bibby the HCC Executive Portfolio holder for Highways and Transport along with Eric Buckmaster the Executive Portfolio Holder for the Environment for the Committee's November 2022 meeting. This would be a good opportunity to discuss the work the County was currently undertaking on Climate Change Emergency.

Members agreed that the Committee could perhaps ask the NHS Trust for East and North Hertfordshire for a written submission on their work on the climate change emergency, and how the Trust was tackling their carbon footprint.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Mapping Exercise Document for the Climate Emergency Review be noted.

5 **URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

None.

6 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Note required.

7 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR

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STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, 19 July 2022

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

Present: Councillors: Lin Martin-Haugh (Chair), Philip Bibby CC (Vice-Chair), Stephen Booth, Rob Broom, Jim Brown, Matt Creasey, Michael Downing, Wendy Kerby, Andy McGuinness, Sarah Mead, Claire Parris, Loraine Rossati and Anne Wells.

Start / End Time: Start Time: 06:00 pm
End Time: 08:42 pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Robin Parker and Bret Facey.

Councillor Stephen Booth substituted for Councillor Robin Parker.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES - 21 JUNE 2022

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 21 June 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to the following points.

- Item 5 – paragraph 5 and 7: A Member advised that the climate change emergency was about the Council and the Town as a whole, and not just about the Council, which the Minutes seem to imply, so the words ‘and the town’ should be next to the words ‘the Council’.
- The Committee noted some of the discussions on climate emergency that took place in the Committee’s previous meeting. This included the wording ‘the Committee urged a focus on achieving outcomes that reduced carbon emissions. It was agreed that the following wording should be included that ‘the Committee highlighted the need for an urgent, emergency response’.

3 PART I DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

2. Minutes – Executive 15 June 2022

Noted.

3. Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees

Noted.

4. Housing First Business Plan

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee were informed that the Executive had received a report in relation to a proposed Housing First Business Plan. The Housing Supply Manager advised the Committee that the report set out the Housing First approach for rough sleepers until the end of 2023/24. Members were informed that 106 individuals were assisted under the Council's Housing First Service since April 2020. The Service continued to meet demand and as a result, there had been a reduction in rough sleepers in the Town.

Members were advised that the Housing First provision would seek to maintain between 25-30 units to mitigate the risk of under occupancy and the associated costs that came with this. The remaining units not utilised for Housing First would be re-purposed to help offset the increasing demand for Temporary Accommodation and reduce reliance on expensive hotel accommodation. The recommendation agreed by the Executive was in line with the aims of Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-2024 to eradicate the rough sleeping in Stevenage.

The Housing Supply Manager advised Members that the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Housing Development advised the Executive that longer term provision would be kept under review, dependent on demand and the status of ongoing Government funding availability.

The Executive supported the recommendation in addition to instructing that a review of the Housing First Service Model be undertaken in 12 months' and reported back to the Executive.

In response to a question from a Member, the Housing Supply Manager advised Members that the Service was monitoring the amount of accommodation it used to ensure the Service did not have underoccupancy and monitored demand to ensure that the Service had enough properties.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Housing First Business Plan be noted.

5. Consultation on Two Article 4 Directions to Require Changes of Use From Class E(G)(I) (Offices And Class E(G)(Iii) (Light Industrial) to Class C3 (Residential) to Obtain Planning Permission

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee were advised that the Executive had considered a report seeking approval for consultation purposes of two revised Article 4 Directions to remove permitted development rights in relation to changes of use from office and light industrial uses to residential use in Gunnels Wood and Pin Green. The Assistant Director for Planning and Regulation advised Members that the current Article 4 Directions would expire at the end of July 2022. The consultation would be for 28 days starting on 20 July 2022 to ensure continuity, and the revised Article 4 Directions would be in effect by October 2022.

In Response to a question from a Member, the Assistant Director for Planning and Regulation advised that there were currently two main Article 4 Directions in Stevenage Gunnels Wood and Pin Green, and there were also Article 4 Directions for a number of HMOs (Houses of Multiple Occupations) in Stevenage.

It was **RESOLVED** that the proposed Article 4 Directions report be noted.

6. Overview Proposal for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee were informed that the Executive had received a report in relation to an overview proposal for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The Corporate Policy and Research Officer advised Members that the report outlined the proposed approach for the delivery of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) in Stevenage between 2022/23 and 2024/25 ahead of the closure of the Local Investment Plan. The UKSPF was the Government's domestic replacement for the European Structural and Investment Programme which the UK continued to participate in until 2023. The Hertfordshire District and Borough councils were allocated £13m, and Stevenage had received an allocation of 1m.

The Chief Executive at the Executive meeting confirmed that he had written to the local MP and had offered to meet to discuss the UKSPF submission and a response from the MP had yet to be received.

In response to a question from a Member, the Corporate Policy and Research Officer advised Members that the funding was broken down over three years and split between revenue and capital. The UKSPF would be for the three year and probably would continue beyond three years.

Members were advised that the UKSPF would fund three core pillars which were the Community and Place, supporting Local Businesses and People and Skills. The funds would support the regeneration programme and Community Safety, in addition It would also fund some of the Co-operative Neighbourhood projects to help tackle the climate change emergency.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Overview Proposal for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund be noted.

7. Approval to re-confirm the Building Control Delegated S3 – S8 Powers

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee were advised that the Executive had received a report seeking approval to re-confirm the delegated Building Control Powers. The Assistant Director for Planning and Regulation advised Members that the SBC along with six other District and Borough councils across Hertfordshire agreed to combine the building control function and the agreement came in to effect in 2016.

Members were advised that the building control services were contracted from the building control authorities to Hertfordshire Building Control through the service agreement which had a term of 5 years ending on 16 August 2022. Three Rivers

District Council (TRDC) had acted as the host local authority for the partner's building control functions that could not be passed on to Hertfordshire Building Control. Under the current arrangements, all the building control authorities had delegated their statutory control functions to TRDC, and it was proposed to continue with TRDC hosting the LA1 functions, but with an interim sign off host authority anticipated to be East Herts District Council.

Members were informed that the interim sign off scheme delegation was arranged till March 2023, and discussions would take place with all 8 shareholding local authorities on how to proceed for a more permanent arrangement beyond March 2023.

A Member raised a question regarding what happens after March 2023? Members would like the opportunity to review the quality of the service and whether it was meeting the needs of Stevenage? The Assistant Director Planning and Regulatory confirmed that this decision was only concerned with the sign off of the function but in time Members could look at the quality of service.

It was **RESOLVED** that the approval to re-confirm the building control delegation be noted.

8. Corporate Performance Quarter 4 2021/22; Annual Report 2021/22; and Corporate Performance Suite for 2022/23

The Strategic Director (RP) advised the Overview and Scrutiny Members that the Executive had considered a report regarding the Corporate Performance Quarter 4 of 2021/22. The report also covered the proposed draft Annual report 2021/22 and the Corporate Performance Suite 2022/23. He explained that the Chief Executive advised the Executive on the following points:

- The Chief Executive highlighted the progress made on the Corporate Performance against some of the recognised areas for improvement including the homelessness, housing voids, garages and customer services.
- Members were advised on the progress made on the delivery of the Future Town Future Council programme and the Council priorities for 2022/23.
- The training audit relating to staff effectiveness to deal with the Temporary/Emergency Accommodation was underway and would be shared with Members post completion.
- Members were advised that the fencing repairs budget was increased to £750,000.

Members discussed the issues related to the customer services including the time handling for calls. In response to a question from a Member, The Strategic Director (RP) advised Members that the average call handling time was about 12 minutes, and the Service was currently assessing to introduce prioritised line for emergencies and urgent issues, however, the Service was currently treating all calls at the same level. The Service encouraged customers to use the online services where they could, to ease off the pressure on the phone lines including reporting repairs, if it was a non-urgent.

He explained that the SBC was not the only authority dealing with increased demand peaked up following the pandemic, however, further steps could be taken to ease the pressure, this could be an increase in the fencing repairs budget, and other similar measures. He advised that due to high Covid sickness levels the Service was depleted and on few occasions it only had 40% capacity in recent weeks.

The Strategic Director (RP) agreed to find out whether the call back function from the web-site was currently working and to communicate this to Members.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Corporate Performance for Quarter 4 2021/22, Annual Report for 2021/22 and Corporate Performance Suite for 2022/23 be noted.

9. 4th Quarter Revenue Budget Monitoring 2021/22 – General Fund and Housing Revenue Account

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee were advised that the Executive had received a report in relation to the 4th Quarter Revenue budget Monitoring 2021/22 for both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The Assistant Director for Finance and Estate advised Members that the 2021/22 accounts were being finalised with a view to publish the draft Statement of Accounts by the statutory deadline 31 July 2022.

It was **RESOLVED** that the 4th Quarter Revenue Budget Monitoring 2021/22 for General Fund and HRA be noted.

10. 2021/22 Capital Expenditure Outturn

The Assistant Director for Finance and Estate advised Members that the Executive had considered the Capital Expenditure Outturn for 2021/22. He advised Members that that there was underspend in the HRA Capital Programme, which would be carried forward.

In response to a question regarding Cavendish Road fire preparedness and a sum of money in report the Assistant Director Finance agreed to provide a full breakdown of this for Members.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Capital Expenditure Outturn for 2021/22 be noted.

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

None.

5 URGENT PART I BUSINESS

None.

6 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That, under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they 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.

7 **PART II MINUTES - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 21 JUNE 2022**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 21 June 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

8 **PART II DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE**

12. Part II Minutes – Executive –15 June 2022

Noted.

13. Write Offs

The Strategic Director (CF) answered a number of Members' questions regarding this item.

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

None.

10 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR

Meeting EXECUTIVE
Portfolio Area RESOURCES
Date 14 September 2022



GARAGES INVESTMENT BUSINESS CASE

KEY DECISION

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This business case outlines the case for investment in two areas. Firstly, to provide the delivery of a backlog of works to void garages and secondly for additional funding to undertake a programme of asbestos surveys in garages.
- 1.2 The business case for the investment in backlog works is offset by the additional revenue that will be earned by bringing these void garages into management. The investment is predicted to yield new cumulative income of £312k by year 5.
- 1.3 There is the need to implement an on-going asbestos surveying regime to meet statutory obligations.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Executive approve the virement of £234k of funding from the current underspend in the Garage Improvement Programme (GIP) to fund the backlog in works to the void garages.
- 2.2 That £55k of General Fund balances are used to fund the investment in asbestos management surveys, to ensure compliance.
- 2.3 That Members note that a further growth bid may be required to manage any asbestos identified and this will come back to Members at a later date once the survey work has been completed.
- 2.4 That the Executive note that officers will develop a revised garages investment strategy / asset management strategy that can be considered at a future meeting of the Executive.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council has an extensive garage stock comprising of 6,465 residential and commercial garages.
- 3.2 The focus of garage services has been on implementing operational improvements around lettings, tenancy start dates and terminations. Work is in progress for garage lettings to transition to being digitalised. The Garages Improvement Plan (detailed in 3.16) includes the refurbishment of void garage stock, however this report seeks to address the issue of the backlog of day to day works plus asbestos compliance.

Demand

- 3.3 Demand for garages in Stevenage continues to be high, whether for storage or parking. The current waiting list stands at 2,836 with demand outstripping supply (particularly in high demand areas).
- 3.4 The rental of the garages is one of the biggest income streams for the Council and is essential for the General Fund and supports the funding of other Council services. In 2021/22 the service generated income of £3.29m against an original budget of £3.58m.

Residual Sprayed Asbestos

- 3.5 The reduction in 2021/22 income was due to the issue of residual sprayed asbestos fibres in a number of garages.
- 3.6 The identification of the residual asbestos within those garages means the licensees with affected stock have not been able to use the garages, and therefore it has not been possible to collect rental income, which impacted on performance. (Affected licensees were offered alternative garages, and where this was arranged, rents are then payable).
- 3.7 Asbestos was identified by the Council's in-house asbestos surveyor during a routine void garage inspection in May 2019 and further affected units were identified in the areas of Bedwell, Longmeadow, Old Town and Shephall.
- 3.8 The Council have communicated with tenants at regular intervals and the Council's website is kept up to date with information and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).
- 3.9 Some survey data is 'cloned'. The cloned approach means that in a block of garage units, a certain number are surveyed and an assumption is made based on those findings to represent the remaining units.
- 3.10 To date, cloned survey data has identified 442 garages affected by residual asbestos contamination. Of these, 335 are let and 107 are void.
- 3.11 Surveys are ongoing, and fortunately are not currently identifying any additionally affected garages. To date, approximately 70% of the stock has been (clone) surveyed. Beacon Partnerships have been commissioned to provide a strategic options analysis of each of the affected blocks, and the findings will be presented to the Executive in Quarter 4, 2022/23.

- 3.12 The discovery of asbestos has resulted in reduced stock and a longer letting process as each garage needs to be assessed for asbestos, plus there has been an increased pressure on resources, both financial and staffing related.

Void Rate

- 3.13 As of July 2022 the garage void rate is 14.48% against a target of 14.30%. The void rate is comprised of 'avoidable' (43%) and 'unavoidable' voids (57%). An avoidable void is a garage that can be re-let following action such as a lettings inspection, clearance, general repair or an asbestos survey and asbestos remedial works. An unavoidable void is a garage that cannot easily be bought back into circulation, such as those that are disposal sites or are awaiting major work.
- 3.14 The performance of the garage stock is dependent on not only the lettings and finance elements (managed by Garage Services) but also the delivery of lettable garages from the repairs function (managed by Estates) and the asbestos surveys (currently managed by Housing and Investment).

Investment in Garage Repairs

- 3.15 Garages have an approximate lifespan of 30 years before capital investment is required.
- 3.16 The void stock is managed in line with the Garage Improvement Programme (GIP). The priority of the GIP is to assess sites according to the level of voids they have; a viability model then captures information on demand in terms of the current waiting list for a garage in that road. The number of voids that may remain after refurbishment is then financially modelled to forecast the future void and income calculations. If the site does not pass the viability assessment, it is not included for refurbishment, and instead the individual void garages needing repair are passed to the repairs team in Estates to complete works in order to get them let.
- 3.17 As of July 2022, 642 garages have been refurbished through the GIP. The void rate on these garages was 31% prior to refurbishment. Having been refurbished, the void rate has fallen to 10%.
- 3.18 Orders have been raised for 346 garages to be refurbished before the end December 2022. Another 208 garages have been approved with a hold on orders being placed as the current contract delivery arrangements are at their financial limit.
- 3.19 The GIP is ending in August 2023 and a holistic approach is required moving forwards. It is anticipated that the new approach may take the form of three elements; repairs, planned preventative maintenance and refurbishments / rebuilds.
- 3.20 There are currently 281 avoidable void garages. Approximately 100 of the garages have been identified as requiring general works. A further 25 require simple door repairs; and these have been procured. Some garages are still awaiting inspection to ascertain the scope of any works. The remainder of the avoidable voids are made up of lettings inspections, asbestos surveys, clearances and asbestos remedial works. The backlog of voids has built up over some years. Part of the reason for the backlog of voids have been

recruitment challenges in Estates and Garages respectively for building surveyor roles and lettings officer roles and a lack of budget to address the works backlog.

- 3.21 In order to formulate a strategy for the delivery of works to the backlog of void garages it has been important to understand the condition of the garages and the type and volume of works required. A number of garages had an inspection when they were returned to the Council however as some have been void for significant period, they needed to be re-inspected. This work has been progressed over recent months by the Lettings Officer and a Building Surveyor has then carried out a detailed survey to diagnose the defect and consider the appropriate cost effective solution.
- 3.22 There are also 48 garages requiring asbestos remedial work. Orders for these are placed with the specialist asbestos framework contractor and have been programmed in. Some of these garages will require general works to be carried out when the asbestos work is completed. (These 48 garages are not to be confused with the 442 garages referred to in paragraph 3.10).
- 3.23 A new system for addressing new voids that have simple non-technical works identified at the termination inspection stage e.g. lock changes and door overhauls has also been implemented. This means that an order for these works can be placed immediately by the Garages team.
- 3.24 Adequate resourcing is essential to ensure that the backlog of works can be progressed and let accordingly. A new short term temporary Building Surveyor post has been created to deliver the backlog of voids, and Garage Services are currently recruiting for an additional Garage Lettings Officer on a one year fixed term contract.
- 3.25 The current process for dealing with void works is to procure on a job-by-job basis.
- 3.26 However, there is a very limited list of preferred contractors currently available to undertake works. This often leads to increased timescales particularly when obtaining quotations and starting work on site. The works team are reviewing ways of introducing target timescales for this work so performance can be monitored and managed.
- 3.27 The Estates team have continued to try to source additional contractors interested in undertaking this type of ad-hoc work, however this is proving to be challenging.

Additional Funding for Asbestos Surveys

- 3.28 Since its discovery, no additional budget has been allocated to asbestos management in garages. Asbestos surveys to date have been funded by stretching Garage Services budgets, some GIP funding (£17.5k) and absorbed as additional workloads by the compliance team in Housing and Investment. These costs cannot continue to be absorbed and a sustainable plan is required to ensure asbestos compliance and financial stability moving forwards.
- 3.29 Asbestos surveys are cyclical and ongoing and garages need to be assessed for deterioration, so some additional funding required will be required year on year.

- 3.30 Under Regulation 16 of The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012, employers have a duty to prevent or reduce the spread of asbestos anywhere work is being carried out under their control.
- 3.31 Every employer must prevent or, where this is not reasonably practicable, reduce to the lowest level reasonably practicable, the spread of asbestos from any place where work under the employer's control is carried out. The Council have contractors/operatives carrying out repairs on both occupied and void garages and have a duty in that respect to advise them what asbestos is present in the garage to ensure it does not get damaged whilst works are being carried out.
- 3.32 In addition, in garages due to the activity/frequency of use there is a higher risk of damage occurring and it is important to mitigate any risk to licensees.
- 3.33 In order to do this it is important to maintain an asbestos register for each garage, which can be done by carrying out annual surveys.
- 3.34 At present there are 800 garage voids a year that will need management surveys for asbestos. Based on there already being a number of surveys in place, it is estimated that there will be the requirement to survey 560 per annum.
- 3.35 There are currently 730 asbestos management surveys for garage blocks. To complete the register an additional 651 surveys are required.
- 3.36 In addition, it will be necessary to undertake a programme of 1,356 annual block re-inspections.
- 3.37 In relation to the 442 garages affected by residual sprayed asbestos, where data for sprayed coatings is currently cloned, it will be necessary to undertake internal surveys on 300 garages. The cloned survey approach was reasonable and sensible in order to understand the potential scope and is generally reliable, however as the project advances it is now necessary to have certainty on the exact number of units affected by sprayed asbestos in order to more accurately calculate the impact of the remedial works required e.g. demolish and rebuild etc.
- 3.38 To undertake surveys on occupied garages in advance of them becoming void, an additional 4,222 garage surveys would be needed.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

Investment in Garage Works

- 4.1 It is proposed that the backlog of void garages is progressed, at pace, to enable them to be let and to provide additional parking and storage solutions for residents. Crucially, the additional income will be used to offset some of the financial loss of rent in 442 garages affected by the residual sprayed asbestos, which amounts to a £205k per year.
- 4.2 The breakdown of the 67 garage voids with known repairs is as follows:
- 26 high demand

- 19 medium demand
- 22 low demand

4.3 Therefore it is reasonable to assume that these garages will be quickly let once they are back online. Data from the Garage Improvement Programme shows that low demand garages are let quickly once refurbished to the minimum lettable standards.

4.4 Inspections to identify the scope of the backlog works are still being undertaken; but Estates have estimated that the cost to clear the backlog will be circa £234k.

Figure 1. Estimated breakdown of works costs

Works Activity	Estimated expenditure to clear voids backlog
	Year 1
Works – 31 garages with identified works following surveyors inspections	£84k
Works – 36 garages with known works but requiring surveyors inspection to confirm	£73k
Estimated 50% of the 33 garages following lettings inspections will require works	£23k
Estimated 20% of 47 garages with asbestos works will require works	£18k
Estimated 20% of 31 garages currently on list for asbestos surveys will require works	£12k
Estimated costs of works to asbestos remedials	£24k
Total	£234k

4.5 The ability to progress the backlog of works, and at pace is resource dependent.

4.6 It is proposed that the backlog of void works is dealt with in a more cost effective and efficient way. The works will be packaged into similar work types and where possible tendered under work categories, for example: door works, roofing works, general works, structural and major works. Performance standards will be agreed with the contractors, inclusive of turnaround times, in order that Garage Services are able to advertise garages in advance of being able to let.

4.7 This should improve the resolution times by reducing the procurement process which is currently on a job by job basis. This will also provide the contractor continuity of work and the ability to plan the works, introduce economies of scale, and reduce the surveyor time required when managing a small number of larger contracts rather than high volume of multiple small value orders.

4.8 Initial discussions have taken place with Procurement colleagues. Using existing contracts and frameworks is being considered but due to the possible value and type of works a bespoke works contract(s) may be the

most suitable option. The detail of this will depend on the value and extent of the works required when known.

- 4.9 It is also proposed to concurrently procure a new term contract(s) to deliver the future void works and reactive works to occupied garages. Estates estimate this this will take 6 months to complete.
- 4.10 In the longer term, opportunities to insource works through the Housing Repairs team will also be further explored.
- 4.11 Figure 2 outlines the approximate timelines for the delivery of works to the void stock. Timescales will be reviewed as the project progresses. If there are any actions that can be taken to reduce the timeframes for delivery (i.e. the use of frameworks) these will be implemented. The period allocated for the works on site may also be reduced but this will depend on the confirmed scope of work.

Figure 2. Timeline for the delivery of works to the void stock



*Completion of surveys is dependent on garages requiring lock changes and those requiring asbestos surveys and remedial works being handed back for works

** If some garages are still due an inspection, there is the option to cover these in the contract

*** Garages handed back for re-let as and when completed. This can be programmed based on garage category e.g. high to low demand

Asbestos Management Options

- 4.12 There are two options available for asbestos management, depending on whether the work is contracted out or carried out in house, and the approach that is taken.

Figure 3. Estimated 5 year costs for asbestos management (contracted out)

Activity	Quantity	Costs (£)				
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Asbestos Void Surveys	560	52,000	52,000	52,000	52,000	52,000
Asbestos - Survey Blocks	651	48,825	-	-	-	-
Asbestos – Re-inspect Blocks	1356	44,915	88,140	88,140	88,140	88,140
Asbestos - Occupied Surveys	4422	71,857	71,857	71,857	71,857	-
Total		217,957	211,997	211,997	211,997	140,140

- 4.13 The Council has a duty to make licensees aware of the presence of asbestos in the assets they use, and should this become damaged they need to report it so that it can be addressed. Licensees are currently advised of any asbestos present via letter and copies of asbestos reports, and information is also provided on the Council’s website and in end of year communications.
- 4.14 It should be noted that many of the asbestos costs are not just for the voids backlog but for the asbestos management of the garage stock as a whole.
- 4.15 The size of the programme is similar to the contract that is managed within Housing and Investment (H&I) and staff, therefore putting a burden on existing H&I performance and resources.
- 4.16 It is recommended that rather than pursuing the external option, a Temporary Asbestos Surveyor is brought on board for a one year fixed term contract in order to carry out the surveys on the blocks and understand the scale of the issue. Their findings will influence how the asbestos is managed moving forwards.

Figure 4. Cost of employing an additional Temporary Surveyor Resource

Role	Activity	One off cost (including oncosts)
Temporary full time Asbestos Surveyor – 12 months only	Block Surveys	£55,000

- 4.17 This cost is far less than outsourcing the work. Depending on the findings from the surveys the £55k may be an ongoing cost and one that could be absorbed in existing teams budgets moving forwards. Appendix A outlines the potential structure of an asbestos management team, which may require additional funding in the future. It should be noted however that there are risks around resilience and contingency should the work be carried out in house.
- 4.18 Insourcing the works aligns closely with the commitment to use in-house services to deliver Council operations, as set out in the Co-operative Commercial and Insourcing Strategy.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 5.1 The projected income from letting the avoidable voids (following works) has been modelled.
- 5.2 It should be noted that the model for income projection is based on proposed garage rental prices for 2023/24, but has not factored in any expected inflationary future price increases. There will also be additional works that emerge from the termination of currently occupied garages that have not been factored into the model.
- 5.3 The model is also based on a series of assumptions on the voids:
- The type of works required and the time frame for return; surveys have only been carried out on 67 garages so far, existing data has been scaled up to cover the remaining 33 garages
 - Void works will commence in April 23 and will be completed by the end of July (taking 17 weeks). High demand garages will be actioned first followed by medium demand garages and lastly low demand garages
 - This equates to 6 garages being having works undertaken per week. The assumption is that high demand garages will be returned by week 7, let out by week 11, medium demand returned by week 12, let out by week 21, low demand returned by week 17, let out by week 45.
 - That no further sprayed asbestos will be found in the avoidable void stock
 - That the garages team have sufficient capacity to advertise 40 garages per week through Digital Lettings

Figure 5. Projected income from re-letting garage stock following works

Category of Garage	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
High – Returned	39	39	39	39	39
High – Let	39	39	39	39	39
High - Cumulative Income	£24,088	£50,959	£77,830	£104,701	£131,572
Income difference*	£24,088	£26,871	£26,871	£26,871	£26,871
Medium – Returned	28	28	28	28	28
Medium – Let	28	28	28	28	28
Medium- Cumulative Income	£13,865	£32,593	£51,321	£70,049	£88,776
Income difference	£13,865	£18,727	£18,727	£18,727	£18,727
Low – Returned	33	33	33	33	33
Low – Let	33	33	33	33	33
Low - Cumulative Income	£9,544	£30,223	£50,903	£71,582	£92,262
Income difference	£9,544	£20,679	£20,679	£20,679	£20,679
Total cumulative income	£47,498	£113,776	£180,055	£246,333	£312,611
Works cost	£234,000	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Overall investment position	-£186,501	-£120,223	-£53,944	£12,333	£78,611

*Income difference compared to the previous year

- 5.4 The projected income from letting all of the avoidable voids (including those that have been had works) has also been modelled, based on 2023/24 proposed pricing.
- 5.5 The model is predicated on the assumption that terminations in the remainder of the avoidable void stock can be let more quickly than the stock requiring works, that the additional Garages Lettings Officer is recruited and that Digital Lettings goes live. It is based on a breakdown of the total avoidable void stock as follows:
- 141 high demand
 - 96 medium demand
 - 44 low demand

Figure 6. Overall potential from avoidable void stock over 5 years

Category of Garage	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
High – Returned	39	39	39	39	39
High – Let	141	141	141	141	141
High - Cumulative Income	£72,981	£170,130	£267,279	£364,428	£461,577
Income difference	£72,981	£97,149	£97,149	£97,149	£97,149
Medium – Returned	28	28	28	28	28
Medium – Let	96	96	96	96	96
Medium- Cumulative Income	£44,465	£108,675	£172,884	£237,094	£301,304
Income difference from	£44,465	£64,209	£64,209	£64,209	£64,209
Low – Returned	33	33	33	33	33
Low – Let	25	44	44	44	44
Low - Cumulative Income	£7,857	£33,369	£60,941	£88,514	£116,087
Income difference	£7,857	£25,511	£27,572	£27,572	£27,572
Total Cumulative Income	£125,303	£312,174	£501,105	£690,037	£878,968
Works costs	£234,000	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Overall investment position	-£108,696	£78,174	£267,105	£456,037	£644,968

- 5.6 It should be noted that the achievement of this target is also dependent on the following factors:
- Garage repairs contractors and asbestos surveyors returning the garages in a timely fashion.
 - The current economic uncertainty and the impact of the cost of living increase
- 5.7 In terms of the potential revenue gains from fully occupied garage stock, the income budget for garage rents only in 2022/23 is £3.35m (£279k per month, £64.4k per week). In the event that there were 0% voids across the domestic and commercial stock and all garages were fully let, the annual revenue

would be £4.3m. There are clearly financial gains to be made by investing in the void stock; however it should be noted that only 281 of the garages are avoidable voids. 519 are unavoidable voids so are unlikely to be able to be re-let in the immediate future (unless they are being progressed through the GIP).

- 5.8 In summary, a £234k investment in the backlog of repairs is predicted to yield cumulative income of £312k by year 5. The breakeven point is week 199 or 3.83 years.
- 5.9 In terms of funding, the GIP is funded by £1m of garage site disposals (of which £447k has been achieved to date) and the remainder (£8.95m) through capital borrowing. £4m has been spent so far so it is reasonable to assume that £3.5m is from borrowing and the remainder from disposal sites that have been disposed of. There is likely to be an underspend at the end of the GIP programme in August 2023 of £3million. It is recommended that £234k of this underspend is used to carry out the works to the backlog of repairs.
- 5.10 The additional Temporary Asbestos Surveyor one year post will be funded through £55k from the General Fund. This role is essential to ensure compliance. Appendix B provides a summary of the costed options.

Legal Implications

- 5.11 All works/services as set out in this report will be procured in accordance with the Councils Constitution, in particular the Contract Procedure Rules and where applicable the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
- 5.12 The duty to manage asbestos is contained in regulation 4 of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012. The duty holder (in this case the Council) has to:
- take reasonable steps to find out if there are materials containing asbestos in non-domestic premises, and if so, its amount, where it is and what condition it is in
 - make, and keep up-to-date, a record of the location and condition of the asbestos- containing materials - or materials which are presumed to contain asbestos
 - assess the risk of anyone being exposed to fibres from the materials identified
 - prepare a plan that sets out in detail how the risks from these materials will be managed
 - periodically review and monitor the plan and the arrangements to act on it so that the plan remains relevant and up-to-date
 - provide information on the location and condition of the materials to anyone who is liable to work on or disturb them

Therefore it is important for the Council to continue carrying out the asbestos surveys to identify such asbestos and as set out in this report deal with that accordingly.

Risk Implications

- 5.13 Failure to have a fully funded asbestos survey / management plan in place will place the Council in breach of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012. There is the risk to human health if asbestos risk is not being assessed in a timely manner, as it deteriorates and exposure takes place.
- 5.14 A series of simulated tests were completed at pilot sites and assessed together with historical exposure information by the asbestos specialist to calculate the exposure risk and harm to residents that have used the garages. The report concluded potential exposure to anyone using the garages as likely to be 'insignificant' to 'low risk'.
- 5.15 Whilst the issue of asbestos in 442 affected garages remains, there are risks to the growth of the Council's income stream for garages if the repairs backlog on the void garages stock is not addressed.

APPENDICES

- A Potential future structure of asbestos management team
- B Summary of costed options

APPENDIX A:

Potential future structure of asbestos management team

Role	Cost	Current funding of role	Potential future funding required
Contract Manager	£56,744	100% HRA	£56,744
Compliance Co-ordinator	£40,600	100% GF	-
Permanent full time Asbestos Surveyor (Voids and Occupied Surveys)*	£45,514	50% GF 50% HRA	£22,757
Temporary full time Asbestos Surveyor (Block Surveys) – 12 months only (agency contingency built in)	£55,000	New role	£55,000
Total	£197,858		£134,501

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APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF COSTED OPTIONS

1. External Asbestos Resource

Total expenditure – Voids Backlog and Asbestos Management Programme External Asbestos Contractor						
		Costs (£)				
	Quantity	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Works - garages with known works	31	84,000				
Works – garages expected to require works	36	73,000				
Estimated 50% of garage team inspections requiring works	16	23,000				
Estimated 20% of garages with asbestos works will require works	9	18,000				
Estimated 20% of garages currently on list for asbestos surveys will require works	7	12,000				
Estimated costs for works to asbestos remedials	35	24,000				
Asbestos Void Surveys	560	36,400	36,400	36,400	36,400.00	36,400
Asbestos - Survey Blocks	651	48,825				
Asbestos - Reinspect Blocks	1356	44,915	88,140	88,140	88,140	88,140
Asbestos - Occupied Surveys	4422	71,857	71,857	71,857	71,857	-
Asbestos Contract Manager		56,774	56,770	56,774	56,774	56,774
Total		492,771	253,171	253,171	253,171	181,314

2. Internal Asbestos Resource

Total expenditure – Voids Backlog and Asbestos Management Programme						
Internal Asbestos Resource to assess scale of issue						
Internal Asbestos Resource	Quantity	Costs (£)				
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Works - garages with known works	31	84,000				
Works – garages expected to require works	36	73,000				
Estimated 50% of garage team inspections requiring works	16	23,000				
Estimated 20% of garages with asbestos works will require works	10	18,000				
Estimated 20% of garages currently on list for asbestos surveys will require works	7	12,000				
Estimated costs for works to asbestos remedials	35	24,000				
Temporary Asbestos Surveyor (Block Surveys)		55,000	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
Total		289,000	-	-	-	-

Meeting Executive
Portfolio Area Environment and Climate Change
Date 14 September 2022



STEVENAGE CONNECTION AREA ACTION PLAN: PREFERRED OPTIONS REPORT FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

KEY DECISION

Author Lewis Claridge | 2158
Lead Officer Zayd Al-Jawad | 2257
Contact Officer Lewis Claridge | 2158

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide Members with an overview of the draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Report [Appendix A].
- 1.2 To seek Members' approval to carry out public and stakeholder consultation on the draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Report.
- 1.3 It is important to note that the options proposed are high level, strategic options and scenarios to develop an improved environment, maximise density of space and economic opportunities around Stevenage Railway Station, in order to enable development in the long-term.
- 1.4 Any interventions that may materialise in the Area Action Plan zone should deliver a new gateway and arrival experience, enhanced movement and access, new mixed-use developments to unlock economic opportunity, create a low-carbon urban village, integrate green infrastructure, provide sustainability in mobility, built form and landscaping, celebrate the heritage of

Stevenage and make the most of digital connectivity and high-speed broadband.

- 1.5 The Stevenage Development Board, in its Town Deal submission to Government, identified the Station Gateway area an area for key regeneration opportunities in Stevenage. Through the allocation of £37.5m Town Deal funding, the Government acknowledged the significant regeneration opportunities in Stevenage, the opportunity for the growth of vital STEM sectors including life sciences. This investment is designed to be clustered around the central parts of the town, and the Government-funded Town Deal funding includes £500k allocation to enable masterplanning of the Station Gateway area going forward.
- 1.6 Stevenage Borough Council, as a co-operative Council, seeks to engage widely with businesses, residents and other stakeholder groups. The Preferred Options Report contains key concepts and aspirations at this stage and does not suggest specific proposals for the Railway Station and Lytton Way.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Executive agree the content of the Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Preferred Options document prior to the document going out to public consultation.
- 2.2 That Executive agree the public consultation methods for when the Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Preferred Options document goes out to public consultation.
- 2.3 That delegated powers be granted to the Assistant Director: Planning and Regulation, to make final amendments to the Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Report prior to going out to public consultation.
- 2.4 That the comments of the Planning & Development Committee are considered regarding the Preferred Options Report ahead of Executive.
- 2.5 That the Executive note that informal engagement with key stakeholders will continue, including the Stevenage Development Board, to test the Preferred Options ahead of final preparation of the Area Action Plan Preferred Options Report.

3 BACKGROUND

Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan

- 3.1 An Area Action Plan (AAP) is a type of Development Plan Document (DPD) providing a planning framework for a specific area of opportunity, change or conservation. AAPs give a geographic or spatial dimension and focus for the implementation of policies for that area. AAPs can create new policy over and above the Local Plan [BD1], within the designated AAP area.
- 3.2 The Council is developing an emerging Area Action Plan for the Stevenage Station Gateway area, titled the "Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan".

As it will be a DPD, this will become part of the Development Plan for Stevenage, and as such is required to be subject to statutory consultation and examination. The final AAP document is required to be adopted by full Council.

- 3.3 The AAP will provide an opportunity for stakeholders to engage and shape this area. It also acts as a catalyst for developers interested in supporting this important part of the Local Plan.
- 3.4 The requirement to produce the Stevenage Station Gateway AAP (site area TC4 as identified in the Local Plan) resulted from a letter from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in March 2019 [BD2]. This lifted the Holding Direction placed on the Stevenage Borough Local Plan in 2017.
- 3.5 Stevenage Borough Local Plan Policy TC4 (“Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area”) states:

Within the Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area, as defined on the Policies Map, planning permission will be granted for:

- a. An extended and regenerated train station;*
- b. New bus station;*
- c. High-density Use Class C3 residential units;*
- d. New multi-storey or basement car parking;*
- e. New Use Class B1 office premises;*
- f. A new Use Class C1 hotel; and*
- g. New Use Class A1 and Use Class A3 restaurant and cafe uses.*

Applications should address the following design and land use principles:

- i. Major reconfiguration of Lytton Way between Fairlands Way and Six Hills Way;*
- ii. Demolition of the Arts & Leisure Centre to facilitate better east-west integration and create new development sites in the environs of the train station;*
- iii. The provision of replacement sports and theatre facilities elsewhere within Stevenage Central;*
- iv. A significantly regenerated and enlarged dual frontage train station of high quality, with associated facilities;*
- v. New public squares on the eastern and western frontages of the train station;*
- vi. High quality office buildings within a short walking distance of the train station;*
- vii. At least one multi-storey car park and cycle parking plus drop-off space.*
- viii. Establishment of an attractive east – west pedestrian route across the East Coast Main Line;*
- ix. High quality landmark gateway environment to create a positive image of Stevenage for all rail visitors.*

- 3.6 The Council provides regular updates to DLUHC (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) on progress with the AAP as one of the conditions set in the Secretary of State's letter to the Council in March 2019. The Council last updated DLUHC in August 2022 to provide an update on indicative overall timescales to adopting the AAP, as well as immediate next steps. DLUHC are content with the progress made to date on the AAP.
- 3.7 The first version of the document was an "Issues and Options" version [Appendix B]. This report outlined the core issues that are present within the station area as well as the background policy issues and wider context that affects its development. This represented an early stage of the preparation of an AAP, and a series of initial options that focussed on mobility were presented for feedback from the public, as well as targeted stakeholders. As a first stage of development of the AAP, this adds some weight to Policy TC4 of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan. Further weight to Policy TC4 will be added with the subsequent Preferred Options version of the AAP.

Objectives and Key Design Principles

- 3.8 There are a range of high-level policy objectives which align with the Local Plan and national policy direction for the AAP to respond to. These include:
- Creating a new gateway and arrival experience;
 - Creating an exemplar, low-carbon "urban village";
 - Sustainable travel considered throughout;
 - Green infrastructure in the public realm;
 - Climate change consideration in all development decisions;
 - Design of the highest architectural standards.
- 3.9 Climate change is one of the most important objectives for the AAP to respond to. The Council declared a climate emergency in June 2019 and reconfirmed a commitment to tackling climate change and its impacts by setting a target to ensure that Stevenage has net zero carbon emissions by 2030. Added to this, the Government has strategic targets to have net zero emissions by 2050. The Council has been proactive in producing a Climate Change Strategy [BD3] and outlined a Climate Change Action Plan. Both the Strategy and Action Plan are being updated to ensure that the Council's commitment to battling climate change is kept at the top of its priorities.
- 3.10 Related to tackling the challenges of climate change in Stevenage, as well as the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, the Council has seen recent investments come forward to help the sustainability of this area and its environs and is working on a range of other related transport initiatives and strategies, including:
- New Stevenage Bus Interchange.
 - Sustainable Travel Town Implementation Plan.
 - Bid for new electric bus fleet.
- 3.11 The high level, strategic options proposed for the area included within the AAP will be strongly influenced by the masterplan for the SG1 development which lies to the east and within the town centre. Connections to this

development and connections through into the town square and central area will form the emerging physical context within which the AAP sits.

- 3.12 The Station Gateway area of Stevenage is a key location for economic competitiveness. Other locations which are a similar time distance away from London terminals are seeing considerable commercial growth, for example Reading, Slough, Milton Keynes and Croydon. Stevenage is perfectly placed in terms of mobility, and already hosts major international companies in the Gunnels Wood Industrial Area as well as GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), a major pharmaceutical company.
- 3.13 Creating an attractive, healthy, memorable and enjoyable place in the Station Gateway area will provide the seeds for high quality mixed-use development to come forward and make the most of the station area and contribute widely across the town.
- 3.14 Key design principles of the emerging framework include:
- Providing people-friendly spaces;
 - Improving links from the rail station to the bus station;
 - Improving step-free and disabled access,
 - Future-proofing the area for a rail station upgrade, consolidating surface car parking to enable development; and
 - To ensure good access for all travel modes, including high quality cycling facilities.
- 3.15 The AAP is being prepared in full knowledge and recognition that a wider masterplan is developing for the Station Gateway area of Stevenage. Up to £500,000 has been committed to ensuring that works for this area are enabled, as well as for deep engagement with a variety of stakeholders. This report sets out the technical planning steps required to develop and approve an Area Action Plan. The work on the AAP will be conducted alongside the work of the Council's Regeneration Team, and Stevenage Development Board partners, to look in greater depth at potential options to create a thriving and successful gateway to the town.
- 3.16 All proposed high-level scenarios for the reconfiguration of Lytton Way have a set of core enhancements, primarily in the North and South zones of the AAP area, north of Swingate and south of Danesgate. These apply to all potential options and include:
- Reduction in width of Lytton Way to be reallocated to pedestrian or cycle movement with associated green infrastructure.
 - An additional segregated cycleway adjacent to Lytton Way, away from the railway tracks.
 - Improved access to the Police Station.
 - A large public square, future-proofed for a new railway station or enhanced station entrance.
 - An east-west "boulevard", running from the west of the railway line to the town centre and would cross the station and public square.
 - A cycle hub at the southern end of the Station Square plot.

- Development plots made available by the consolidation of surface car parking into a Multi Storey Car Park (MSCP), subject to funding being available.

Planning Policy Process

- 3.17 The Issues and Options stage was the first stage of development of the Area Action Plan. This is followed by a “Preferred Options” consultation which is informed by the Issues and Options consultation response. Following this, the final version of the AAP will be submitted to the Secretary of State. This will be followed by an Examination in Public.
- 3.18 The AAP, as a Development Plan Document, is similar in status to the Local Plan and therefore requires Examination in Public by an appointed Planning Inspector, representing the Secretary of State. Should the AAP pass the soundness tests during the Examination in Public, the gateway process to formally adopting the AAP would progress immediately afterwards.
- 3.19 The Council is in the very early stages of scoping a review of its Local Plan. Policy TC4: Station Gateway of the current Local Plan enables the AAP to be produced. However, this will not automatically prescribe development to happen in this area. An adopted AAP will provide further weight to the Local Plan and form strong evidence to inform the Local Plan Review.
- 3.20 Any proposals that do come forward in the Station Gateway area will be duly considered by the Planning & Development Committee in accordance with Local Plan Policy TC4, the AAP and any relevant policies under review, at the appropriate time.

Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening

- 3.21 Sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment are tools used at the plan-making stage to assess the likely effects of the plan when judged against reasonable alternatives. A sustainability appraisal should be prepared for any of the documents that can form part of a Local Plan, including Core Strategies, Site Allocation documents and Area Action Plans.
- 3.22 During preparation of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan, officers concluded that Policy TC4 (Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area) had no significant environmental impact. The statutory consultees for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening have been contacted to confirm they are content with this position.
- 3.23 There is potential to include stronger wording in the AAP referring to environmental effects of the development. This should reflect the position taken in the Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal, noting the environmental benefits that the preferred option works would provide such as reduction in air pollution and contribution to net zero carbon targets.

Decision of the Executive, February 2021: Issues and Options AAP for Public Consultation

- 3.24 In February 2021, the Executive [BD4] approved the publication of the Stevenage Connection AAP: Issues and Options Report for public consultation.

Decision of the Executive, February 2022: Consultation Responses to Issues and Options AAP

- 3.25 In February 2022, the Executive [BD5] received a report outlining the responses from the consultation on the Issues and Options AAP in July – September 2021.
- 3.26 The report set out 4 options for the area adjacent to Stevenage Railway Station incorporating Lytton Way:
- Option 0 – Do nothing.
 - Option 1 – All traffic modes: reduces the central area of Lytton Way between Swingate and Danesgate to a single carriageway suitable for all modes of traffic.
 - Option 2 – Bus and Taxi only: reduces the central area of Lytton Way between Swingate and Danesgate to a single carriageway and restricts movement to buses and taxis only.
 - Option 3 – Pedestrianised Plaza: removes regular vehicle movement from the front of the station and Lytton Way ceases to be a through-route. An access through-route is retained for emergency vehicles needing to access and egress the station and immediate environs.
- 3.27 There were two cycle path options proposed as well as a range of other potential core enhancements for the area, including development parcels, temporary uses and phasing developments.
- 3.28 The varied response the Council received, not just on the Options for the central section of Lytton Way, shows that in developing the Preferred Options AAP and taking the AAP through to its final stages, the aspirations in the vision for the AAP are of prime importance. This is to ensure that the Station Gateway area of opportunity is brought to life and delivered in the appropriate manner in accordance with other related measures. This is being reflected in the Preferred Options Report.
- 3.29 Hertfordshire County Council Highways (with consultancy WSP) produced a report for Stevenage Borough Council that assesses the impacts of each of the Lytton Way options on the highway network around Stevenage, as well as offer potential mitigation measures. The modelling work undertaken was based on a baseline year of 2021, with scenarios based on traffic flows in 2025 and 2031, with and without the A1(M) SMART motorway in operation.
- 3.30 While the emerging Highways Modelling report suggested that Option 1 would have the least impact on traffic flows (particularly at peak hours) around Stevenage, the Hertfordshire County Council AAP consultation response highlighted Option 2 as the most preferred option which aligns with strategic aspirations to improve active travel.

- 3.31 While the model results make it difficult to recommend Options 2 or 3 from a highway capacity viewpoint, both Option 2 or 3 could work in highway capacity terms if residents of Stevenage and users of the town centre accepted a much higher level of modal shift than would be required for Option 1. The level of ambition in the Stevenage Sustainable Travel Town may make the level of mode shift achievable – however without major behaviour change and modal shift, there are potential risks of causing significant congestion. The Council’s objectives to reach net zero carbon by 2030 also need careful consideration in this regard. The Council, as well as ensuring that the AAP final options consider the net zero ambitions, will be carefully considering how to realise climate change and net zero objectives in the forthcoming Local Plan Review.
- 3.32 The Highways Modelling Report provides a sound analysis of the potential impacts on the highway network in Stevenage, of any changes to the configuration of Lytton Way that could occur in the medium to long-term. It is important to note that implementing any interventions derived from the AAP options would require likely further work and analysis, as they advance through the planning process to potential approval and delivery.
- 3.33 The Executive Report from February 2022 and Issues and Options AAP Consultation Statement [Appendix C] provides further details of consultation responses. In summary:
- Option 2: reduce the central section of Lytton Way to one lane both ways, for buses and taxis only, has emerged as a preferred option. However, Option 3: reduce the central section of Lytton Way to zero lanes to be a pedestrianised plaza, was also very popular across many consultation respondents and key stakeholders. Some elements of this option will be reflected or future proofed as much as possible into the final preferred option, in order to match the aspirations of active travel and the regeneration plans for the town centre (SG1).
 - While Option 1 is less supportive of active travel aspirations, it was also popular among respondents, therefore demonstrating a clear overall desire for some form of positive change involving Lytton Way. Option 0 “do nothing” received significantly less support than Options 1, 2 and 3.
 - There was a clear preference for “Potential Layout 1” relating to the cycle path options – this is reflected in the Preferred Options document. This layout retains the existing cycle route, running alongside the railway line and at the extreme western edge of the AAP site boundary.
- 3.34 The Executive, in February 2022, emphasised the importance of the arrival experience and that a high-tech and vibrant economy should help to shape the future identity of the area. There should be further reference to culture in order to utilise this area in the future to showcase the heritage and culture of Stevenage New Town.
- 3.35 It was resolved by the Executive in February 2022, that:
- It be agreed to progress to the next stage of the Area Action Plan progress, namely the production of the “Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Report”, (the Preferred Options Report),

this report being based on the outcomes of the “Issues and Options” consultation;

- It be noted that the draft of the Preferred Options Report will be presented to Executive for approval to go out to public consultation (formal consultation, if approved, will take place once approved); and
- That informal engagement with key stakeholders will continue, to test the Preferred Options ahead of preparation of the Area Action Plan Preferred Options Report.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

Recommendation 2.1: That Executive agree the content of the Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Preferred Options document prior to the document going out to public consultation.

- 4.1 The draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Report is included in Appendix A.
- 4.2 There are a range of high-level policy objectives which align with the Local Plan and national policy direction for the AAP to respond to. These include:
- A new gateway and arrival experience;
 - Creating an exemplar, low-carbon “urban village”;
 - Sustainable travel considered throughout;
 - Mixed-use development to unlock economic opportunity;
 - Green infrastructure in the public realm;
 - Climate change consideration in all development decisions;
 - Design of the highest architectural standards;
 - Celebrating the heritage of the town;
 - Making the most of digital connectivity and high-speed broadband.
- 4.3 A broad overview of the key points from the draft version is presented below.
- 4.4 In general, there has been a retention of Chapters 2 to 5 relating to background, setting the context, issues and challenges and existing environment. This has incorporated any issues highlighted during the Issues and Options AAP consultation, as summarised in the previous Report to Executive and in particular, the Issues and Options AAP Consultation Statement [Appendix C].
- 4.5 Again, relating to what has been summarised in the previous Report to Executive and the Issues and Options AAP Consultation Statement, the key changes being reflected in the Preferred Options AAP are to Chapter 6 “Emerging Framework”. These include:
- Including reference at the beginning of Section 6 to reinforce the key principles of the AAP, that will be recognised through any final option the AAP recommends. All potential changes and scenarios proposed will promote movement and improve access to and from

the Railway Station to the Town Centre and enhance the sense of arrival to Stevenage, providing the gateway to improved opportunities for the area.

- Regarding the central section of Lytton Way, a focus on moving forward with Option 2 as a preferred option, with flexibility to convert to elements of other Lytton Way Options in the future and further work to consider how this land can best enable movement and the delivery of the AAP vision.
- Importance of flexibility to incorporate elements of other Options in the final version of the AAP. Flexibility in land use terms, to move from Option 2 (preferred option) to Option 3 in accordance with active travel aspirations and the overall opportunity the area presents, to bring about the best possible sense of arrival and gateway to the regenerated town – in accordance with the vision and aspirations of the Area Action Plan / Local Plan Policy TC4: Station Gateway.
- Focus on moving ahead with “Potential Layout 1” for a likely Cycle Path Option.
- Retention of objectives, key design principles and core enhancement sections, incorporating comments raised during the Issues and Options AAP consultation.
- Retention of phasing, temporary uses and development parcels sections, again incorporating any Issues and Options AAP consultation comments.
- Integration of current and recent developments in the vicinity of the Railway Station, including:
 - Town Investment Plan and Towns Fund Projects / Business Cases, some of which have a strong linkage to the Station Gateway area of Stevenage, as outlined in the Executive Report in February 2022 [BD5].
 - Multi-Storey Car Park (MSCP), Station North (construction started 23 May 2022, to last for 40 weeks; completion estimated March 2023;
 - New Bus Interchange (opened 26 June 2022) and associated at-grade crossing on Lytton Way.

Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening

- 4.6 No substantive comments were received on the content of the SEA Screening Report during the public consultation on the Issues and Options AAP [Appendix D].
- 4.7 For the Preferred Options AAP, contact has been made with the three statutory agencies (Historic England, Environment Agency and Natural England). A revised SEA Screening Report will accompany the Preferred Options AAP when it goes out to public consultation.

- 4.8 As the Preferred Options AAP carries through options from the Issues and Options AAP, it is unlikely that any significant comments or objections will be made by these bodies. Any representations that are made will form part of the Consultation Statement for the Preferred Options AAP, once consultation has closed.

Recommendation 2.2: That Executive agree the consultation methods for when the Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Preferred Options document goes out to public consultation.

Consultation methods for Issues and Options AAP Public Consultation

- 4.9 The formal consultation consisted of:
- A series of dedicated meetings with a range of key stakeholders to the AAP area.
 - Publicity via the Stevenage Borough Council website and social media platforms (including the Council's Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn pages).
 - A link to the Council's consultation interface, where the public were able to download the AAP and SEA Screening document and submit their observations and representations.
 - The consultation interface included a series of "consultation questions", designed to cover the varying aspects of the AAP and to generate comments on certain sections of the document.
 - A press release and articles in the Comet newspaper relating to the AAP public consultation.
 - Continuation of distribution of leaflets and posters publicising the public consultation. This included distribution at Stevenage Central Library, Daneshill House Reception and Stevenage Railway Station retail outlets.
 - Continuation of engagement with the wider public via consultation stalls at the Railway Station and West Gate Shopping Centre, the Town Square and Stevenage Indoor Market.
 - Engagement with community interest groups on the AAP at events that were scheduled for Summer 2021. Leaflets and posters were placed on various neighbourhood centre notice boards. In addition, there was engagement with supermarkets and doctors' surgeries on notice boards, to gauge views on the preferred options for Lytton Way.
 - Engagement, via the Regeneration team, with key partners, businesses and wider stakeholders to help look at the 'art of the possible' for this Gateway location.

Progression to Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Report

- 4.10 At all stages of the process to date, officers have taken all comments and views into account, in a conscientious manner. This has helped to inform and shape the position being reported to Executive.
- 4.11 The following paragraphs detail other important considerations for officers in preparing the Preferred Options version of the AAP.
- 4.12 The first stage for public consultation, the “consultation on initial draft policies and options”, has been completed. The “Issues and Options” version of the Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan formed this first stage in 2021.
- 4.13 The next stage, “develop submission version of policies” will form the second stage of the Area Action Plan and will form the “Preferred Options” draft for public consultation.
- 4.14 Following the Preferred Options consultation, the AAP will be submitted to the Secretary of State ahead of an independent Examination in Public by an appointed Planning Inspector.
- 4.15 A final consultation on any modifications proposed by the Inspector to the Plan will be held prior to the Inspector’s Report, which confirms whether the Plan can proceed to formal adoption. Monitoring and review of the Plan is required a period of time after the Plan has been adopted.

Next Steps

- 4.16 At Executive, Members will be given the opportunity to express their views on how the Preferred Options consultation will operate. For the Issues and Options AAP consultation in Summer 2021, extensive public consultation and stakeholder engagement was carried out across the town which brought significant and useful feedback.
- 4.17 Running a similar level of engagement would have substantial resource impacts; in particular for the Planning Policy team and potentially other teams at Stevenage Borough Council.
- 4.18 Consultation for Preferred Options could incorporate methods including:
- Asking what types of development people would like to see in a newly-regenerated area around the station;
 - “You said, we did” summary;
 - Frequently asked questions or “FAQs”;
 - Summary of the impacts of each option (particularly highways impacts);
 - Highlighting the potential to future proof the consultation area to adapt to other options that maintain a balance between traffic flow considerations and active travel ambitions of the Council.
- 4.19 Informal and formal engagement is continuing. For example, the Stevenage Development Board met on 16 June 2022 and were in broad support of the AAP’s vision, aspirations, and general direction of travel, ahead of the

Preferred Options AAP going to Executive. In particular, the aspirations of the AAP were seen as vital in providing a gateway to the town and providing positive first and last impressions, to cement the relationship between the Railway Station and the Town Centre. The Development Board appreciated that the AAP represented a medium to long-term project, not a quick solution. The Board also recognised that arrival for business is key to retaining the best talent and investment to the town.

- 4.20 For the Preferred Options consultation, we would go wider to tie together with more detailed masterplanning and market engagement (with input from Regeneration and Stevenage Development Board) to help shape the Area Action Plan and ensure we have deep support behind it into the final version.
- 4.21 As part of the next stage of consultation and work on the masterplan for the Station Gateway area, there will be further work undertaken to consider scenarios and options for how land use, and the spaces around the Station Gateway area, can best work. This will include further engagement and liaison with the public and key stakeholders to the area.
- 4.22 If Executive approve the Preferred Options draft to go out to public consultation, the necessary amendments and updates to the AAP will be made as soon as possible in order to facilitate a public consultation. This would be envisaged to run for a minimum of 6 weeks from Winter 2022 / 2023, subject to the level of consultation methods agreed by Executive. It is then envisaged that a further Report would come back to Executive in early 2023 to feed back on the Preferred Options consultation and agree the next steps to progressing the final version of the AAP.
- 4.23 Once the Preferred Options Report is out to public consultation, this will add further weight to Policy TC4 and thereafter until the Area Action Plan is adopted. During the process to adoption, it is anticipated that further positive engagement with landowners and key stakeholders in the process will aid early delivery of the eventual schemes on the AAP sites and for the relevant sections of Lytton Way.
- 4.24 The table below illustrates an indicative timetable for progression of the Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan. This is subject to change based on the volume of engagement and response received on the Preferred Options AAP.

Stage	Date
<i>Preferred Options AAP: Public Consultation</i>	Winter 2022 / 2023 (minimum 6 weeks)
<i>Preferred Options AAP: consider and address responses</i>	Early 2023
<i>Executive: Report Preferred Options AAP consultation responses and approve Submission AAP</i>	Early 2023

Stage	Date
<i>Submission of AAP to Secretary of State</i>	Summer 2023
<i>Examination in Public of Plan</i>	Summer / Autumn 2023
<i>Inspector's Report</i>	Autumn 2023
<i>Adoption of Plan</i>	Autumn / Winter 2023
<i>Monitoring and Review</i>	From Winter 2023 (in accordance with Local Plan Review)

Recommendation 2.3: That delegated powers be granted to the Assistant Director: Planning and Regulation, to make final amendments to the Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Report prior to going out to public consultation.

- 4.25 The draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Report is appended to this report [Appendix A].
- 4.26 It is requested that Executive agree to delegate powers to the Assistant Director: Planning and Regulation, to make any final amendments to the Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Report prior to going out to public consultation. This will include final wording amendments, graphics, maps, and any final publishing as required.
- 4.27 It is likely that a consultancy will be contacted to assist with the final stages of publishing of the Preferred Options draft document, as was undertaken for the Issues and Options document.

Recommendation 2.4: That the comments of the Planning & Development Committee are considered regarding the Preferred Options Report ahead of Executive.

- 4.28 The Planning & Development Committee were presented an update on the AAP on 22 June 2022. Comments included:
- Importance of ensuring, if options to reduce Lytton Way were agreed, that the northern access via Tesco is adequate to alleviate some of the traffic impacts.
 - The need to get the balance with active travel is of great importance, but proposals concerning the area and in particular, Lytton Way, need to consider access from the south of the town.
- 4.29 The views of the Planning & Development Committee Members are of significant value in shaping the future direction the Stevenage Connection AAP takes as it progresses into Preferred Options stage. Key concerns expressed previously include the need for wide engagement; potential future

changes to Lytton Way; and connectivity between the Railway Station and the town centre, as it progresses through several stages of regeneration.

Recommendation 2.5: That the Executive note that informal engagement with key stakeholders will continue, including the Stevenage Development Board, to test the Preferred Options ahead of final preparation of the Area Action Plan Preferred Options Report.

- 4.30 The Stevenage Development Board were consulted on the Issues and Options public consultation findings at their meeting scheduled for 24 February 2022 and again on 16 June 2022. The Development Board provided broad support for the AAP as described in paragraph 4.16 of this Report.
- 4.31 Following the Executive meeting in September 2022, there may be scope for further engagement with other key stakeholders to inform them of progress on the AAP and listen to any comments they may wish to make.
- 4.32 Given the role of the Stevenage Development Board in securing funding for masterplanning the future of the Station Gateway area, it is important that the Preferred Options AAP is shaped by continued close working with the Stevenage Development Board on masterplanning activity. This is in order to explore the options, scenarios and ideas for development in the area in greater depth and to ensure the right outcomes are achieved in time.

5 IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 5.1 The costs associated with producing and consulting on the draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Report will be met from the agreed departmental budget.
- 5.2 The Hertfordshire County Council / WSP Highways Modelling Report work, to supplement the Issues & Options Consultation and Preferred Options report drafting, required a budget of c. £30,000.
- 5.3 Potential further Highways Modelling work could be utilised, for example to test the success or otherwise of the Preferred Lytton Way Options by temporarily restricting through traffic on Lytton Way to identify if the reality of this situation is the same as predicted in the model. This would have further budget implications.
- 5.4 Depending on the extent of public consultation methods desired and agreed by the Executive, there could be further cost / budget implications and resourcing impacts on several teams within the Council.
- 5.5 It is possible that further consultancy assistance will be required to consider costs, feasibility of and graphics related to development of Preferred Options documentation.

- 5.6 Any potential schemes that are referenced in the AAP and subsequently developed will need to be subject to a business case and / or will require third party funding.

Legal Implications

- 5.7 The draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Report has been prepared in accordance with the appropriate legislation, regulations and guidance, including the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The outcomes of any consultation will be conscientiously considered in accordance with the legal requirements in developing the Preferred Options version of the AAP, prior to approval by the Executive.
- 5.8 The comments of the Planning & Development Committee have been considered regarding the content of this Report.

Risk Implications

- 5.9 Given the level of exposure the AAP has had to date, the potential impacts on traffic flow in Stevenage and in conjunction with wider discussions regarding Lytton Way and current and recent developments in the Station Gateway and Lytton Way area, there is a risk that political agendas could influence the direction in which the Preferred Options AAP is steered, in the lead up to and during the public consultation process. A careful approach will be needed to ensure all views are considered and appropriate wording is taken through to the Submission version of the AAP.
- 5.10 The Multi-Storey Car Park (MSCP) site is well underway and on course for completion in 2023. This will need to be carefully considered when progressing the AAP into its latter stages, prior to Submission to the Secretary of State.

Policy Implications

- 5.11 The Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan will accord with and is being produced to supplement policies in the adopted Stevenage Borough Local Plan (2019). As it is a Development Plan Document it may also develop policies over and above the Local Plan for the Stevenage Station Gateway area of opportunity.
- 5.12 The Preferred Options Report, when drafted will align with other corporate Council documents such as the Climate Change Strategy (adopted September 2020), Action Plan and Charter as well as Stevenage's Future Town Future Transport Strategy (2019) and emerging Stevenage Sustainable Travel Town Implementation Plan.

Planning Implications

- 5.13 The Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan will supplement the Stevenage Borough Local Plan (2019).
- 5.14 The document will add to and complement the Development Plan for Stevenage. It will be a material consideration for planning applications.

Environmental Implications

- 5.15 During preparation of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan and the SEA Screening Report for the AAP, officers concluded that Policy TC4 (Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area) had no significant environmental impact. There is potential to include stronger and more focused wording in the Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Preferred Options Report referring to environmental effects of any potential future development.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.16 The Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan will seek to provide sustainable travel solutions and promote active modes of transport. This will support the aims and objectives of the Stevenage Climate Change Strategy (September 2020) and contribute to the overall climate change aspirations of the Council.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.17 The Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan will seek to improve disabled and step-free access to Stevenage Railway Station; several Issues and Options consultation responses highlighted that this should be a priority. This will therefore offer further opportunities and benefits for all accessing the Railway Station and more widely, connecting to the regenerated town centre in the future.

Community Safety Implications

- 5.18 While the Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan is unlikely to have any direct community safety implications per se; when implementing any of the proposals the delivery body will need to closely consider the potential impacts on community safety.

Other Implications

- 5.19 There will be significant economic implications from future work arising from the Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan.
- 5.20 For example, the AAP could help to maximise opportunity for provision of high-quality facilities for the growing local research and development industry as well as the expanding cell and gene therapy catalyst industry that is seeking future accommodation and opportunities in Stevenage and the wider area.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- BD1 Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011–2031 (May 2019)
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/planning-policy/stevenage-borough-local-plan/stevenage-borough-local-plan.pdf>
- BD2 Letter from Rt. Hon. James Brokenshire MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, to Stevenage Borough Council: Stevenage Borough Council's Local Plan (March 2019)

<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/planning-policy/holding-direction/the-secretary-of-states-letter.pdf>

- BD3 Stevenage Climate Change Strategy (September 2020)
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/about-the-council/climate-change-strategy/climate-change-strategy-september-2020.pdf>
- BD4 Meeting of the Stevenage Borough Council Executive, Item 5: Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report for Public Consultation (February 2021)
<https://democracy.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/s27638/Station%20Gateway%20AAP.pdf>
- BD5 Meeting of the Stevenage Borough Council Executive, Item 8: Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report Public Consultation Feedback (February 2022)
<https://democracy.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/s30618/Station%20Gateway%20AAP%20-%20Exec%20Report.pdf>

APPENDICES

- A Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Draft Preferred Options Report (August 2022)
- B Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report (July 2021)
- C Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Consultation Statement (January 2022)
- D Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Statement (July 2021)

Stevenage Connection AAP: Preferred Options Report.

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Constricted space – except for cars	X
Safety Issues	X
Development Issues	X
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Stevenage Central Framework (DLA, 2016)	X
Rail Station Vision (Arup, 2017)	X
SG1 Masterplan (Mace, 2018)	X
05 Existing Environment	X
Existing Land Uses	X
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Existing Green Infrastructure	X
06 Emerging Framework	X
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Key principles	X
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***Contents / page numbers to be finalised when Preferred Options AAP is finalised**

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01 Introduction



Figure 1: Stevenage town centre from the air

Stevenage's town centre is undergoing a process of renewal and regeneration. As part of this, the area around the station bounded by the railway tracks and Lytton Way has been identified as a key site for new development and change. This key gateway for the town has the potential for significant transformation, based on its well-connected position only 20 minutes from Kings' Cross. Such development form a key part of the regeneration of the town centre.

This report is the second stage in the process of producing an Area Action Plan (AAP) for the station area. It outlines the key issues that affect the area identified as site TC4 in the Local Plan. It then presents a series of potential options that will form the basis for targeted consultation with stakeholders.

What is an AAP?

An Area Action Plan (AAP) is an optional development plan document which provides specific planning policy and guidance for a particular location or area of significant change. AAPs must be in general conformity with the Local Plan and the NPPF. The key stages of an AAP are summarised below:

- Publication of Issues and Options, which seek the views of stakeholders on Issues and Options for the future development of the area.
- Publication of Preferred Options, to set out the Council's preferred way forward for the area.

- Following consideration of responses to this consultation, the Submission Document will be prepared. This will be submitted to the Secretary of State.
- The fourth stage is the independent Examination of the submitted document. The purpose of this is to consider the soundness of the AAP and representations. A Planning Inspector will be appointed by the Secretary of State to conduct the examination.
- The Planning Inspector will produce a binding report that sets out the final version of the AAP. This will then be adopted by the Council and incorporated in the Local Development Framework.

Stages 1 to 3 will each be subject to a 6-week public consultation (in compliance with SBC's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI; 2018) which sets out statutory consultation requirements).

Why create an Area Action Plan (AAP)?

After reviewing Stevenage's Local Plan during the Hold Direction, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) asked Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) to prepare an Area Action Plan (AAP) for Stevenage Station Gateway Area to support Policy TC4: Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area. This is a limited area within the wider Stevenage Central area.

The AAP can create new policy over and above the Local Plan and will require its own Sustainable Environmental Assessment at the Preferred Options Stage. Other mechanisms are available to provide appropriate planning and design guidance.

It is important to understand that this version of the Area Action Plan is not prescribing specific solutions to the issues and challenges raised. This Issues and Options Report is discussing key concepts and high level, strategic options and scenarios around Stevenage Railway Station, in order to enable potential future development that could take place. It does not, at this early stage, suggest specific proposals for Stevenage Railway Station or relating to Lytton Way.

Stevenage Borough Council is a co-operative Council and will undergo several rounds of consultation, work and co-operation with residents, businesses and key stakeholders to shape the Area Action Plan through these key stages. As a co-operative Council, Stevenage Borough Council will take into account all views and representations before discussing and developing any final options.

02 Background

The town centre of Stevenage ('Stevenage Central') is undergoing an extensive process of regeneration, renewal and new development. This ambitious programme builds on Stevenage's heritage as a New Town and its success in attracting people and businesses. Only 20 minutes from London's Kings' Cross, it is exceptionally well-connected and offers similar potential for commercial and residential growth as other locations such as Reading, Croydon and Milton Keynes. The station area is thus crucial for the success of this plan. This section sets out the background studies, policies and activities that form the basis for intervention.

Stevenage Central Regeneration Framework



Figure 2: Stevenage Central Regeneration Framework masterplan

Published in 2016, the Stevenage Central Regeneration Framework forms the governing masterplan for the town centre, outlining the key objectives, opportunities and vision for regeneration. The core recommendations within the report formed the parameters and basis for the Rail Station Vision study (2017) and underlies the masterplan for the area known as 'SG1'. The Framework has informed the policies in the recently adopted Local Plan.

Fitting within the Local Plan

Stevenage Borough Local Plan policy TC4 ("Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area") states:

Within the Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area, as defined on the Policies Map, planning permission will be granted for:

- a. *An extended and regenerated train station;*

- b. *New bus station;*
- c. *High-density Use Class C3 residential units;*
- d. *New multi-storey or basement car parking;*
- e. *New Use Class B1 office premises;*
- f. *A new Use Class C1 hotel; and*
- g. *New Use Class A1 and Use Class A3 restaurant and cafe uses.*

Applications should address the following design and land use principles:

- i. *Major reconfiguration of Lytton Way between Fairlands Way and Six Hills Way;*
- ii. *Demolition of the Arts & Leisure Centre to facilitate better east-west integration and create new development sites in the environs of the train station*
- iii. *The provision of replacement sports and theatre facilities elsewhere within Stevenage Central*
- iv. *A significantly regenerated and enlarged dual-frontage train station of high quality, with associated facilities*
- v. *New public squares on the eastern and western frontages of the train station*
- vi. *High quality office buildings within a short walking distance of the train station*
- vii. *At least one multi-storey car park and cycle parking plus drop-off space*
- viii. *Establishment of an attractive east - west pedestrian route across the East Coast Main Line*
- ix. *High quality landmark gateway environment to create a positive image of Stevenage for all rail visitors*

Within this policy context, there are a range of high-level policy objectives which align with the Local Plan and national policy direction for the AAP to respond to. These include:

- Sustainable travel considered throughout
- Green infrastructure in the public realm
- Climate change consideration in all development decisions
- Design of the highest architectural standards

The options proposed for the area included within the AAP will be strongly influenced by the masterplan for the SG1 development which lies to the east and within the town centre. Connections to this development and connections through into the town square and central area will form the emerging physical context within which the AAP sits.

Climate Change

Climate change is one of the most important objectives for the AAP to respond to. On 12th June 2019, Stevenage Borough Council declared a climate emergency and reconfirmed its commitment to tackling climate change by setting a target to ensure that Stevenage has net-zero emissions by 2030. In September 2020, the Council responded to this emergency by publishing its *Climate Change Strategy (2020)* which acts as a starting point for the development of a resident-led, co-produced more focused Climate Change Strategy for Stevenage.

As a co-operative Council, Stevenage is committed to act as a community leader and facilitate local people and businesses during the decarbonisation process. The Strategy focusses on four main

areas. Most of the carbon emissions in Stevenage come from Transport, People's home and businesses, construction, and utilities. Through focusing on these areas, better understanding their requirements, and engaging with them Stevenage can reach the zero-carbon target.

The Strategy gives valuable direction for the development of a Stevenage tailored Climate Change Action Plan to net zero by 2030. The Action Plan is a live document that will be continuously developed by the local community and is responsive to the opportunities that new technologies and bids for funding may allow. It follows 8 distinctive themes: People, Biodiversity, Transport, Energy and Water, Businesses, Homes, Construction and Regeneration, and Waste and Recycling.

Added to this, the Government has strategic targets to have net zero emissions by 2050. The Council has been proactive in producing the Climate Change Strategy and outlined a Climate Change Action Plan. Both the Strategy and Action Plan are being updated to ensure that the Council's commitment to battling climate change is kept at the top of its priorities.

Related to tackling the challenges of climate change in Stevenage, as well as the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, the Council has seen recent investments come forward to help the sustainability of this area and its environs and is working on a range of other related transport initiatives and strategies, including:

- New Stevenage Bus Interchange.
- Sustainable Travel Town Implementation Plan.
- Bid for new electric bus fleet.

Other Policy Documents

Future Town, Future Transport (2019) is SBC's transport plan responding to Hertfordshire County Council (HCC)'s Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4). This brings forward modal shift and sustainable transport measures across the county.

The document contains a number of policy actions for the 'Stevenage Gateway' area (approximately concurrent with the AAP area). These are split across short term and medium term plans, and the AAP must respond to them.

Short term action plan – immediate actions:

- Relocation of the bus station to be adjacent to the railway station
- A cycling and walking infrastructure plan
- A cycle hire scheme with docking hubs at the railway station and across the town centre
- Rules to allow e-scooters to use cycleways
- Engagement with Network Rail over capacity and access requirements

Short-term action plan – Part 2 (2021–25):

- Improvements to the station environment
- Intermodal interchange at the station including cycle hire, a cycle hub with covered parking and maintenance facilities
- Demand management for car parking

Medium-term action plan (beyond 2025):

- Underpass environment improvements
- Bus priority measures on key streets

- Developing proposals for commercial uses in the gateway area

In 2017 the Government published its first Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy with an ambition to make walking and cycling the natural choices for shorter journeys. The *Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)* is a document used to implement the strategy at a local level.

Stevenage's LCWIP sets out a network of preferred and future routes for walking and cycling in the borough and identifies a programme of infrastructure improvement priorities to guide future works and investment.

The emerging *Stevenage Sustainable Travel Town Implementation Plan* forms part of Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan and aims to increase the number of people walking, cycling and using public transport. The key difference from previous initiatives is that the Sustainable Travel Town will fully integrate behavioural change techniques with infrastructure improvements so that new facilities are fully utilised. It is anticipated that the establishment of behaviour change programme and the delivery of much of the required infrastructure will be delivered within a 4-to-5-year period. However, it is essential that mechanisms are put in place to ensure the longevity of the measures.

Stevenage Borough Council was one of nine organisations who applied to be part of the programme. This bid was one of three which were shortlisted, and then subsequently entered into the programme.

The overall vision for the Stevenage Sustainable Travel Town is to enable the delivery of the growth plans set out in the Local Plan (2019) whilst maintaining the attractiveness of the town for residents and business. This requires a major shift of journeys from the car to active and public transport. The objectives are taken from Stevenage Borough Council's submission to the Sustainable Travel Town programme:

- Enable the delivery of housing proposals within the Local Plan by providing a modal shift in vehicle use.
- Enable the delivery of town centre regeneration proposals within the Local Plan by providing a modal shift in vehicle use.
- Aid the retention of significant national and international companies in the town by helping to maintain and improve the attraction of Stevenage as a location for businesses.
- Help to achieve truly sustainable transport in the town and establish Stevenage as a leader in sustainable development.
- Help to reinstate the town's original New Town design objectives and help to achieve a sense of place in Stevenage as an active community.
- Help to reinstate the town's original New Town design objectives and help to achieve a sense of place in Stevenage as a healthy community.

03 Setting the Context

The Heart of the Town Centre?

The area around Stevenage railway station is a key location in the centre of the town. It forms the western edge of the traditional town centre 'box' as imagined by the New Town masterplan, and is the first place that many visitors and commuters see.

As Stevenage expands and regenerates in the future, the town centre will expand. The Stevenage Central Regeneration Framework envisages an expansion of the 'box' to encompass land west of the railway, extending towards the Airbus site and taking in intensification of the Leisure Park across the railway tracks. As a result, the station area will move to being at the heart of the town centre, a critical movement node east-west, and one of the best-connected places in the town.

The Local Plan identifies (Policy TC4) a proposal for a radically improved new Stevenage railway station, with National Rail having plans for a 5th platform, as part of a broader central area regeneration scheme. The Local Plan Inspector's Report suggested that the railway station be extended as well as regenerated.

From wide engagement with businesses and developers there is an opportunity to significantly enhance this part of the town centre and to enhance east-west connectivity.

The area is thus a key strategic brownfield site opportunity, linking east – west movement. It is a key arrival point for business and visitors, and sits at the heart of the sustainable travel network. Effective use of the land is thus essential to create new employment capacity and jobs, as well as ensure it becomes an attractive and vibrant place in its own right, welcoming people to Stevenage.

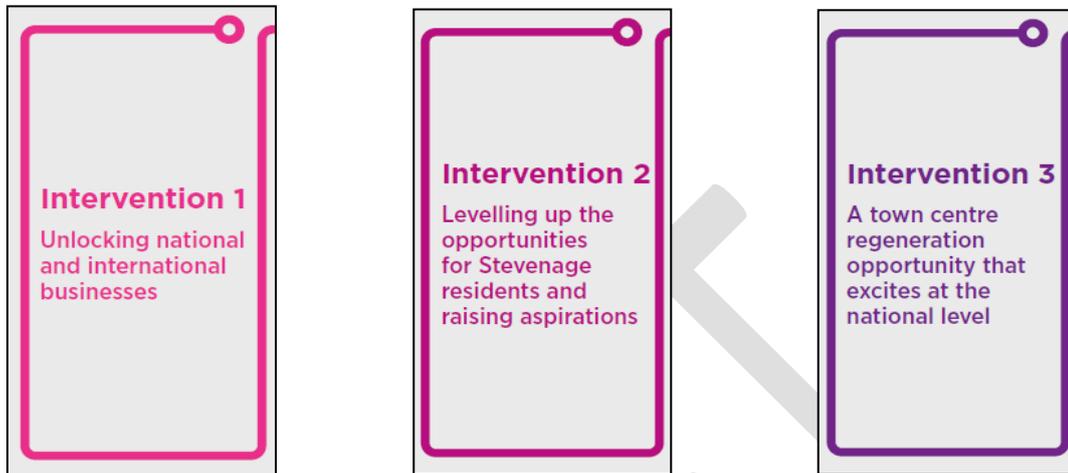
Investment in the Station Gateway



Much of the town's original New Town infrastructure has aged, leaving facilities that are no longer fit for purpose for the town's businesses and residents. The Gateway provides an opportunity to address this and to transform an area characterised by roads, surface level car parking and poor-quality

buildings into a new thriving commercial and residential quarter for the town. Stevenage Borough Council has secured:

- £6m land release via a new Multi Storey Car Park
- £500k for masterplanning



The Four 'Big Moves'



Planning for the future – long-term

- Developing a long-term, 10–15 year long planning policy to enable development – via an Area Action Plan
- Developing more detailed masterplan options for how land can be used, attracting investors, and engaging Network Rail

Enabling the Gateway in the shorter-term

- Delivering projects that create an enhanced Gateway and release land
- Consolidation of surface level car parking to release land
- Creating a high-quality public transport interchange

The Site

The selected Stevenage Station Gateway AAP area is tightly defined. It abuts the railway land/tracks and includes the dual carriageway of Lytton Way. The ambitious regeneration plans for Stevenage Central anticipated that Lytton Way would largely be redeveloped as part of a major reorganisation of the town's distributor road network.

Most of the site is currently occupied by surface level car parks which largely serve commuters using Stevenage Station. The constrained nature of the site limits both the volume of building which can be accommodated, the range of uses and how the buildings are organised on site.

The site, designated as TC4 in the Local Plan, is approximately 440m from north to south, and varies between 100m wide at the northern end, to 55m at the station entrance. The total site area is about 3ha. The site is oriented roughly north-south, and is situated to the west of the main part of Stevenage town centre.

The boundary of Local Plan Policy TC4 includes the two sites that form the Gordon Craig Theatre / Stevenage Arts & Leisure Centre and proposed new Bus Station development. These sites, current developments and future proposals regarding them are considered in the context of this Area Action Plan but not included for the purposes of the Area Action Plan boundary.

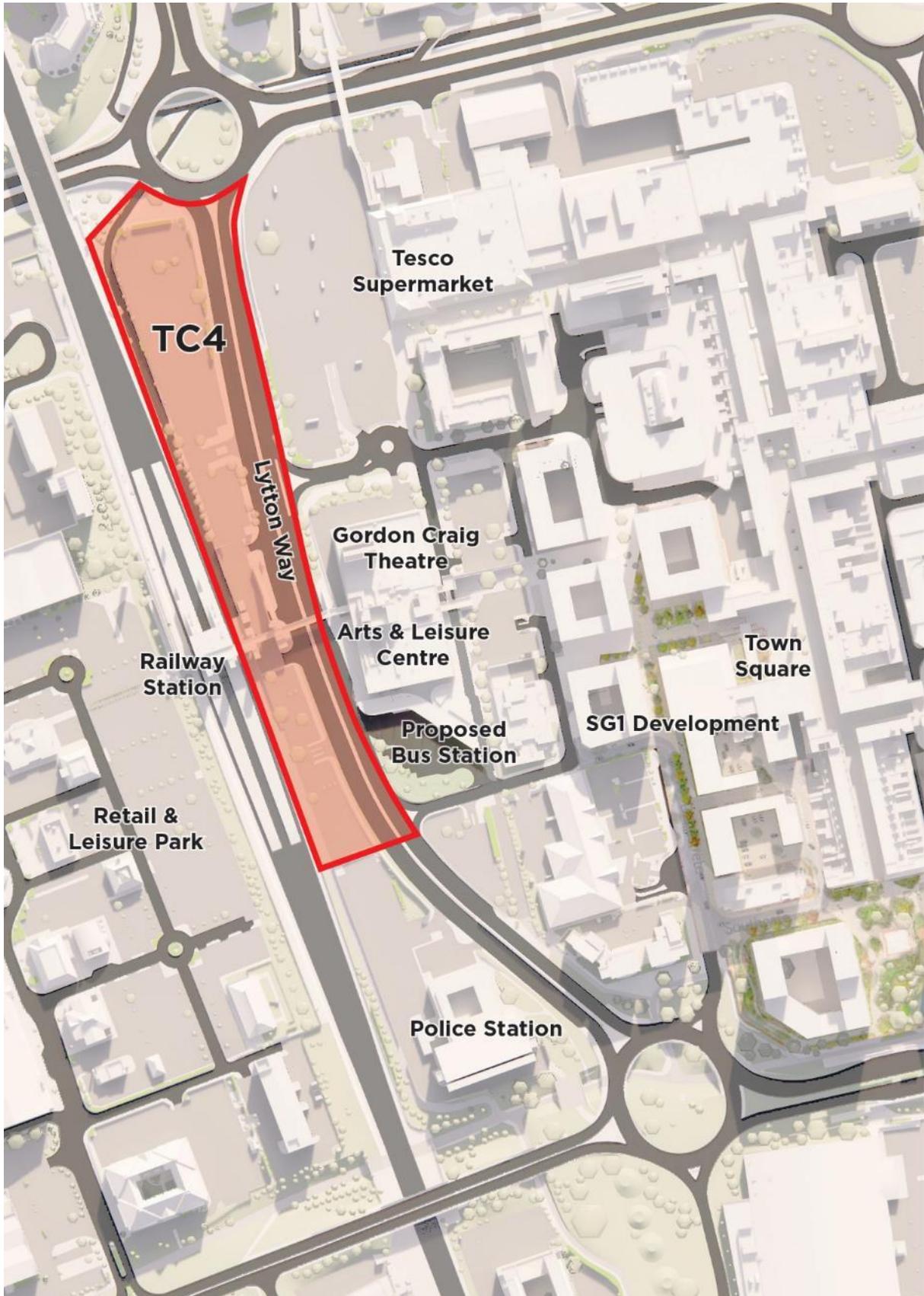


Figure 3: Site plan showing TC4 area and selected nearby locations

The Opportunity

What can a modern station and station area be?

Many stations have historically been located at the edge of historic town centres – they were built at the urban edge in the 19th Century. On the far side of the tracks, industrial uses that needed good access to the rail network were often built, or there was marginal land around flood plains. This pattern was repeated in many of the New Towns built post-war, such as in Stevenage. This approach worked when most people lived and worked in the same town, using the station occasionally. In the modern era, intercity connectivity is essential to creating a vibrant, connected, knowledge-based economy such as that seen in Stevenage. Stations are now hubs of development, with pressures to create housing, office space, retail and other commercial space. Without a comprehensive masterplan, the fundamentals of the rail station – that of an accessible transport interchange – can be compromised.

Stations must:

- Be the centre of movement: efficient multi-modal interchanges between all modes of transport, with sustainable modes prioritised;
- Support inclusive growth: responding to the particular needs of their location – for example needs for affordable housing, better commercial space, or regeneration schemes;
- Be at the heart of healthy communities: by making it easy for people to choose active modes of travel at the core of a healthy network, and creating spaces that include nature and prioritise physical and mental health.

Stations are often severing points in the urban fabric – an edge. By turning the station into a public place with a wide and accessible pedestrian bridge, it becomes a link or node to focus around. As the gateway to a place, it forms an essential first impression for visitors, and serves as a reminder to regular users that their town is an attractive, thriving and people-focused place every time they use it.

In the context of Stevenage, the area around the station is a key location for economic competitiveness. Locations a similar time distance away from London terminals are seeing considerable commercial growth, such as Reading, Slough, Milton Keynes and Croydon. Stevenage is perfectly placed in terms of mobility, and already hosts major international companies. Only 20 minutes from the major Kings Cross development and the business area around Farringdon (where Thameslink and Crossrail will interchange), the opportunity to establish a significant business environment adjacent to the station is considerable.

Although the development opportunity is clear, the route towards it requires the creation of a more people-friendly place than currently exists. Creating an attractive, healthy, memorable and enjoyable place will provide the seeds for high quality mixed-use development to come forward and make the most of the station area, and contribute widely across the town.



Figure 4: Recent station area transformation precedents - clockwise from top left: Oxford, Reading, Sheffield, Slough, Utrecht (Netherlands), Wakefield Westgate

The Policy and Political Context

Rail transport in the UK has seen enormous growth in recent decades, driven by a combination of increases in commuting due to house price rises, concentrations of jobs in hubs like the City of London, leisure travel and a demand for more sustainable modes of travel. The COVID-19 pandemic created significant uncertainty about future patterns of rail travel, it remains clear that demand for rapid, sustainable rail travel will be a feature of our medium and long-term mobility future.

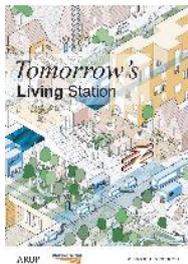
Looking to the future, the Transport Secretary laid out further plans to transform the country's transport infrastructure to help the country 'build out' of COVID-19, supporting the nation's economy, and delivering on the government's key agenda of levelling up the country.

The Government has recently favoured development around stations, in particular for disabled passengers and improving access where possible. The intention is for funding to be made available at a large number of train stations around the UK to make them more accessible. Initiatives will include incorporating accessible toilets and customer information screens, as well as new lifts. This forms a key element of levelling up access for disabled people to transport and opening up opportunities for all.

A range of publications set out government policy and best practice thinking which touch upon the themes and objectives to be developed within Stevenage station area.



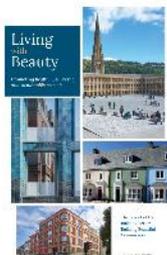
Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge is a report from the DfT which sets out that in the future active and public transport will be the first choice of transport for most journeys. This will form the basis of the forthcoming transport strategy from the DfT. This is an ambitious and unprecedented document, and gives high-level support for Stevenage’s transport strategy and sustainable mobility interventions around the railway station.



Tomorrow's Living Station, a report for Network Rail, envisages railways stations as more than just access points to the rail network, but thriving multi-modal interchanges and mixed-use places, integrated into their communities and responding to their needs.



Our Principles of Good Design by Network Rail, and the Design Council’s *Think Station* report outline core design principles for stations as modern multi-modal travel hubs. Responsiveness to local needs, local context and heritage are important, but good access and excellent mobility functionality are also emphasised.



Building Better, Building Beautiful is a report to MHCLG which will inform the upcoming Planning White Paper and revisions to the National Design Guide. It recommends good design and placemaking principles. Although primarily focused on residential developments, it is clear that mixed-use places with a focus on regeneration are essential to creating better towns and cities, based on a ‘triangle’ of housing, nature and infrastructure. Brownfield sites should be prioritised, and nature given a place in urban areas.



The High Street Report was the underpinnings of the High Street Task Force, within MHCLG. The report recommended a number of approaches to revitalising Britain's town centres for future resilience. These include a better balance of office, retail and residential space, increased town centre residential populations, and more creative provision of facilities in town centres.

MHCLG has supported a range of station-led development opportunities, such as those at York, Taunton and Swindon. The *National Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2016-2021* highlights that the Homes and Communities Agency (now Homes England) will work with local authorities and Network Rail to bring forward land around stations for housing, commercial development and regeneration.

Recent court decisions on the climate change impact of infrastructure decisions (such as at Heathrow, and a pending case on the government's road expansion scheme), provide a concrete basis for prioritising sustainable transport over cars. Stevenage Borough Council has declared a climate emergency and vowed to reduce carbon emissions, and a recent study found that Stevenage is one of the worst 10 cities in the UK for air pollution, relative to its size and population.

The Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has seen significant disruption to the economy and changes to people's lifestyles. It is clear that some of this disruption will drive lasting change in how we use and view the urban areas in which we live. Although it is too early to predict these lasting changes comprehensively, some principles of urban design have come to the fore more recently.

In the future it is clear that new development must consider the importance of:

- Local services, shops, healthcare provision and social care
- Provision of space for pedestrians for walking, queueing and socialising
- Comprehensive active travel provision to enable us to get around safely
- Access to networks of open space and integration of nature into streets
- A focus on improving air quality
- Safe spaces for socialising, play and recreation
- Potential demand for larger offices to accommodate distanced desks
- Potential shift to more collaborative spaces including meeting rooms, break out spaces and more reliance on home working
- 'Local working' hubs with good digital connectivity

An important consideration for Stevenage relates to the nature of some of the town's high-tech bioscience and engineering industries. This means that a large number of workers still need to travel to Stevenage to access, for example, laboratory and workshop spaces.

Much media coverage has focused on short-term interventions that local authorities are making to ensure streets are safe for pedestrians and cyclists. These are vital safety measures, but consideration should be given to temporary measures that have other benefits and can be made improved and made permanent in the future. Stevenage already has cycling and walking

infrastructure in place which can be positively utilised. In the context of Stevenage's station area, such measures include priority for active travel and improving conflict point safety, as well as increasing space allocated to pedestrians and people versus that allocated to private vehicles.

The impact of COVID-19 on rail travel is still uncertain. It seems likely that we will see less peak-time travel in the future, reducing the pressure on rush-hour services as more people work from home or stagger their working hours. Rail demand is starting to return to comparable levels as the economy and situation return to normal in the medium to long term, but potentially spread throughout the day.

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04 Issues and Challenges

Our analysis has divided the issues within the TC4 station area boundary into three categories; experiential issues, functional issues and development issues. Although there is overlap between them, this forms a useful framework for understanding the main challenges to be addressed.

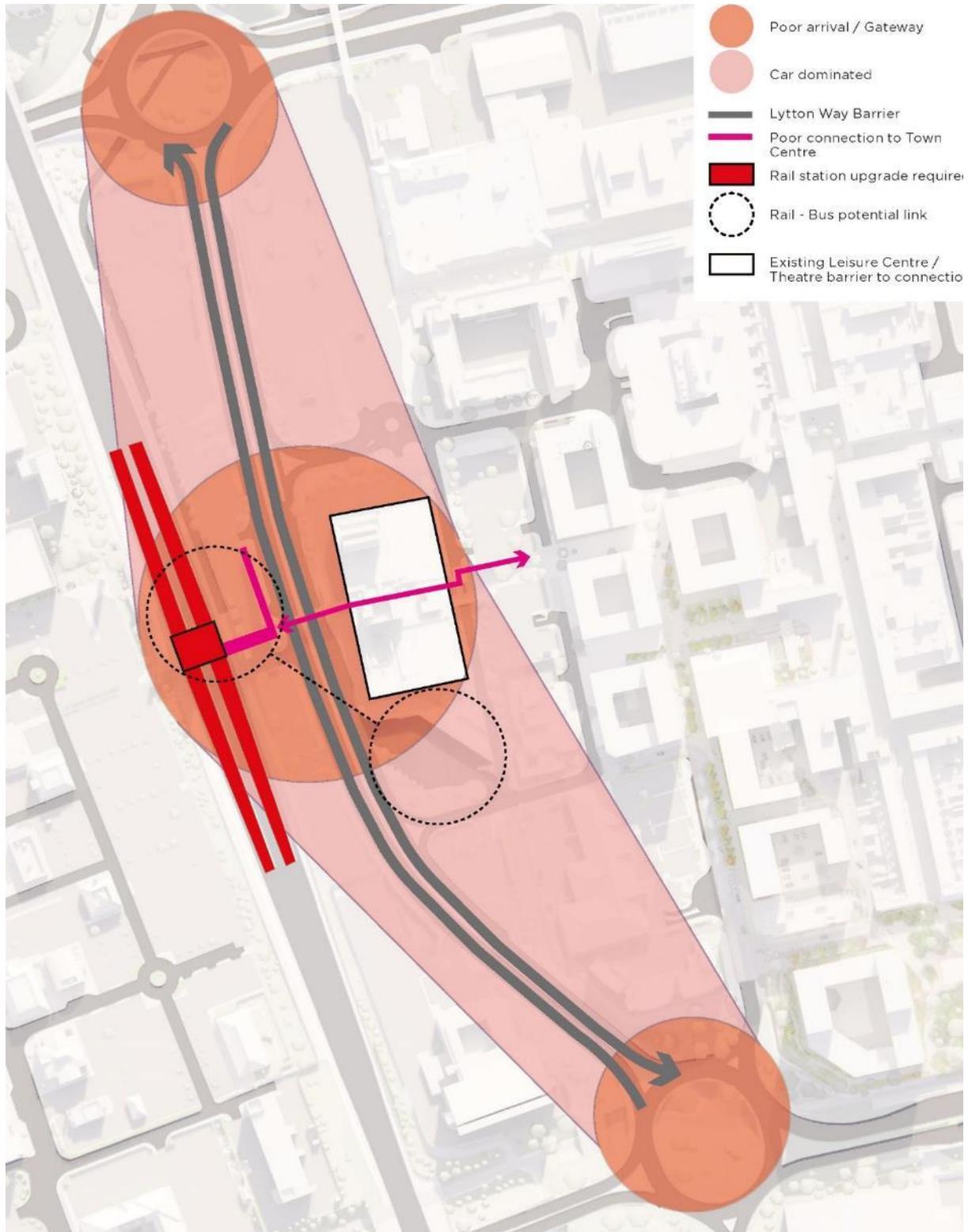


Figure 5: Issues and challenges in the station area

The Experience

The experience of arrival forms an important first impression of a place. Areas around railway stations have to work especially hard, due to their need to integrate considerable transport infrastructure and be highly functional places for a variety of user groups. However, this does not require them to be unattractive, and a great many station environs are beautiful, bustling and interesting places that give the visitor and local alike a representative impression of the town they have just arrived at.

Project for Public Spaces, a respected US non-profit organisation, has published research on 'what makes a great place'? The four key themes work together to create places and spaces that people enjoy and want to go back to. Fulfilling these themes will be an essential part of creating a better station area experience in Stevenage, unlocking development opportunities, better functionality, and a new part of the town centre.

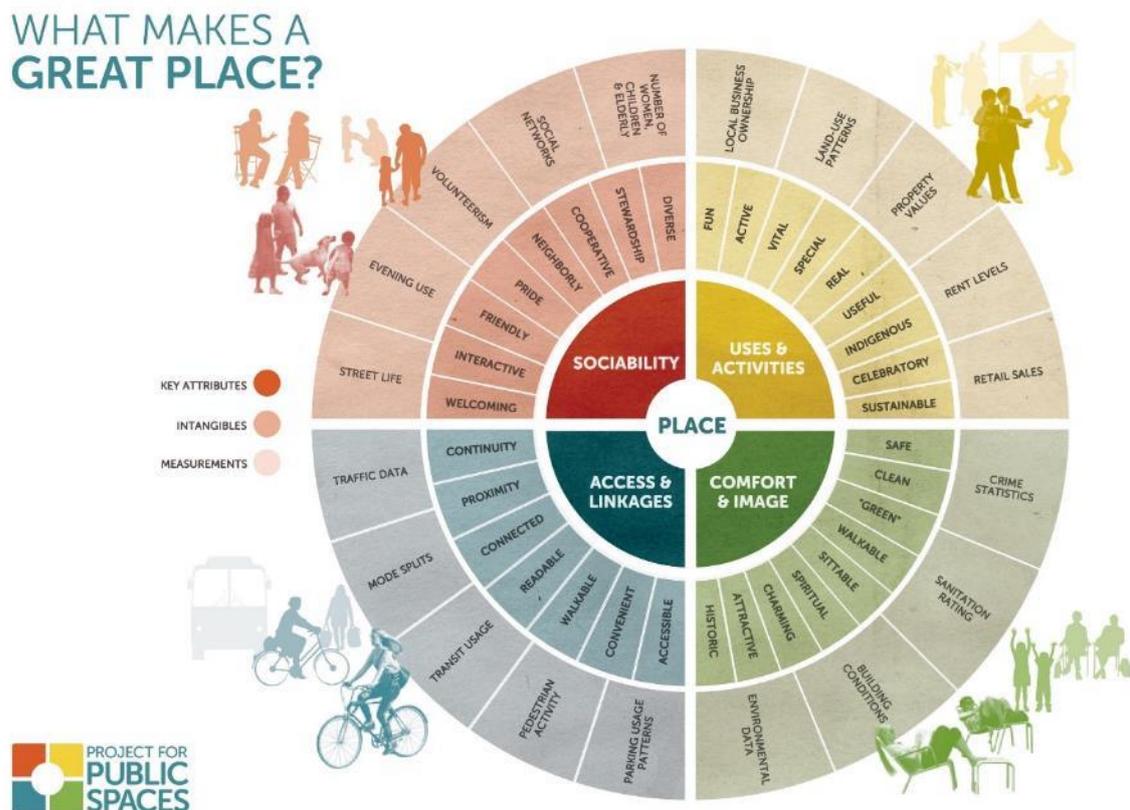


Figure 6: The attributes, intangibles and measurements for a great place (Project for Public Spaces)

The area around Stevenage station is compromised by:

- Poor access and linkages for pedestrians and over-dominant car infrastructure
- Few uses and activities beyond the station and associated car parking
- Unattractive public realm and landscaping, giving little comfort and a poor image
- No opportunity for street life, connections between people or other sociability

This adds up to a poor arrival experience for anyone visiting Stevenage, a disinviting front door for the town and it results in a 'non-place'.

Lytton Way – an ‘Urban Motorway’



Figure 7: View of Lytton Way from south



Figure 8: View of Lytton Way from north

The overriding driver for this poor experience is the presence of Lytton Way, a wide dual carriageway mostly segregated from pedestrians that takes up a great deal of land. It does not function as an urban street that could host other uses and development along it to create an attractive and enjoyable place.

The downgrading and potential removal of Lytton Way for through traffic represents a major principle of the Stevenage Central Framework. A key focus of the Area Action Plan must be implementation strategies for a reduction in the scale of, and a change in character of Lytton Way to create a high quality, functional and successful environment.

The northern and southern entrances to the station area along Lytton Way are similarly poor, with large roundabouts and highway infrastructure creating an environment hostile to pedestrians. The cycling underpasses that run underneath the roundabouts are wide but lack overlooking and could be perceived as unsafe.

Landscaping and Public Realm Quality

The AAP area suffers from a public realm that is car-dominated and uses predominantly tarmac and other highway surfacing materials. What landscaping is present is limited to buffer strips of grass, and towards the northern and southern ends of the area, some areas with trees. Street trees are present within the car parks but are surrounded by tarmac surfacing. As a result the public realm is a poor environment for anyone not in a car.

Monofunctional and Lacking Uses

At present the station area is a place of transit and only hosts the railway station as a use. Other than crossing the bridge to the retail park (which is amply provided with car parking), there is little other reason to be in the area other than the station. This results in little human activity on the streets, compounding safety issues, and a lack of interest and attraction.

The Arts & Leisure Centre complex presents a blank edge towards the station and does not contribute street activity towards the street. Uses adjacent to the northern and southern ends such as the supermarket and the police station are surrounded by surface car parking.

Functional Issues

Compounding the experiential issues associated with the station environment are a range of functional issues, where the station area could work better for a wide variety of users.

At its heart, a station and its immediate area must function as a transport interchange and mobility hub, smoothly and safely allowing users of all modes of transport to arrive, leave, interchange between modes and find their onward connections. The current station area could perform significantly better than it currently does.

Poor connectivity to the town centre

At present there are three legible pedestrian connections between the AAP area and the town centre – the overbridge through the Arts & Leisure Centre, Danesgate and Swingate. The latter two are surface streets and cannot be reached from the station itself without crossing Lytton Way, which is not possible due to a lack of pedestrian crossings and a barrier in the centre of the dual carriageway. As a result the only real route is the bridge, which runs directly through the station. Although this is a direct route, it then drops into a surface car park which provides a poor entrance to the town. Other issues include barriers for cyclists from the town centre to the train station and the station lift is not DDA compliant, is badly maintained and causes issues for disabled people. The new Bus Interchange does seek to create an at-level crossing to help break the ring road and therefore a good opportunity. A clearer, active and attractive route into the town square from the station is something that should be enabled by the AAP.

A barrier to east-west movement

The station area is currently configured as an 'edge' to the town centre, with a single constrained pedestrian connection through the rail station towards the Leisure Park to the west. This constrained connection discourages movement across the railway tracks. Coupled with the poor quality of north-south pedestrian movement and barriers for cyclists through the AAP area, the land is poorly used due to this edge placement.

To realise the aims of the Central Regeneration Framework with the station area as a central node and place within the expanded town centre, a reconfiguration of movement through the area is required. Better connections east-to-west, with the intention of providing a clear pedestrian link all the way from the current town centre to Gunnels Wood Road, require a change to land use and road space allocation outside the station.

Little support for active modes

The station is connected to Stevenage's extensive segregated cycle path network, and hosts 194 cycle parking spaces, which are well used. There is, however, limited space to expand the cycle provision due to site constraints. The Stevenage Cycle Strategy Action Plan calls for additional spaces at the station. Although there is CCTV, bicycle theft remains an issue, the current facilities are only partially covered, and are constricted in space, conflicting with pedestrian movements on pavements. To support Stevenage's ambitious cycle strategy, and build on the New Town legacy of

Stevenage as a town built for the bicycle, modern, safe and secure cycle facilities must be provided so that station users can easily interchange between local cycle mobility and regional rail mobility.

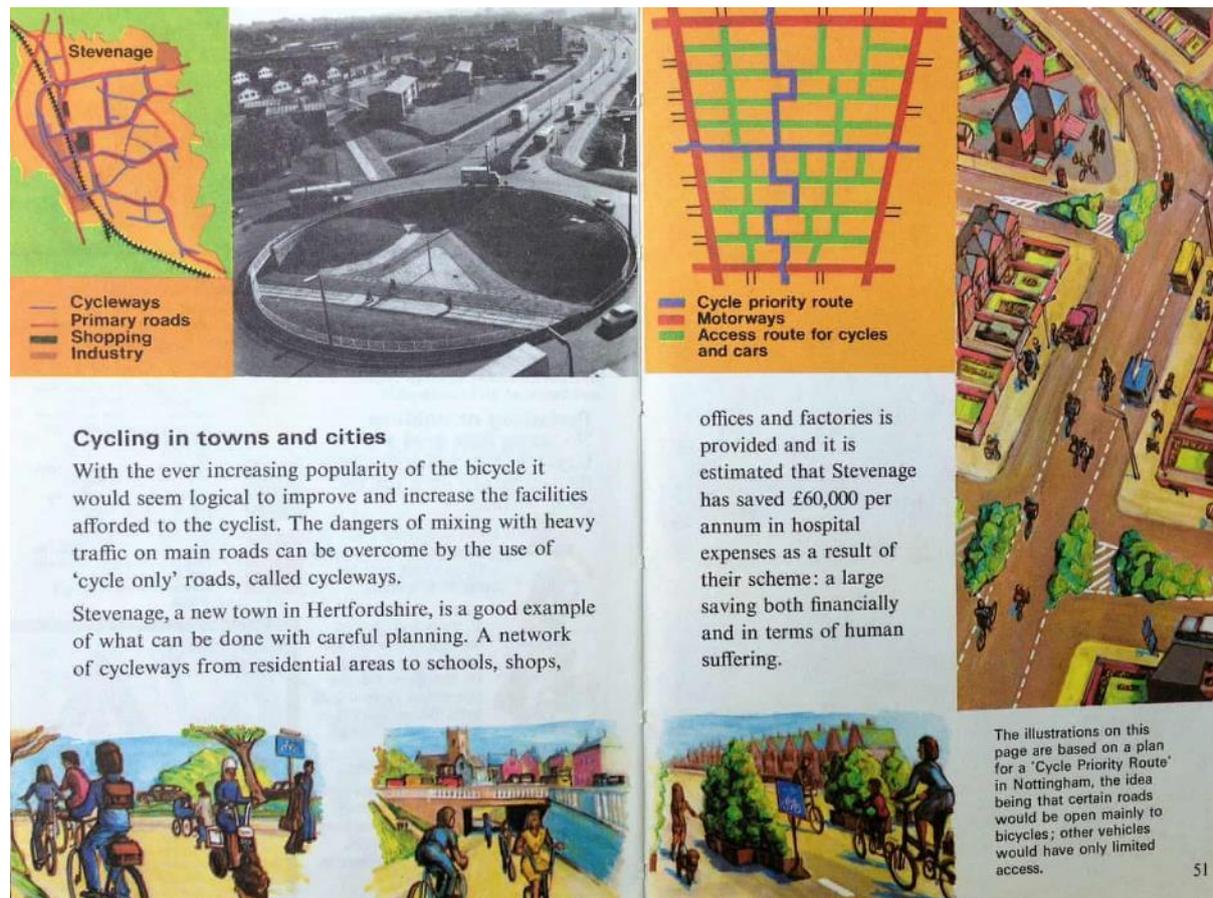


Figure 9: Ladybird book about cycling lauding Stevenage's planning

Walking to and from the station is also more difficult than it needs to be. Footpaths are narrow, and the main route from the town centre runs across a narrow bridge through the Arts & Leisure Centre complex and above Lytton Way. Although this bridge runs down a ramp by the time it arrives in the town square, this does restrict accessibility and requires all users of the station area to climb a level to access the gate lines. Although the route via the bridge is rather utilitarian, it does provide clear and easy access between the station and town centre for the majority of users. It is essential that this route is retained until a high-quality alternative has been provided.

It is vital to improve the station-area environment for active travel modes. As shown in Figure 10, accessibility analysis indicates that the majority of Stevenage is within a 15-minute cycling catchment of the station (around 85 – 90,000 people), and this catchment is increased with the use of electric bicycles. A significant fraction, approximately 45 – 50,000 people, are within 10 minutes cycle ride.



Figure 10: Accessibility isochrones with population enclosed figures (2011) for cycling and e-bike modes

A station in need of an upgrade

Stevenage rail station is one of the three busiest stations in Hertfordshire (along with St Albans and Watford) and is a major stop on the East Coast Main Line. Built in the 1970s, the station buildings are no longer able to adequately cope with the level of passenger traffic through them. With the building of a new terminating platform, and the potential long-term for additional public through traffic using the station bridge to access development on the western side of the tracks, a new station building is necessary.



Figure 11: View of 'The Square' from Arup's Rail Station Vision Study

In 2017 Arup completed a study on different options for a new railway station, based on the parameters set in the Stevenage Central Framework. This reinforced the framework's core principles and the study forms the basis of an understanding for how a new station might interface with the surrounding area. The Arup study found that a new station built on an overbridge to the south of the existing station buildings would be the strongest option. This new axis would align with the Mace SG1 masterplan route into the town centre and the entrance to the new bus station.

Policy TC4 of the Stevenage Local Plan states that within the Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area, planning permission will be granted for an extended and regenerated train station. It is uncertain when a new station would be forthcoming, so it will be necessary for the AAP to include phasing options, which provide future-proofing for accommodating the existing station and the new station, as well as responding to and setting key parameters for a new station building.

Constricted space – except for cars

The area in front of the station is extremely constricted at ground level for any user other than vehicles. There is little pedestrian space for movement along Lytton Way, particularly outside the station where pavements become cramped and filled with street furniture. Pavements have been reallocated as parking space for bicycles, scooters and motorcycles, and also function as waiting areas for cramped bus stops.



Figure 12: Public realm colonised by cramped motorcycle parking



Figure 13: Walking, cycle parking, bus stop and other street furniture in a small space

Much pedestrian movement occurs on the first floor level, leaving ground level unoccupied except for essential use.

Contrasting this cramped environment for many users is the extensive space given over to vehicles, in carriageway space, slip lanes and car parking. This creates a very large and over-scaled space with underused land.

Safety Issues

A range of safety issues present themselves within the station area. Stations are used day and night, and the area surrounding them must perform the basic function of providing safety and reassurance at all hours. Poor overlooking and passive surveillance of the ground level leads to a perception of a lack of safety, particularly when dark. Cycle paths are also isolated and poorly overlooked. A lack of uses fronting the space other than the rail station, where dwell times are typically low as a place of transit, means there are generally few people about.

The dominance of road infrastructure, with high traffic speeds, no crossing points and barrier fencing down the central reservation creates road safety issues where pedestrians and cyclists are unable to safely navigate the environment.

Accessibility Issues

A single, non-Equalities Act-compliant lift is the only alternative to the stairs to get to concourse level from Lytton Way. This poses frequent challenges and difficulties for wheelchair users, parents with pushchairs, the elderly and infirm.

Regarding the road bridge, there are issues in terms of future access. The step grade drop needs to form part of the proposed solutions in the Area Action Plan.

Accessibility issues raised during the Issues and Options consultation included:

- Further distance for the elderly to walk from the new bus station to the town centre;
- Impacts on access to Tesco, to the north and east of the area and if Lytton Way is reduced;
- Poor use of the ramp and the lift at the station is not DDA compliant;
- For workers, access to the railway station for services is vital;
- General issues with ground level access to the town centre and bus station, especially for disabled people and more disabled parking is required.

Development Issues

The station area should also be a key location for a range of land uses, particularly commercial space and high density residential buildings, building on the excellent sustainable mobility options. At present, however, the land around the station is used primarily for surface car parking. The key piece of land between Lytton Way and the railway tracks is too constricted in width to accommodate typical commercial or residential developments, and the street environment is too poor to support an attractive, walkable place within which to site new development.



Figure 14: Station Hill development in Reading



Figure 15: Station Quarter, Slough



Figure 16: Ruskin Square, East Croydon



Figure 17: New Santander HQ adjacent to Milton Keynes rail station

The area around the station is a key location for economic competitiveness. Locations a similar time distance away from London terminals are seeing considerable commercial growth, such as Reading, Slough, Milton Keynes and Croydon. Stevenage is perfectly placed in terms of mobility, and already hosts major international companies. Only 20 minutes from the major Kings Cross development and

the business area around Farringdon (where Thameslink and Crossrail will interchange), the opportunity to establish a significant business environment adjacent to the station is considerable.

As a result, this piece of land is valuable for the town and the wider region, and should be more intensively used than it currently is.

Immediately fronting the station is the existing Arts & Leisure Centre and Gordon Craig Theatre complex, with a high-level walkway running through. It is anticipated that this will remain for the foreseeable future, although the Arts & Leisure Centre part may be moved in the medium-term. As such provision should be made in any options for the area to work well with a fully retained or only half-retained building.

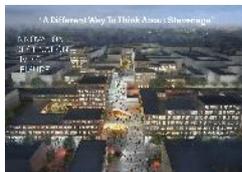
Responding to existing work

A significant amount of previous planning and design work has gone on in Stevenage town centre, including the railway station AAP area. The AAP will build upon this work. Much of the previous work undertaken builds in core principles and creates underlying flexibility for future detailed plans to work within.



Stevenage Central Framework (DLA, 2016)

This work established the core principles of movement between the station and town centre, key development sites such as the station, and the principle of removing Lytton Way as a part of the ring road system. It also established the principle of more intensive development to the west of the railway tracks, using the station as a node.



Rail Station Vision (Arup, 2017)

This study was developed by Arup, as Government advisors. It looked at high-level, urban design options for a new station and how it would interface with the immediate surrounds. All options considered had their merits and there was positive engagement with a wide range of stakeholders. As such the parameters established are key to design options within the AAP area.

The preferred option in the report is **The Square**, and this is the option worked up in detail. Other options in the report sought to reduce any day to day disruption for commuters and rail operators.

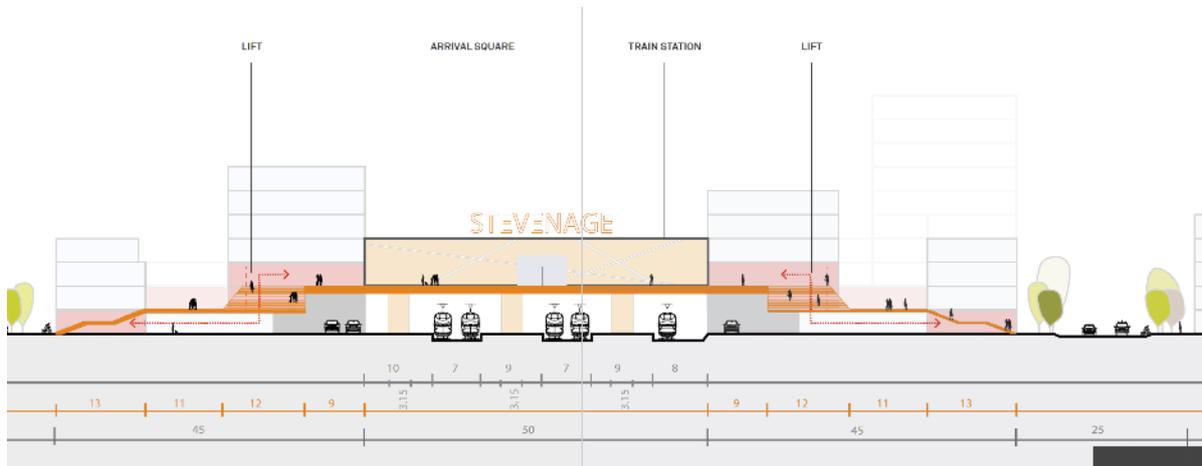


Figure 18: Section of preferred option for new railway station

The design work establishes core parameters to respond to:

- Steps to access the bridge, with a lift to provide step-free access
- Stairways approx. 12m wide at top
- Lift accessed through passage next to retail space
- Bridge at +7m from existing ground level
- Space at +3.5m, which provides access into interior courts at first storey level
- Public right of way across bridge, with entrance and ticket line for station on the bridge above the tracks



Figure 19: Renders of proposed new station

Although this is a long-term vision of how the station could be configured, in the short and medium-term, the design presents some issues for the AAP to respond to:

- The detailed design presented relies upon the removal of the existing Arts & Leisure Centre complex, to re-route the centreline of Lytton Way across that site. At present this is not considered feasible for SBC, so an alternative configuration must be found
- The taxi and drop-off areas ('kiss and ride') are located on the western side of the station. Although this is a long-term option, the AAP area does not include this land and must include taxi and drop-off movements within its boundaries in order to retain that function
- The steps of the bridge on the eastern side run towards the existing Arts & Leisure Centre and miss the opportunity to align with the routing past the bus station and into town that responds to the Mace SG1 masterplan (see below). The Arts & Leisure Centre building is likely to be redeveloped in the future, allowing for a potential at-grade crossing and making the bridge a secondary form of access.

As such the rail station vision provides core principles and parameters to respond to, but is not at present able to form a detailed spatial plan for the centre of the AAP area immediately adjacent to the station. Further detail will be required on configuration of spaces, streets and different mobility modes in the AAP.

The AAP's spatial proposals will reserve a site for a potential new station or enhanced station entrance, following the parameters set out in Arup's work. Reserving a site in planning policy terms ensures that present-day development and proposals do not prejudice future developments to provide a new or enhanced station. Without this approach a considerable and needed improvement for the town could be prevented, and an opportunity lost.

SG1 Masterplan (Mace, 2018)



Figure 20: SG1 masterplan from Design & Access Statement (2019)

The emerging SG1 masterplan (Mace, 2018), proposes the main station-to-town pedestrian route is placed one block to the south of that in the Framework. This aligns with the front of the Arts & Leisure Centre, past the proposed bus station, and then sets up the potential to align with a new railway station building built to the south of the existing station. It will be important to ensure that desire lines are observed between the Mace Boulevard, leading to the Town Square and towards the Station are as direct as possible and maintain visual connection as much as possible.

Issues and Options Consultation (July – September 2021)

*Summarise from Consultation Statement / Exec Report February 2022 – possibly include as an Appendix to this report.

05 Existing and Emerging Environment

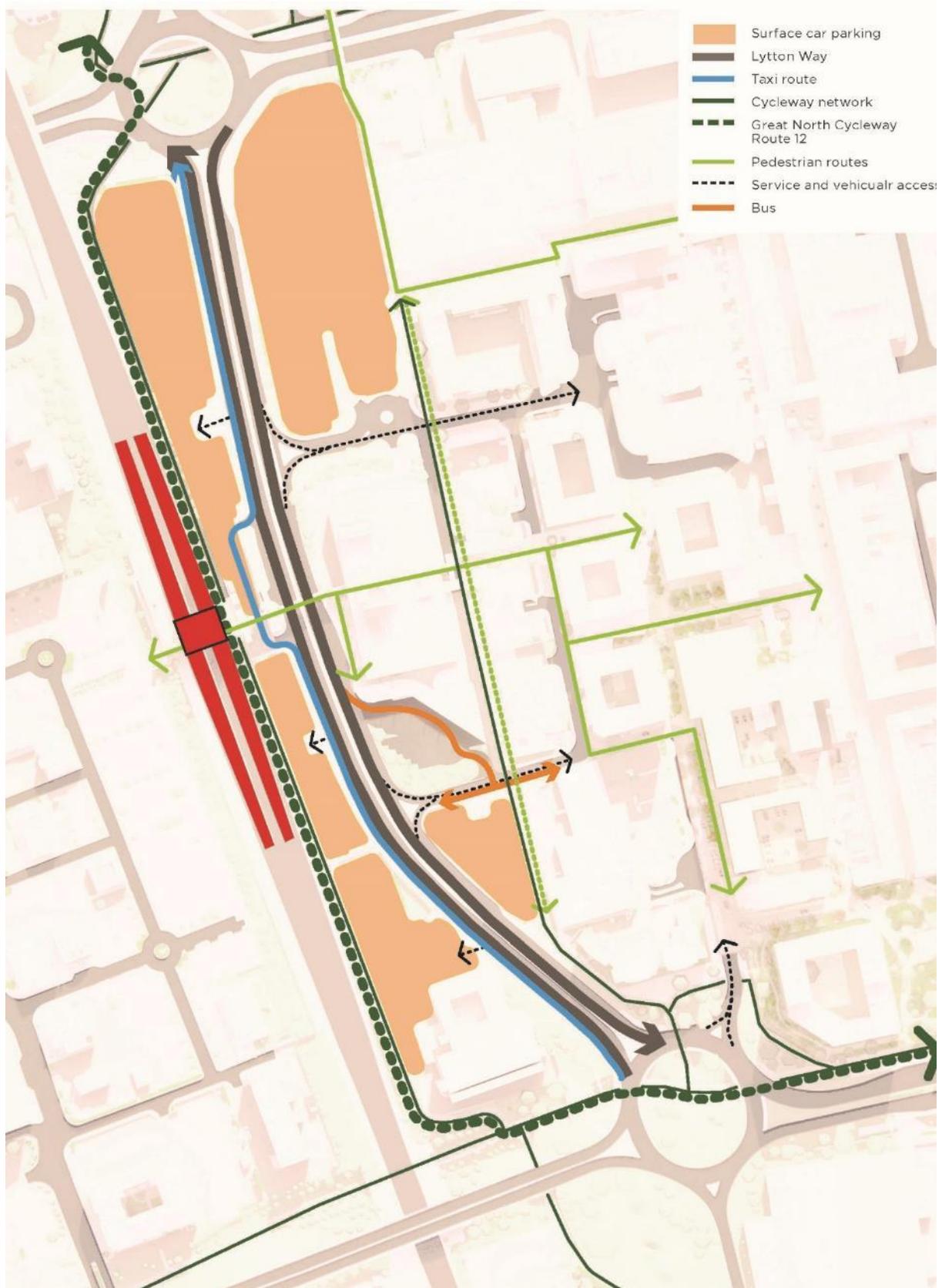


Figure 21: Current environment showing movement and land uses

Existing Land Uses

At present the following land uses exist:

- Railway station and associated bridge, access and entrance buildings
- Existing cycleway
- Surface car parking for the station
- Lytton Way highways infrastructure
- Some buffer green space

Adjacent to the TC4 area is:

- The Gordon Craig Theatre
- Stevenage Arts & Leisure Centre
- Stevenage Police Station
- Tesco supermarket
- Stevenage Magistrates' Court

The new bus station "Stevenage Interchange" was opened on 26 June 2022 and falls within the AAP area directly to the south of the Arts & Leisure Centre on the existing car park.

Existing Movement

At present a range of different mobility modes cross the area, as shown in Figure XX.

- Pedestrians: an incomplete network of pedestrian links creates a fragmented environment that is difficult to navigate on foot
- Cyclists: the main cycle path runs north-to-south along the railway line edge and through the underpasses at the northern and southern ends of Lytton Way
- Buses: buses currently run north-to-south along Lytton Way and enter the central bus station along Danesgate. There is a bus stop outside the railway station which is constricted in waiting space and must be accessed via the footbridge. The new bus station will occupy space in front of the Arts & Leisure Centre and it is anticipated in the short term that the existing bus loop along Danesgate will be shortened to not include the old bus station.
- Taxis and Drop Off: taxis drop off directly outside the station in a combined taxi and public drop-off area. This is very constricted and lacks much space for waiting taxis. It also encourages public drop-off to block the area due to lack of space.
- Parking: there is extensive surface car parking across the TC4 area and it forms the dominant land use. There are a total of 453 surface public car parking spaces within the boundary, along with additional space in a very constricted car park for station staff directly adjacent to the station.
- Servicing: service accesses to the station and neighbouring land uses come from Lytton Way.
- At-grade crossing: as part of the development of the new bus station "Stevenage Interchange", a new at-grade crossing has been constructed across Lytton Way, immediately south of the pedestrian overbridge.

Although the New Town masterplanning approach promoted separation of traffic modes, there are a number of conflict points between cars and active modes, particularly at the station entrance. There are also issues where cars take priority over pedestrians and force more circuitous routes than necessary. Pedestrian flows are expected to change upon completion of the new bus station.

Level access across the station area is a particular challenge posed by the topography of the Station Gateway site as a whole and may pose some development and mobility issues to address.

It would be useful to conduct a further review of the routes that people use to walk and cycle to and from the station so that a proper assessment can be made of the adequacy of existing routes.

Existing Green Infrastructure

The site contains little green infrastructure (GI) at present, except for highway verges and verges within surface car parking. At the northern end, there is some landscaping and grass adjacent to the roundabout on Lytton Way. Within the car parks, there are some trees that break up the parking.

The new bus station provides some enhancement of GI with trees and grass at the southern edge.



Figure 22: New bus station adjacent to Arts & Leisure Centre

Current and Recent Developments

Towns Fund: Station Gateway

The Towns Fund project on the Station Gateway involves the delivery of the Multi-Storey Car Park (MSCP) as part of a sustainable transport interchange on the Stevenage North railway car park. The project was being led by the Council and was funded through £6.5 million from the Towns Fund and £3.5 million direct match funding from Stevenage Borough Council and Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. The land was owned by the council and the match funding / investment element would be subject to a separate business plan to be considered by the decision-making committees of the Council. The project was fully consistent with the Stevenage Town Investment Plan and was a key first phase to progress the wider Stevenage Gateway scheme without prejudicing the Area Action Plan process.

At Stevenage Development Board in December 2021, it was acknowledged that complementary improvements to Stevenage Railway Station would be required at some point in the future to provide a welcoming aspect for visitors to the town through the Gateway area. The Station Gateway Project Business Case was endorsed and recommended to the Accountable Body (Stevenage Borough Council) for approval.

In December 2021, the Borough Council's Executive referred specifically to the Stevenage Borough Local Plan and Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan as a crucial supporting mechanism for the realisation of the Towns Fund project for the wider Station Gateway scheme.

Multi-Storey Car Park (MSCP)

A planning permission was granted in January 2022 for a Multi-Storey Car Park (MSCP), relating to the site north of the Railway Station, which is within the AAP area:

“Construction of Multi Storey Car Park and Secure Cycle Stores to provide 622 car parking spaces of which 30 are accessible “Blue Badge” spaces, 80 secure cycle spaces, and 27 motorcycle spaces with associated hard and soft landscaping works. Up to 25% of car parking spaces are to be provided with active Electric Vehicle charging points and up to 50% of car parking spaces are to be provided with passive Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure for future activation to suit demand. The MSCP is six storeys tall with a centra photovoltaic canopy on the open top deck”.

The construction programme for the MSCP is underway and is anticipated to be complete in March 2023.

Bus Interchange: “Stevenage Interchange”

Significant progress has been made on the construction of the new bus interchange located closer to the Railway Station. The interchange will provide safe bicycle parking, a comfortable and modern waiting environment for passengers and capacity for electric bus charging, as well as a café and mobility store.

06 Emerging Framework

Objectives

The baseline analysis presented in previous chapters point towards a series of complementary objectives to address the issues facing the station area. Interventions in the AAP area should deliver:

- **A new gateway and arrival experience:** the station area should create a sense of arrival in a distinctive and vibrant place. It should be welcoming, safe, legible and accessible to all and capitalise on helpful wayfinding and positive signposting. The station has a presence in the urban landscape as it is highly visible to people in the town.
- **Enhanced movement & access for all modes:** rationalisation of space currently given over to vehicles will increase space for walking and cycling, making movement and access better and easier for all, with good segregation to ensure safety. Effective transport interchange between sustainable modes should be facilitated by grouping of activities and modes.
- **Green infrastructure integrated throughout:** ‘greening the grey’, by converting surfaces to permeable green infrastructure and habitats provides relief from dense urban environments, enhances biodiversity, creates more pleasant microclimates, improves air quality and urban drainage, and contributes to attractive public realm and placemaking.
- **New mixed use development to unlock the economic opportunity:** Stevenage’s location and connectivity create the perfect conditions for strong economic growth. The station area is the ideal place to locate new development to support this, with sustainable transport connections and under-used land. The AAP will support this with a new mix of uses designed to create a vibrant and successful place.
- **Creating a low-carbon urban village:** mixing new homes, employment, retail and other uses with strong placemaking and exceptional mobility has the potential to deliver on Stevenage’s ambitious climate change targets, creating an exemplar development in the heart of the town. It must be flexible to accommodate changing lifestyles, encourage low car ownership rates, and including buildings that are adaptable.
- **Sustainability in mobility, built form and landscaping:** the station area has a significant part to play in creating supporting active travel and other low-carbon travel modes, as well as creating sustainable development opportunities. Development must be future-proofed for new technologies, with resilience and adaptability to new forms of micro-mobility such as e-scooters.
- **Celebrating the heritage of the town:** as one of the original New Towns, with a unique heritage and design, Stevenage’s station area must reflect what makes the town special and use it to create a sense of place on arrival and departure.
- **Making the most of digital connectivity and high speed broadband:** many firms and some industries already located in Stevenage operate at a global level and have a tradition of research and development, innovation and high-tech solutions. In order to maintain these industries and attract further economic growth, the town must continue to offer the best possible digital connectivity to businesses, residents and visitors, in particular high speed broadband on arrival to Stevenage Station.

Key principles

To deliver on these objectives, a set of design principles has been adopted that will be carried through the process of creating the AAP. These are:

- Enhance the station arrival experience, wayfinding and signposting to create a people-friendly space

- Improve step-free, disabled and accessible pedestrian links with town centre
- Improve links between rail and bus stations
- Turn Lytton Way into a 'town street'
- Create good access for all travel modes with high quality, attractive cycling facilities, and prioritising sustainable and active modes
- Make ground level the place where pedestrians move – while giving pedestrians freedom to travel at whichever level they desire.
- Consolidate surface car parking to make better use of land and enable development opportunities
- High quality public realm, green infrastructure and creating space and opportunities for landscaping through rationalisation of vehicle space
- Future proof for possible station upgrade, replacement of the Leisure Centre and improved links and development west of the rail station
- Design in flexibility to accommodate changing behaviours and the most up to date and attractive technology and high speed digital connection
- Celebrate the heritage of the town in the fabric, layout and design of the station gateway
- Creating a lasting legacy of high quality placemaking
- Putting people first, at the heart of the decision-making process

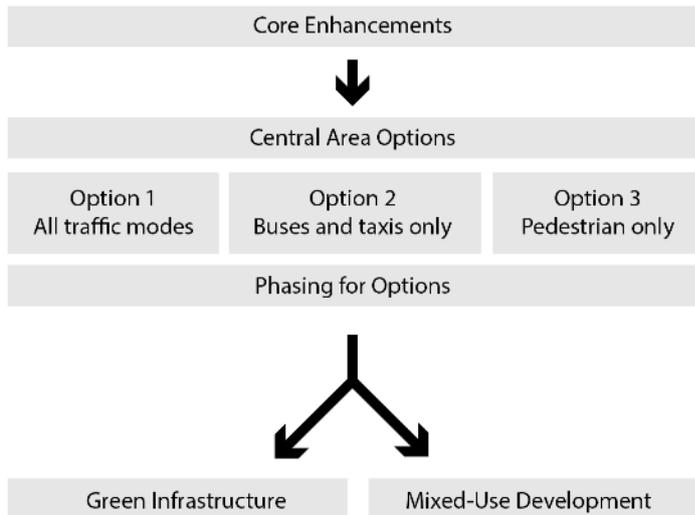
Preferred Option for Lytton Way

At the heart of the issues affecting Stevenage's station area is the design and function of Lytton Way. It severs the station from the town centre, provides a barrier and unpleasant environment for active travel modes and the public realm, uses land inefficiently so as to create unusable development parcels between it and the railway line, and undermines SBC and HCC's commitment to sustainable transportation.

The Town Centre Regeneration Framework pinpoints the downgrading and potential removal of Lytton Way to through traffic as a key plank of its strategy for good placemaking and regeneration of the town centre. This has been endorsed by the relevant stakeholders and will be carried forward by the AAP as the basis for policy in the area.

To unlock the potential of the AAP area, it is essential first to determine the preferred option for a redesign of Lytton Way. This chapter of the report presents the core enhancements proposed, the preferred option(s) for the key central area between Swingate and Danesgate, and then a series of themes that the reconfiguration of Lytton Way will enable.

***It is important to recognise that the objectives and key design principles of the Area Action Plan, as listed above, will be brought through any final option the Area Action Plan recommends. All potential changes to this area and scenarios proposed will promote movement and improve access to and from the Railway Station to the Town Centre and enhance the sense of arrival to Stevenage, providing the gateway to improved opportunities for the area.**



Core Enhancements

FIGURES FROM SAMPLE DOC P2-5

All proposed options for the reconfiguration of Lytton Way have a set of core enhancements, primarily in the northern and southern zones of the AAP area, north of Swingate and south of Danesgate. These are:

- A reduction in the width of Lytton Way, with the space reallocated to pedestrian or cycling movement, street trees and other landscaped green infrastructure. In these northern and southern areas Lytton Way will remain open to all modes, providing continued access for other parts of the town centre.
- An additional segregated cycleway adjacent to Lytton Way, away from the railway tracks. Making use of the improved street environment along Lytton Way, cycling along this route will become more attractive. Along with built form development along this route, this offers the advantages of creating an overlooked cycling route that will feel considerably safer to users than the current path adjacent to the tracks. It will add movement and vibrancy to the street and create visibility for all modes.
- Improved vehicle access to and egress from the police station, making use of the reduction in speeds and change in character of Lytton Way to offer a limited use right-turn access box.
- Vehicle drop off and pick up facilities will need to be provided in the Multi-Storey Car Park and southern car park with good pedestrian links to the station.
- A large public square that creates a flexible entrance space from the existing station building, future-proofed for a new station or enhanced station entrance further to the south.
- Facilitation of the key East-West pedestrian 'boulevard' route running from west of the railway line through to the existing town centre, crossing at the railway station and the proposed public square in front. The enhancements proposed enable this connection to be made and provide the key spaces through which it will pass through within the AAP area.
- A 'cycle hub', compatible with existing and potential new station buildings, that contains secure cycle parking, cycle hire schemes, cycle maintenance facilities and the potential for a local transport information point to aid multi-modal interchange. Above the cycle hub on the ground floor would be development opportunities.
- Development plots made available by the consolidation of surface car parking into a multi-storey car park.

Sections AA, BB and CC demonstrate the re-allocation of land use and street space from underuse vehicle capacity towards active travel and green infrastructure, improving access for all modes while retaining existing functionality and providing a much improved street environment.

Summary of Issues and Options Consultation Responses and Preferred Option(s) for Lytton Way

The public consultation exercise returned a wide range of responses from members of the public, interest groups and key stakeholders. The AAP covers many planning and policy issues and challenges. A fully summary is provided in the *Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Consultation Statement*.

The varied response the Council received, not just on the Options for the central section of Lytton Way, proves that when developing the Preferred Options AAP and taking the AAP through to its final stages, the ambitions and aspirations in the vision section of this AAP are of prime importance. This is to ensure that the Station Gateway area of opportunity is brought to life and delivered in the appropriate manner, in accordance with other related measures.

Taking everything into consideration, the indications were that there was a lower level of support for a “do nothing” approach as advocated by Option 0. Transport and accessibility attracted a great deal of interest, for which officers have considered closely for this Preferred Options AAP.

Option 2 has emerged as a Preferred Option. However, Option 3 was also very popular across many consultation respondents and key stakeholders. Some elements of Option 3 will be reflected or future proofed as much as possible, in order to match the aspirations of active travel and the regeneration plans for the Town Centre (SG1).

While Option 1 is less supportive of active travel aspirations, it was also popular among respondents. This demonstrated a clear overall desire for some form of positive change involving Lytton Way. Option 0 received significantly less support than Options 1, 2 or 3.

Preferred Option(s) for Lytton Way

The following preferred option(s) proposed illustrate the core options available within the central area, defined as that south of Swingate but north of Danesgate.

***It is important to recognise that the options for Lytton Way form just a part of the overall aims and objectives of the Station Gateway area, as presented throughout this document. The final preferred option will be flexible in land use terms to move from Option 2 to Option 3, in accordance with active travel aspirations and the overall opportunity the area presents, to being about the best possible sense of arrival and gateway to the regenerated town centre. This will be in accordance with the objectives and key design principles of this Area Action Plan and Local Plan Policy TC4: Station Gateway.**

Central Area Option 2 – Bus and Taxi access only

FIGURES FROM SAMPLE DOC P9-10

Option 2 reduces the central area of Lytton Way between Swingate and Danesgate to a single carriageway and restricts movement to buses and taxis only. A change of surface material reinforces this restriction. As it approaches the area outside the station it transitions to becoming a shared space carriageway with flush kerbs and bollards to reduce vehicle speeds.

The movement diagram demonstrates how different modes are able to move within the new environment.

Advantages

- Reduction in vehicle traffic makes pedestrian and cycling movement easier
- Reduction in noise outside station
- No re-routing of bus routes required
- Clear prioritisation of sustainable modes

Disadvantages

- Potential conflicts between buses, taxis and pedestrians, although risk much lower than Option 1
- Potentially significant change to traffic flows around Stevenage town centre

Precedents

- Cambridge Railway Station



Central Area Option 3 – Pedestrianised Plaza

FIGURES FROM SAMPLE DOC P11-12

Option 3 removes regular vehicle movement from the front of the station and Lytton Way ceases to be a through-route. An access route is retained through for emergency vehicles needing to access and egress the station and immediate environs.

The movement diagram demonstrates how different modes are able to move within the new environment.

Advantages

- Free movement for walking and cycling modes in front of station with few conflict points
- Much larger area that can be given over to flexible public square
- Reduction in noise outside station
- Clear prioritisation of active modes

- Extra space for green infrastructure over highways space

Disadvantages

- Requires bus routes to be re-routed, potentially disadvantaging routes to and from the north of the town
- Potentially significant change to traffic flows around Stevenage town centre

Precedents

- Station Hill, Reading



Hertfordshire County Council / WSP Highways Impact Assessment

In December 2021, Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and consultancy WSP produced a report that assessed the impacts of each of the Lytton Way Options, on the highway network around Stevenage. The report also offered potential mitigation measures to alleviate any highway impacts. The modelling work undertaken was based on a baseline year of 2021, with scenarios based on traffic flows in 2025 and 2031, with and without the A1(M) SMART motorway in operation.

The report suggested that Option 1 would have the least impact on traffic flows (particularly at peak hours) around Stevenage. The HCC Issues and Options AAP consultation response highlighted Option 2 as the most preferred option which aligns with aspirations to improve active travel. It was acknowledged that substantial intervention would be required to realise the Preferred Option that will materialise in the AAP.

The model indicated that the traffic redistribution through the highway network around Stevenage Town Centre, offers challenges in the models with the existing gap parameters. This means neither Option 2 or 3 shows long term operational resilience, with the 2031 scenarios showing a situation where traffic cannot get through the model causing major delays to bus services. This means that at present, the recommended option in highway capacity terms in the report is Option 1, because it is the only option that is not predicted to cause significant congestion.

While the model results make it difficult to recommend Option 2 or 3 from a highway capacity viewpoint, there are other considerations that need to be considered when assessing which Option is most appropriate. Both Option 2 or 3 could work in highway capacity terms if residents of Stevenage and users of the Town Centre accepted a much higher level of modal shift than would be required for Option 1. The level of ambition in the Stevenage Sustainable Travel Town may make the level of mode shift achievable – however without major behaviour change and modal shift, there are potential risks of causing significant congestion.

Effectively, the roadworks associated with the new Stevenage Bus Interchange have already demonstrated that Option 1 is likely to work. This means that one further option could be to test the success or otherwise of Options 2 and 3 by temporarily restricting through traffic on Lytton Way to identify if the reality of this situation is the same as predicted in the model.

Further movement analysis could potentially be utilised to support any future options and scenarios for the area. A wider policy rationale could be developed to support a Preferred Option.

The modelling report does suggest some potential mitigation measures, for further investigation, to alleviate the traffic flow impact. These include:

- Removal of the bypass lane from Danestrete to Six Hills Way;
- Additional Right Turn Lane from Fairlands Way to St. George's Way;
- Amendments to eastbound carriageway on Fairlands Way to St. George's Way roundabout;
- Signalisation of northbound Gunnels Wood Road approach to Fairlands Way roundabout;
- It is also recommended that bus priority measures should be considered to help buses traverse the congested network.

Cycle Path Options

The existing cycle path along the edge of the railway tracks has been identified earlier in this document as suffering from a lack of passive surveillance and perceived lack of safety and security. Its position constrains the width of potential development parcels that could otherwise back straight onto the railway tracks. Due to its location pushed to the edge, it appears as a back-of-house or service access and feels secondary to vehicles.

However, the cycle path does provide a direct, uninterrupted and segregated cycle route through the area, although it also functions as the only north-south pedestrian route.

The Issues and Options AAP proposed two potential options for improving cycle access within the station area, building on its strengths while addressing weaknesses.

At this stage of the Area Action Plan, Stevenage Borough Council is determined in seeking the very best solutions for sustainable travel. The importance of the cycle link is paramount in any scenario presented. The Council remains committed to providing cycling routes in the town in accordance with the Future Town Future Transport Strategy.

Summary of Issues and Options Consultation Responses and Preferred Option for Cycle Path

There was a clear preference for "Potential Layout 1" relating to the cycle path options.

Potential Layout 2 proposed to remove the existing cycle path and was not thought as feasible in achieving positive modal shift in accordance with active travel ambitions. Potential Layout 1 retains this cycle path and offers the opportunity to connect the AAP area to the Town Centre (with any Lytton Way Option(s) taken forward) and a new north-south route.

Potential Layout 1 also offers the opportunity to enhance the existing National Cycle Route and create additional cultural features, for example, to celebrate the town and relate to the new identity being created by regeneration of the Town Centre and a sense of arrival into Stevenage, in accordance with other regeneration measures.

Preferred Option – Two Cycle Paths

This option retains the existing bicycle path and creates a new segregated path within the revised Lytton Way street profile. It is compatible with all three Central Area Options. The provision of a new cycle hub facility can be accessed conveniently from both routes.

Provision of the new path within the enhanced streetscape of Lytton Way contributes to an activated public realm and the increased safety and security this provides. It elevates cycling to the street and makes it more visible as a mobility option.

The new path would be segregated from cyclists by use of a different surface colour and small kerb upstands, as recommended in LTN 1/20 (Cycle Infrastructure Design). The routing along the street would create some potential conflict points with pedestrians, and cars at the multi-storey car park entrance. These would need to be mitigated with clear markings and signage.

Retention of the existing path provides an alternative route for cyclists to follow that would not have conflict points, although a future redesign of the station building could alter its path at that point. However, this duplication of routes reduces the efficiency of layout and consequently the area of developable land. It would require development parcels to provide active frontages or overlooking on both aspects, rather than simply backing onto the railway tracks. This would further constraint development options.

Consideration will be given for cycling routes that use this area as a route through the station to get to other destinations to work or visit. Improvement of, or additional, signage and wayfinding measure will also be considered.

Cycling provision in the preferred option will need to be developed in accordance with LTN 1/20 guidance. Further consideration will be given to the connections of the proposed cycle path with the existing cycle network on Six Hills Way and at Fairlands Way. Level differences at Six Hills Way will also need to be addressed. Consideration will also be given to crossing of side road accesses and provision for cyclists wanting to access Swingate and Danesgate via any proposed new roundabouts.

Phasing and Temporary Uses

To transform the station area towards one of these options requires a phasing strategy that considers:

- Timing of highway works
- Provision of active travel infrastructure
- Timing of relocation of key mobility uses such as taxi ranks and drop-off
- Relocation and consolidation of station surface car parking

A potential phasing strategy that is robust and flexible enough to accommodate all three options is presented in Figure XX. Phase 1 provides the temporary groundwork for Phase 2, which fully implements the options as presented in this report. Phase 3 considers potential future developments and how they would interact with the options presented.

To enable this phased approach, a strategy employing temporary uses should be put in place. The phasing strategy clearly identifies locations suitable for such temporary uses, which can enliven the space around the station and establish the groundwork and footfall for permanent development in the future. This can provide reassurance to potential developers that a location is viable and visited, as well as creating a safer and more vibrant place during the process of transformation.

Phasing needs to recognise the changes already planned as part of the new bus interchange and the new at-grade crossing. The existing footbridge should be retained until there is a wider redevelopment that enables suitable alternatives to be provided.

Responding to Stevenage's Arts & Culture Strategy, it would also be possible to include early space in developments for artists' studios or workshops to activate the ground floor and provide a placemaking catalyst as a temporary use. The use of such temporary arts provision could also be used to 'kick-start' a local arts trail, as recommended in the strategy document.

Precedent studies of temporary or 'meanwhile' uses are presented on the following pages.

Beyond the AAP: Future Proofing

A range of potential future schemes beyond the edge of the station area AAP boundaries have been considered during the creation of the design options. These are:

- Replacement of the Arts & Leisure Centre building
- Replacement of the existing station building with a new building further to the south
- New development to the west of the railway tracks which would require improved pedestrian connections across the railway

Each central area option provides passive provision for these potential future schemes, offering flexibility for future delivery and supporting the long-term implementation of the Town Centre Regeneration Framework.

Greening the Grey

Stevenage, as the UK's original New Town, was designed to ensure that green open space was accessible to all and integrated within the urban built environment. The station area should reflect this heritage and deliver it as part of a vibrant, rich and interesting urban place. The reconfiguration of Lytton Way outlined in this report, along with all of the Central Area Options, deliver opportunities to re-integrate natural habitats and planted landscaping throughout the environment.

Such a strategy provides relief from hard landscaped environments, gives space for biodiversity, improves microclimates with the cooling or shading effects of trees and plants, offers sustainable surface water management and enhances the experience and appearance of the environment. Above all, new green infrastructure around the station will create a great gateway experience that reflects the green character of the rest of the town.

Opportunities to include green infrastructure exist throughout the proposed options. These include:

- Street trees
- Planted landscaping
- Sustainable drainage features
- Green roofs and walls on new development

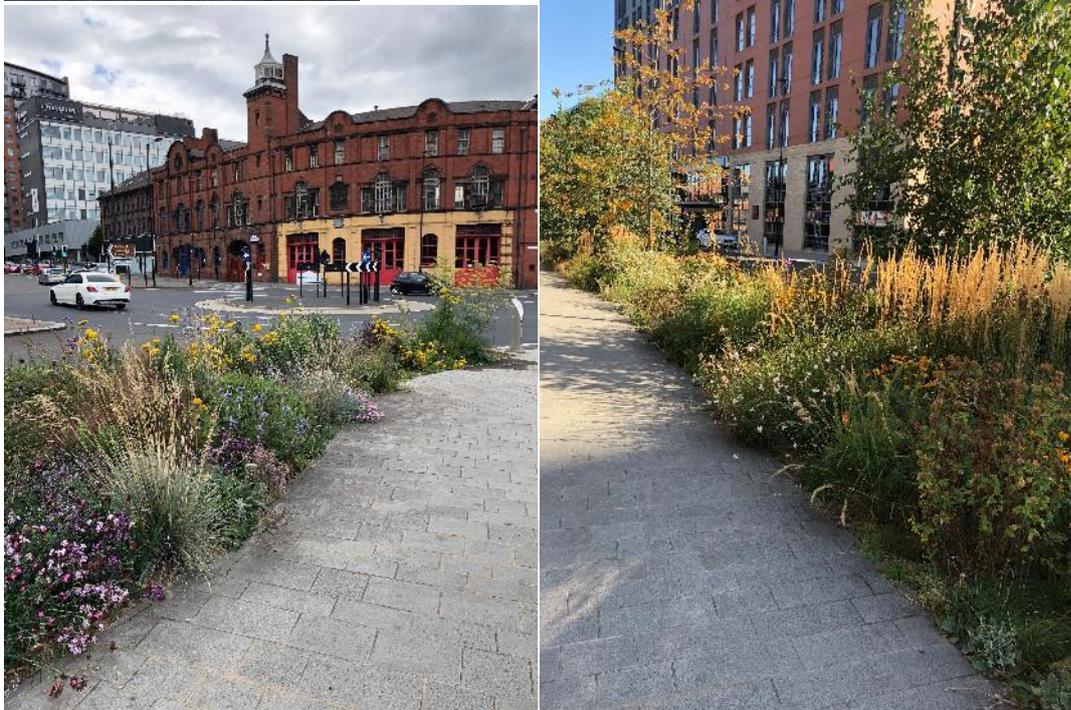
Case Study: Sheffield

One of the most successful urban schemes to incorporate significant new green infrastructure and biodiversity improvements has been the 'Greening the Grey' scheme in Sheffield. Although the scheme covers a wider area than just the station area, it has created significant change throughout the city centre. The scheme has transformed streets that previously only featured hard landscaping materials into habitat-rich spaces, with seating and significantly improved streetscapes. Vehicle space has been reduced and the planting offers separation between transport infrastructure and pedestrians.

A key function of the areas of planting are the collection and storage of rainwater enabled by the increased area of permeable surface. These help to reduce the quantum and slow the flow of stormwater into the City's sewer system.

The planting palette has been selected for its low maintenance requirements. All planting requires a degree of maintenance but this can be minimised through the selection and specification of the

right species. Species have also been selected for their aesthetic qualities to create an enhanced streetscape and also for their ecological value as a food source for insects and birds.



Using Development to Make a Place

The reconfiguration of mobility along Lytton Way enables a range of development opportunities to come forward on land previously used for car parking or transport infrastructure.

Opportunities for investment and development are important to identify within this key location. Beyond this, the design of developments should support the creation of the station area as a functional, vibrant, interesting and useful place for the town – a destination as well as a transit point towards other places. There is a potential in this area to showcase exemplary design of buildings to secure a strong sense of arrival to the town.

As well as drawing upon the land uses outlined in Policy TC4, this report also draws upon other documents including the SBC Arts & Culture Strategy to define potential uses that could animate and occupy space around the station.

Key principles that have been adopted include:

- Surface car parking for the railway station can be consolidated into a multi-storey car park (MSCP) without losing parking capacity but releasing significant land
- Vertical mixed-use within buildings is possible, particularly with commercial uses such as offices and retail sharing the same building
- Maximisation of active frontages and ground-floor opportunities along the streets, particularly around the new station square environment
- Flexibility of space provided is essential to enable the area to grow and adapt as it is developed. Temporary uses and occupation of space can help bridge the gap between today and the future place.

Flexibility and Economic Opportunity

The change to the Use Classes Order (UCO) in September 2020, to subsume use classes A1, A2, A3 and B1 into a single class E (subject to some exemptions), presents both issues and opportunities from a planning policy perspective in this location.

At a policy stage it will be less possible for SBC to restrict or specify particular land uses, especially on the ground floor, without more detailed planning policy or restrictions in place. However, this may not be required as the purpose of the use class change is to encourage flexibility to move between different uses as local conditions require. This could present an opportunity for a more adaptive place that can change uses quickly as the area develops over time.

Stevenage Borough Council is currently in the process of revising Article 4 Directions to protect a series of light industrial and office buildings from change of use to residential use. Future flexibility of land uses in the Station Gateway area will provide a high level of support for Stevenage's economy and offer a range of uses in this area to promote vibrancy and employment opportunities.

Grow on space could be important for this area, for example relating to low carbon development. The area could operate well as a service industry for the aerospace and research and development cluster at nearby Gunnels Wood, as well as supporting the emerging cell and gene cluster at the south of the town. There needs to be careful consideration of what businesses require in Stevenage and beyond.

From the point of view of the preparation of the AAP, suggested or anticipated uses will still be included in plans for development options, as the space and servicing requirements for retail are considerably different from those of offices.

Development Parcels

Five main development parcels have been identified:

- **North:** made up of the existing surface car parks north of the railway station. This land is currently largely in the ownership of SBC and would have the potential to be developed in an early phase
- **Central (phase 1):** made up of the existing surface car parks north of the railway station. This land is currently being developed into a new Multi-Storey Car Park (MSCP).
- **Central (phase 2):** made up of the existing station drop-off areas and immediate surrounds of the existing station, to the north of the proposed square present in all of the Central Area Options. This land is primarily in the ownership of Network Rail, and would only be able to come forward for development after a new railway station building was constructed further to the south, adjacent to the proposed public station square
- **Station Square:** made of the existing surface car parks south of the railway station within the AAP boundary. This land is also currently in the ownership of SBC. This in effect becomes a reserve site, futureproofing the potential to deliver a new rail station should funding become available. As such its delivery is indeterminable.
- **South:** made of the existing surface car parks south of the railway station within the AAP boundary. This land is also currently in the ownership of SBC and would have the potential to be developed in an early phase.

It is important to note at this stage that the opportunities offered within each development parcel reflect the very early stage this Area Action Plan is at and are intended to be strategic, high-level details. There will be scope to build on and progress the opportunities identified within each development parcel through the process of developing this Area Action Plan.

For the most efficient use of land, and to deliver the comprehensive objectives of the regeneration policy, proposals for these development parcels should respond to the AAP's Core Enhancements and mobility options, presented earlier in this chapter. At present, plot widths are compromised by the need to provide pedestrian movement along Lytton Way within curtilage. Redistribution of vehicle space

Isolated, uncoordinated development proposals that do not effectively respond to the AAP have the potential to compromise effective placemaking efforts and reduce the overall development gains that could be delivered through a comprehensive approach.

Each development parcel has the potential to support a mix of uses that contribute towards the components of placemaking, as identified in chapter 4.

- **North:** North: this parcel offers an opportunity to create a landmark development which could predominantly be residential-led. This is a prominent gateway site and given the lack of adjoining development and the need to create a gateway development, storey heights should be a minimum of 6 storeys and could rise to over 10 storeys, dependent upon the configuration of the buildings. A basement storey of surface car parking, to retain a proportion of commuter parking provision, as well as an element of development parking will be required as part of this development parcel with due consideration given to safe access and egress for vehicles accessing Lytton Boulevard.
- **Central (phase 1):** this parcel will incorporate the new comprehensive multi-storey car park (MSCP) as referred to in Chapter 5. Electric Car charging is also being considered with a view to future travel demand. To support this, there could be additional opportunity to locate hotel, office space and residential with an active ground floor on the remaining land next to the new MSCP. -Due consideration will need to be given to safe access and egress for vehicles accessing Lytton Way.
- **South:** the northern end of the parcel could be an ideal location for an additional high-quality cycle hub, such as that seen in Cambridge or in Dutch cities, providing accessible and secure cycle parking and maintenance directly adjacent to the existing and proposed new railway

station, as well as the bus station. Offices could be located above the cycle hub, with storey heights determined by market demand and consideration for sunlight into the new public space to the north. A cycle hub would be much closer in this location to a potential future rail station and perhaps allow for futureproofing in this south block.

- **Station Square:** Whilst this is designated as a longer-term development site, primarily being occupied by a new rail station building it will also form part of the public realm that will define the arrival into Stevenage. Until such time that the rail station is built the site will perform an important role in being the arrival and departure space for Stevenage. As such this should be a well-designed space that will be of high quality and act as an extension of the regeneration of the town centre. The design of the space will need to be designed so that it can accommodate a new rail station building or entrance in part of the space. The design of the space is also a perfect opportunity to support 'Meanwhile Uses' that can evolve and change over time. This could also play a role in supporting SBC's Arts and Cultural Strategy.
- **Central (phase 2):** this is a longer-term development option that will frame the new public space after a potential new station building is constructed [it would be built largely on the area occupied by the existing rail station]. As such it will have intensive mixed-use, including a vibrant ground floor with retail, café's and other active uses. Above this office uses would successfully capitalise on the highly accessible location. As it is located to the north of the public square, a landmark or feature tower would be appropriate.

Parking Consolidation

The surface car parks adjacent to the railway station provide around 450 parking spaces, and are typically well-used. Consolidation of the existing surface parking will be an essential component of delivering the objectives of the AAP.

A new MSCP is being progressed (please refer to Chapter 5 for further details):

- Station North car park – within **Central (phase 1)** parcel.

07 Conclusions and Feedback

This report outlines the core issues that are present within the station area as well as the background policy and wider context that affects its development. This is the second stage of the preparation of an AAP, and preferred options that focus on mobility, and promotion of active travel in Stevenage, are presented for feedback from targeted stakeholders.

Stakeholder Feedback

This report will be circulated to key stakeholders who operate within and around the area covered by the AAP. It seeks targeted feedback from these stakeholders on the following topics:

- Chapters 1–5: Overall Vision, Aims, Objectives, Key Design Principles of the Stevenage Connection AAP
- Chapter 6: The Enhancements for Preferred Options
- Chapter 6: Preferred Option(s) for Central Section of Lytton Way, with a particular focus on issues and opportunities raised by the different mobility options
- Chapter 6: Preferred Cycle Path Option
- Chapter 6: Phasing approaches

In addition to these, this stage of the process seeks informal thoughts and feedback on opportunities for and the form of Temporary Uses, Green Infrastructure and potential Development Options.

Following consultation on this document, the Preferred Options AAP, the next stage of the process of preparation of the AAP will be a formal public consultation on the final version of the AAP, which will have been influenced by feedback from this report. The final version of the AAP is submitted to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) before undergoing the process of Examination in Public.

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STEVENAGE CONNECTION

AREA ACTION PLAN

ISSUES + OPTIONS REPORT



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01 INTRODUCTION

01 INTRODUCTION

Stevenage's town centre is undergoing a process of renewal and regeneration. As part of this, the area around the station bounded by the railway tracks and Lytton Way has been identified as a key site for new development and change. This key gateway for the town has the potential for significant transformation, based on its well-connected position only 20 minutes from Kings' Cross. Such development could form a key part of the regeneration of the town centre.

This report is the first stage in the process of producing an Area Action Plan (AAP) for the station area. It outlines the key issues that affect the area identified as site TC4 in the Local Plan. It then presents a series of potential options that will form the basis for targeted consultation with stakeholders.

What is an AAP?

An Area Action Plan (AAP) is an optional development plan document which provides specific planning policy and guidance for a particular location or area of significant change. AAPs must be in general conformity with the Local Plan and the NPPF. The key stages of an AAP are summarised below:

- Publication of Issues and Options, which seek the views of stakeholders on Issues and Options for the future development of the area.
- Publication of Preferred Options, to set out the Council's preferred way forward for the area.
- Following consideration of responses to this consultation, the Submission Document will be prepared. This will be submitted to the Secretary of State.
- The fourth stage is the independent Examination of the submitted document. The purpose of this is to consider the soundness of the AAP and representations. A Planning Inspector will be appointed by the Secretary of State to conduct the examination.
- The Planning Inspector will produce a binding report that sets out the final version of the AAP. This will then be adopted by the Council and incorporated in the Local Development Framework.

Stages 1 to 3 will each be subject to a 6-week public consultation (in compliance with SBC's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI; 2018) which sets out statutory consultation requirements).



Figure 1: Stevenage town centre from the air

Why create an Area Action Plan (AAP)?

After reviewing Stevenage's Local Plan during the Hold Direction, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) asked Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) to prepare an Area Action Plan (AAP) for Stevenage Station Gateway Area (identified in the Local Plan as Site TC4). This is a limited area within the wider Stevenage Central area.

The AAP can create new policy over and above the Local Plan and will require its own Sustainable Environmental Assessment at the Issues and Options Stage. Other mechanisms are available to provide appropriate planning and design guidance.

It is important to understand that this version of the Area Action Plan, as an "Issues and Options" Report, is not prescribing specific solutions to the issues and challenges raised. This Issues and Options Report is discussing key concepts and high level, strategic options and scenarios around Stevenage Railway Station, in order to enable potential future development that could take place. It does not, at this early stage, suggest specific proposals for Stevenage Railway Station or relating to Lytton Way.

Stevenage Borough Council is a co-operative Council and will undergo several rounds of consultation, work and co-operation with residents, businesses and key stakeholders to shape the Area Action Plan through these key stages. As a co-operative Council, Stevenage Borough Council will take into account all views and representations before discussing and developing any preferred options.

02 BACKGROUND

02 BACKGROUND

The town centre of Stevenage ('Stevenage Central') is undergoing an extensive process of regeneration, renewal and new development. This ambitious programme builds on Stevenage's heritage as a New Town and its success in attracting people and businesses. Only 20 minutes from London's Kings' Cross, it is exceptionally well-connected and offers similar potential for commercial and residential growth as other locations such as Reading, Croydon and Milton Keynes. The station area is thus crucial for the success of this plan. This section sets out the background studies, policies and activities that form the basis for intervention.

Stevenage Central Regeneration Framework

Published in 2016, the Stevenage Central Regeneration Framework forms the governing masterplan for the town centre, outlining the key objectives, opportunities and vision for regeneration. The core recommendations within the report formed the parameters and basis for the Rail Station Vision study (2017) and underlies the masterplan for the area known as 'SG1'. The Framework has informed the policies in the recently-adopted Local Plan.

Fitting within the Local Plan

Stevenage Borough Local Plan policy TC4 ("Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area") states:

Within the Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area, as defined on the Policies Map, planning permission will be granted for:

- a. An extended and regenerated train station;
- b. New bus station;
- c. High-density Use Class C3 residential units;
- d. New multi-storey or basement car parking;
- e. New Use Class B1 office premises;
- f. A new Use Class C1 hotel; and
- g. New Use Class A1 and Use Class A3 restaurant and cafe uses.

Applications should address the following design and land use principles:

- i. Major reconfiguration of Lytton Way between Fairlands Way and Six Hills Way;
- ii. Demolition of the Arts & Leisure Centre to facilitate better east-west integration and create new development sites in the environs of the train station
- iii. The provision of replacement sports and theatre facilities elsewhere within Stevenage Central
- iv. A significantly regenerated and enlarged dual-frontage train station of high quality, with associated facilities
- v. New public squares on the eastern and western frontages of the train station
- vi. High quality office buildings within a short walking distance of the train station
- vii. At least one multi-storey car park and cycle parking plus drop-off space
- viii. Establishment of an attractive east - west pedestrian route across the East Coast Main Line
- ix. High quality landmark gateway environment to create a positive image of Stevenage for all rail visitors

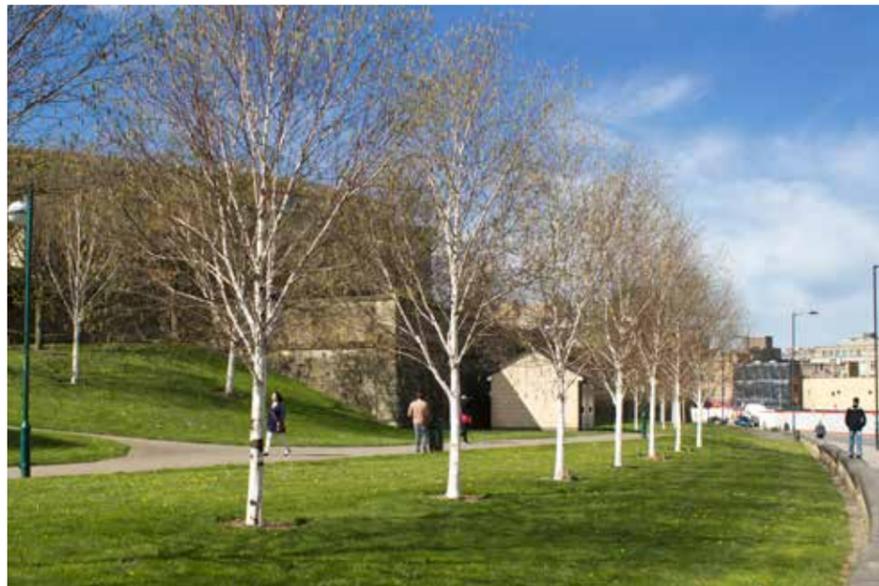
Within this policy context, there are a range of high-level policy objectives which align with the Local Plan and national policy direction for the AAP to respond to. These include:

- Sustainable travel considered throughout
- Green infrastructure in the public realm
- Climate change consideration in all development decisions
- Design of the highest architectural standards

The options proposed for the area included within the AAP will be strongly influenced by the masterplan for the SG1 development which lies to the east and within the town centre. Connections to this development and connections through into the town square and central area will form the emerging physical context within which the AAP sits.



Figure 2: Stevenage Central Regeneration Framework masterplan



Climate Change

On 12th June 2019, Stevenage Borough Council declared a climate emergency and reconfirmed its commitment to tackling climate change by setting a target to ensure that Stevenage has net-zero emissions by 2030. In September 2020, the Council responded to this emergency by publishing its Climate Change Strategy (2020) which acts as a starting point for the development of a resident-led, co-produced more focused Climate Change Strategy for Stevenage.

As a co-operative Council, Stevenage is committed to act as a community leader and facilitate local people and businesses during the decarbonisation process. The Strategy focusses on four main areas. Most of the carbon emissions in Stevenage come from Transport, People's home and businesses, construction, and utilities. Through focusing on these areas, better understanding their requirements, and engaging with them Stevenage can reach the zero-carbon target.

The Strategy gives valuable direction for the development of a Stevenage tailored Climate Change Action Plan to net zero by 2030. The Action Plan is a live document that will be continuously developed by the local community and is responsive to the opportunities that new technologies and bids for funding may allow. It follows 8 distinctive themes: People, Biodiversity, Transport, Energy and Water, Businesses, Homes, Construction and Regeneration, and Waste and Recycling.

Other Policy Documents

Future Town, Future Transport (2019) is SBC's transport plan responding to Hertfordshire County Council (HCC)'s Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4). This brings forward modal shift and sustainable transport measures across the county.

The document contains a number of policy actions for the 'Stevenage Gateway' area (approximately concurrent with the AAP area). These are split across short term and medium term plans, and the AAP must respond to them.

Short term action plan – immediate actions:

- Relocation of the bus station to be adjacent to the railway station
- A cycling and walking infrastructure plan
- A cycle hire scheme with docking hubs at the railway station and across the town centre
- Rules to allow e-scooters to use cycleways
- Engagement with Network Rail over capacity and access requirements

Short-term action plan – Part 2 (2021-5):

- Improvements to the station environment
- Intermodal interchange at the station including cycle hire, a cycle hub with covered parking and maintenance facilities
- Demand management for car parking

Medium-term action plan (beyond 2025):

- Underpass environment improvements
- Bus priority measures on key streets
- Developing proposals for commercial uses in the gateway area.

03 SETTING THE CONTEXT

03 SETTING THE CONTEXT

The Heart of the Town Centre?

The area around Stevenage railway station is a key location in the centre of the town. It forms the western edge of the traditional town centre 'box' as imagined by the New Town masterplan, and is the first place that many visitors and commuters see.

As Stevenage expands and regenerates in the future, the town centre will expand. The Stevenage Central Regeneration Framework envisages an expansion of the 'box' to encompass land west of the railway, extending towards the Airbus site and taking in intensification of the Leisure Park across the railway tracks. As a result, the station area will move to being at the heart of the town centre, a critical movement node east-west, and one of the best-connected places in the town.

The Local Plan identifies (Policy TC4) a proposal for a radically improved new Stevenage railway station, with National Rail having plans for a 5th platform, as part of a broader central area regeneration scheme. The Local Plan Inspector's Report suggested that the railway station be extended as well as regenerated. From wide engagement with businesses and developers there is an opportunity to significantly enhance this part of the town centre and to enhance east-west connectivity.

The area is thus a key strategic brownfield site opportunity, linking east - west movement. It is a key arrival point for business and visitors, and sits at the heart of the sustainable travel network. Effective use of the land is thus essential to create new employment capacity and jobs, as well as ensure it becomes an attractive and vibrant place in its own right, welcoming people to Stevenage.



Figure 4: Recent station area transformation precedents - clockwise from top left: Oxford, Reading, Sheffield, Slough, Utrecht (Netherlands), Wakefield Westgate

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Figure 3: Site plan showing TC4 area and selected nearby locations

The Site

The selected Stevenage Station Gateway AAP area is tightly defined. It abuts the railway land/tracks and includes the dual carriageway of Lytton Way. The ambitious regeneration plans for Stevenage Central anticipated that Lytton Way would largely be redeveloped as part of a major reorganisation of the town's distributor road network.

Most of the site is currently occupied by surface level car parks which largely serve commuters using Stevenage Station. The constrained nature of the site limits both the volume of building which can be accommodated, the range of uses and how the buildings are organised on site.

The site, designated as TC4 in the Local Plan, is approximately 440m from north to south, and varies between 100m wide at the northern end, to 55m at the station entrance. The total site area is about 3ha. The site is oriented roughly north-south, and is situated to the west of the main part of Stevenage town centre.

The boundary of Local Plan Policy TC4 includes the two sites that form the Gordon Craig Theatre / Stevenage Arts & Leisure Centre and proposed new Bus Station development. These sites, current developments and future proposals regarding them are considered in the context of this Area Action Plan but not included for the purposes of the Area Action Plan boundary.

The Opportunity *What can a modern station and station area be?*

Many stations have historically been located at the edge of historic town centres - they were built at the urban edge in the 19th Century. On the far side of the tracks, industrial uses that needed good access to the rail network were often built, or there was marginal land around flood plains. This pattern was repeated in many of the New Towns built post-war, such as in Stevenage. This approach worked when most people lived and worked in the same town, using the station occasionally. In the modern era, intercity connectivity is essential to creating a vibrant, connected, knowledge-based economy such as that seen in Stevenage. Stations are now hubs of development, with pressures to create housing, office space, retail and other commercial space. Without a comprehensive masterplan, the fundamentals of the rail station - that of an accessible transport interchange - can be compromised.

Stations must:

- Be the centre of movement: efficient multi-modal interchanges between all modes of transport, with sustainable modes prioritised;
- Support inclusive growth: responding to the particular needs of their location - for example needs for affordable housing, better commercial space, or regeneration schemes;
- Be at the heart of healthy communities: by making it easy for people to choose active modes of travel at the core of a healthy network, and creating spaces that include nature and prioritise physical and mental health.

Stations are often severing points in the urban fabric - an edge. By turning the station into a public place with a wide and accessible pedestrian bridge, it becomes a link or node to focus around. As the gateway to a place, it forms an essential first impression for visitors, and serves as a reminder to regular users that their town is an attractive, thriving and people-focused place every time they use it.

In the context of Stevenage, the area around the station is a key location for economic competitiveness. Locations a similar time distance away from London terminals are seeing considerable commercial growth, such as Reading, Slough, Milton Keynes and Croydon. Stevenage is perfectly placed in terms of mobility, and already hosts major international companies. Only 20 minutes from the major Kings Cross development and the business area around Farringdon (where Thameslink and Crossrail will interchange), the opportunity to establish a significant business environment adjacent to the station is considerable.

Although the development opportunity is clear, the route towards it requires the creation of a more people-friendly place than currently exists. Creating an attractive, healthy, memorable and enjoyable place will provide the seeds for high quality mixed-use development to come forward and make the most of the station area, and contribute widely across the town.

The Policy & Political Context

Rail transport in the UK has seen enormous growth in recent decades, driven by a combination of increases in commuting due to house price rises, concentrations of jobs in hubs like the City of London, leisure travel and a demand for more sustainable modes of travel. The current COVID-19 pandemic is creating uncertainty about future patterns of rail travel (see below), it remains clear that demand for rapid, sustainable rail travel will be a feature of our medium and long-term mobility future.

Looking to the future, the Transport Secretary has laid out further plans to transform the country's transport infrastructure to help the country 'build out' of COVID-19, supporting the nation's economy, and delivering on the government's key agenda of levelling up the country.

The Government has recently favoured development around stations, in particular for disabled passengers and improving access where possible. The intention is for funding to be made available at a large number of train stations around the UK to make them more accessible. Initiatives will include incorporating accessible toilets and customer information screens, as well as new lifts. This forms a key element of levelling up access for disabled people to transport and opening up opportunities for all.

A range of recent publications set out government policy and best practice thinking which touch upon the themes and objectives to be developed within Stevenage station area.

Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge is a report from the DfT which sets out that in the future active and public transport will be the first choice of transport for most journeys. This will form the basis of the forthcoming transport strategy from the DfT. This is an ambitious and unprecedented document, and gives high-level support for Stevenage's transport strategy and sustainable mobility interventions around the railway station.

Tomorrow's Living Station, a report for Network Rail, envisages railway stations as more than just access points to the rail network, but thriving multi-modal interchanges and mixed-use places, integrated into their communities and responding to their needs.

Our Principles of Good Design by Network Rail, and the Design Council's Think Station report outline core design principles for stations as modern multi-modal travel hubs. Responsiveness to local needs, local context and heritage are important, but good access and excellent mobility functionality are also emphasised.

Building Better, Building Beautiful is a recent report to MHCLG which will inform the upcoming Planning White Paper and revisions to the National Design Guide. It recommends good design and placemaking principles. Although primarily focused on residential developments, it is clear that mixed-use places with a focus on regeneration are essential to creating better towns and cities, based on a 'triangle' of housing, nature and infrastructure. Brownfield sites should be prioritised, and nature given a place in urban areas.

The High Street Report was the underpinnings of the High Street Task Force, within MHCLG. The report recommended a number of approaches to revitalising Britain's town centres for future resilience. These include a better balance of office, retail and residential space, increased town centre residential populations, and more creative provision of facilities in town centres.

MHCLG has supported a range of station-led development opportunities, such as those at York, Taunton and Swindon. The National Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2016-2021 highlights that the Homes and Communities Agency (now Homes England) will work with local authorities and Network Rail to bring forward land around stations for housing, commercial development and regeneration.

Recent court decisions on the climate change impact of infrastructure decisions (such as at Heathrow, and a pending case on the government's road expansion scheme), provide a concrete basis for prioritising sustainable transport over cars. Stevenage Borough Council has declared a climate emergency and vowed to reduce carbon emissions, and a recent study found that Stevenage is one of the worst 10 cities in the UK for air pollution, relative to its size and population.

The Impact of COVID-19

This report has been prepared during the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, which has seen significant disruption to the economy and people's lifestyles. It is clear that some of this disruption will drive lasting change in how we use and view the urban areas in which we live. Although it is too early to predict these lasting changes comprehensively, some principles of urban design have come to the fore in recent weeks and months.

In the future it is clear that new development must consider the importance of:

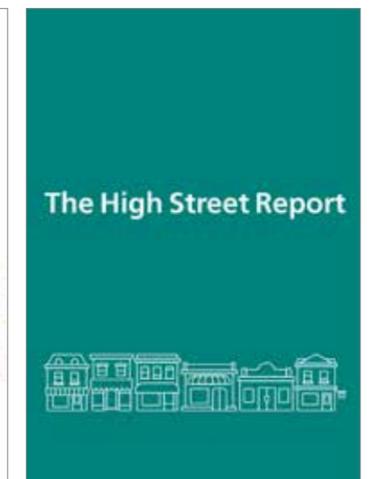
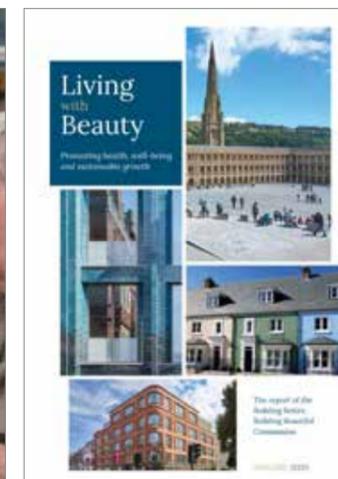
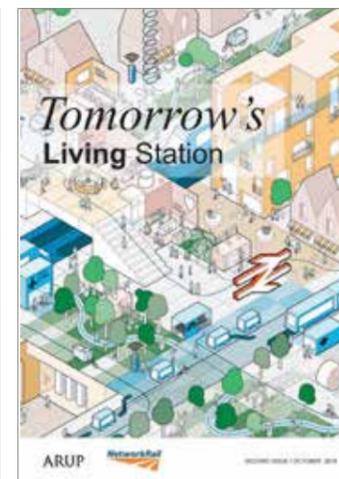
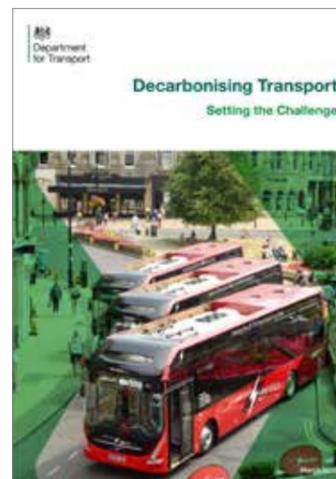
- Local services, shops, healthcare provision and social care
- Provision of space for pedestrians for walking, queueing and socialising
- Comprehensive active travel provision to enable us to get around safely
- Access to networks of open space and integration of nature into streets
- A focus on improving air quality
- Safe spaces for socialising, play and recreation
- Potential demand for larger offices to accommodate distanced desks
- Potential shift to more collaborative spaces including meeting rooms, break out spaces and more reliance on home working
- 'Local working' hubs with good digital connectivity

An important consideration for Stevenage relates to the nature of some of the town's high-tech bioscience and engineering industries. This means that a large number of workers still need to travel to Stevenage to access, for example, laboratory and workshop spaces.

Much media coverage has focused on short-term interventions that local authorities are making to ensure streets are safe for pedestrians and cyclists. These are vital safety measures, but consideration should be given to temporary measures that have other benefits and can be made improved and made permanent in the future. Stevenage already has cycling and walking infrastructure in place which can be positively utilised. In the context of Stevenage's station area, such measures include priority for active travel and improving conflict point safety, as well as increasing space allocated to pedestrians and people versus that allocated to private vehicles.

The impact of COVID-19 on rail travel is uncertain. It seems likely that we will see less peak-time travel in the future, reducing the pressure on rush-hour services as more people work from home or stagger their working hours. Rail demand is likely to return to comparable levels as the economy and situation return to normal in the medium to long term, but potentially spread throughout the day.

Reports (left to right): Decarbonising Transport; Tomorrow's Living Station; Our Principles of Good Design; Building Better, Building Beautiful; The High Street Report



04 ISSUES & CHALLENGES

04 ISSUES & CHALLENGES

Our analysis has divided the issues within the TC4 station area boundary into three categories; experiential issues, functional issues and development issues. Although there is overlap between them, this forms a useful framework for understanding the main challenges to be addressed.

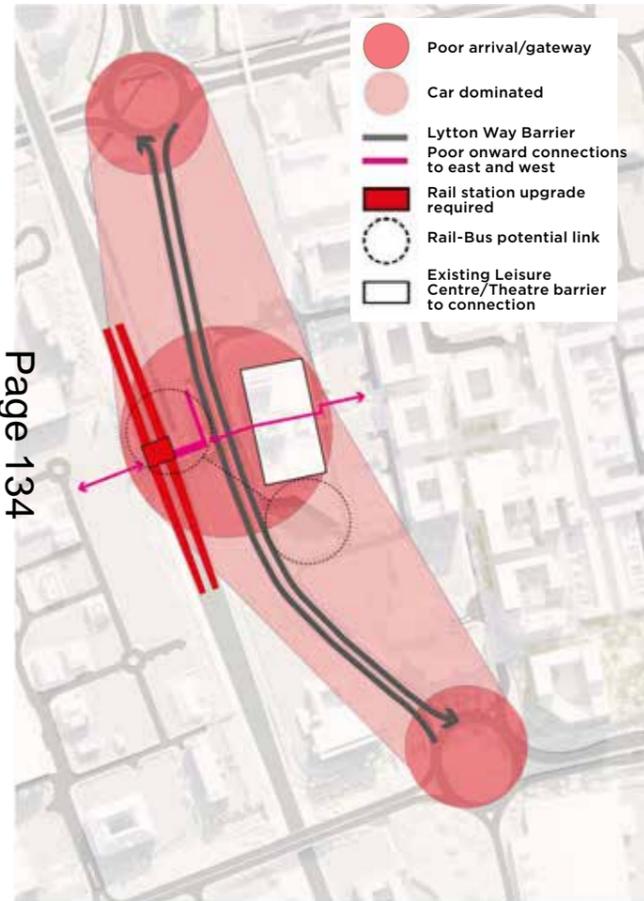


Figure 5: Issues and challenges in the station area

The Experience

The experience of arrival forms an important first impression of a place. Areas around railway stations have to work especially hard, due to their need to integrate considerable transport infrastructure and be highly functional places for a variety of user groups. However, this does not require them to be unattractive, and a great many station environs are beautiful, bustling and interesting places that give the visitor and local alike a representative impression of the town they have just arrived at.

Project for Public Spaces, a respected US non-profit organisation, has published research on 'what makes a great place?'. The four key themes work together to create places and spaces that people enjoy and want to go back to. Fulfilling these themes will be an essential part of creating a better station area experience in Stevenage, unlocking development opportunities, better functionality, and a new part of the town centre.

The area around Stevenage station is compromised by:

- Poor access and linkages for pedestrians and over-dominant car infrastructure
- Few uses and activities beyond the station and associated car parking
- Unattractive public realm and landscaping, giving little comfort and a poor image
- No opportunity for street life, connections between people or other sociability

This adds up to a poor arrival experience for anyone visiting Stevenage, a dis-inviting front door for the town and it results in a 'non-place'.

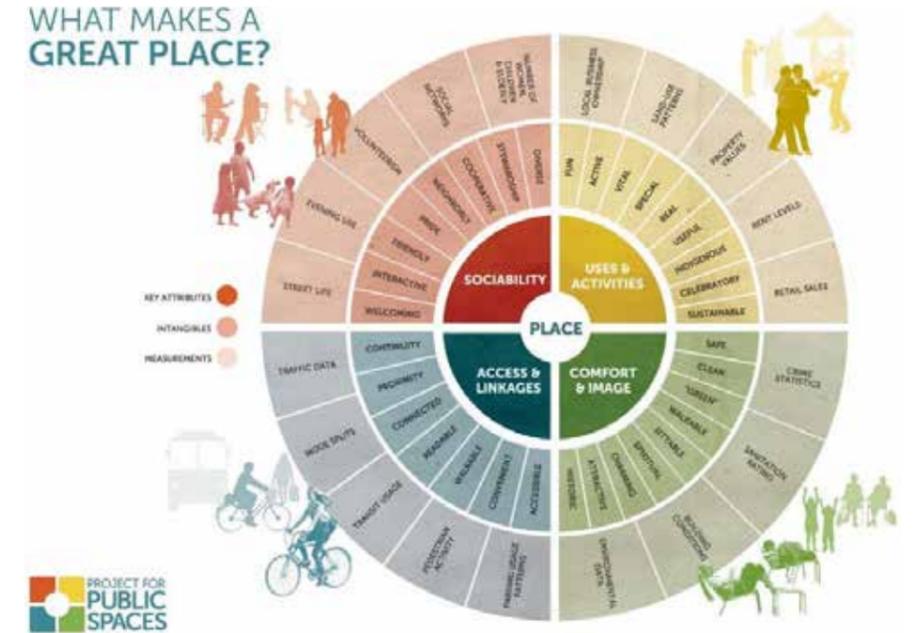


Figure 6: The attributes, intangibles and measurements for a great place (Project for Public Spaces)

Lytton Way - an 'Urban Motorway'

The overriding driver for this poor experience is the presence of Lytton Way, a wide dual carriageway mostly segregated from pedestrians that takes up a great deal of land. It does not function as an urban street that could host other uses and development along it to create an attractive and enjoyable place.

The downgrading and potential removal of Lytton Way for through traffic represents a major principle of the Stevenage Central Framework. A key focus of the Area Action Plan must be implementation strategies for a reduction in the scale of, and a change in character of Lytton Way to create a high quality, functional and successful environment.

The northern and southern entrances to the station area along Lytton Way are similarly poor, with large roundabouts and highway infrastructure creating an environment hostile to pedestrians. The cycling underpasses that run underneath the roundabouts are wide but lack overlooking and could be perceived as unsafe.



Figure 7: View of Lytton Way from south



Figure 8: View of Lytton Way from north

Landscaping & Public Realm Quality

The AAP area suffers from a public realm that is car-dominated and uses predominantly tarmac and other highway surfacing materials. What landscaping is present is limited to buffer strips of grass, and towards the northern and southern ends of the area, some areas with trees. Street trees are present within the car parks but are surrounded by tarmac surfacing. As a result the public realm is a poor environment for anyone not in a car.

Monofunctional and Lacking Uses

At present the station area is a place of transit and only hosts the railway station as a use. Other than crossing the bridge to the retail park (which is amply provided with car parking), there is little other reason to be in the area other than the station. This results in little human activity on the streets, compounding safety issues, and a lack of interest and attraction.

The Arts & Leisure Centre complex presents a blank edge towards the station and does not contribute street activity towards the street. Uses adjacent to the northern and southern ends such as the supermarket and the police station are surrounded by surface car parking.

Functional Issues

Compounding the experiential issues associated with the station environment are a range of functional issues, where the station area could work better for a wide variety of users.

At its heart, a station and its immediate area must function as a transport interchange and mobility hub, smoothly and safely allowing users of all modes of transport to arrive, leave, interchange between modes and find their onward connections. The current station area could perform significantly better than it currently does.

Poor onward connections

At present there are three legible pedestrian connections between the AAP area and the town centre - the overbridge through the Arts & Leisure Centre, Danesgate and Swinsgate. The latter two are

surface streets and cannot be reached from the station itself without crossing Lytton Way, which is not possible due to a lack of pedestrian crossings and a barrier in the centre of the dual carriageway. As a result the only real route is the bridge, which runs directly through the station. Although this is a direct route, it then drops into a surface car park which provides a poor entrance to the town. Other issues include barriers for cyclists from the town centre to the train station and the station lift is not DDA compliant, is badly maintained and causes issues for disabled people. Recent Bus Interchange-related works to calm Lytton Way introduced an at-grade pedestrian/cyclist crossing, three sets of traffic lights, bus-priority lanes and reduced lanes of traffic. This is an incremental move towards the Local Plan's aspiration to remove through-traffic from the road. The AAP should respond to the planned 'East-West Boulevard' and improved pedestrian linkages for Phase 1 of SG1, which has received resolution to grant from SBC.

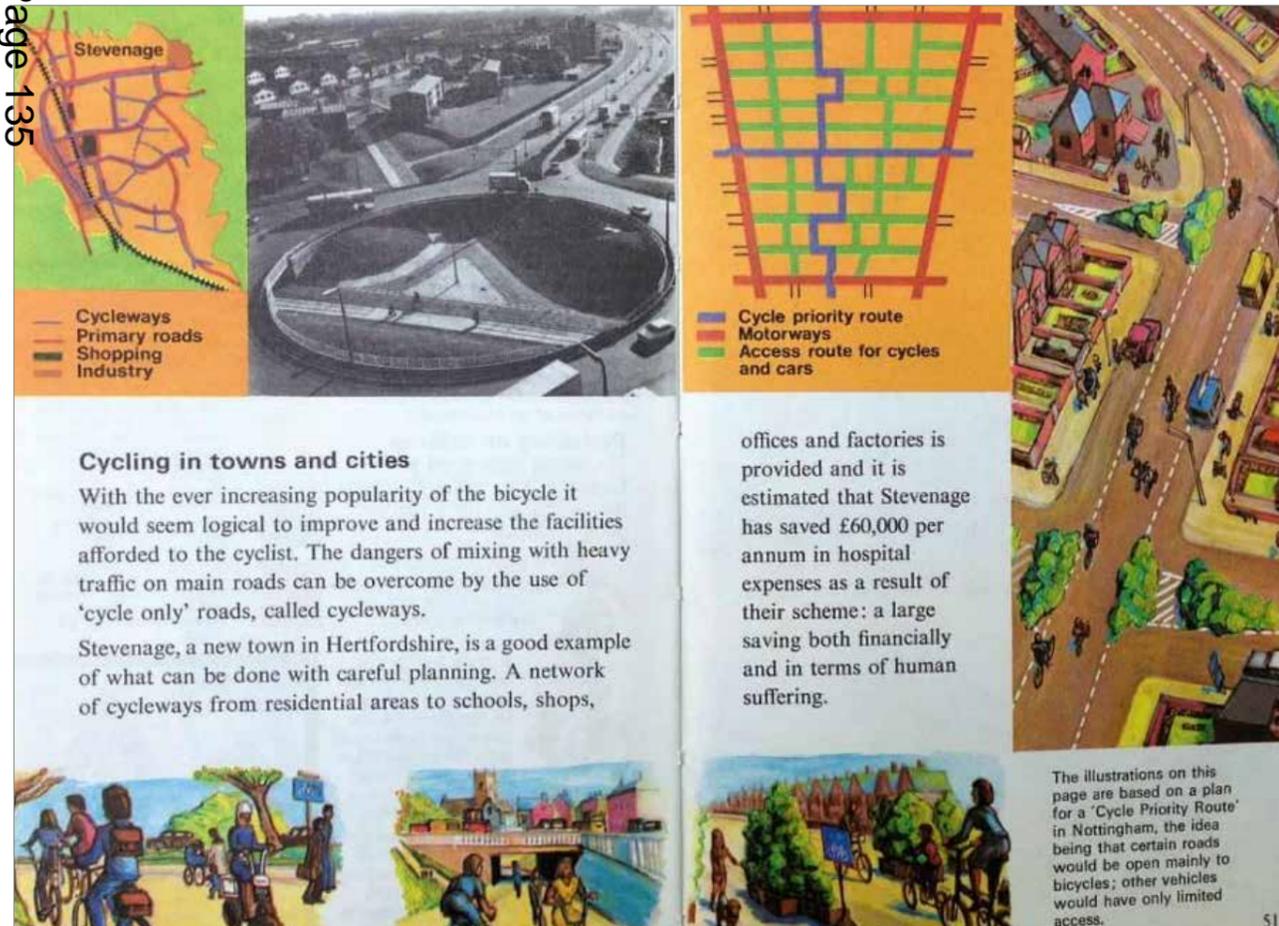


Figure 9: Ladybird book about cycling lauding Stevenage's planning

A barrier to east-west movement

The station area is currently configured as an 'edge' to the town centre, with a single constrained pedestrian connection through the rail station towards the Leisure Park to the west. This constrained connection discourages movement across the railway tracks. Coupled with the poor quality of north-south pedestrian movement and barriers for cyclists through the AAP area, the land is poorly used due to this edge placement.

To realise the aims of the Central Regeneration Framework with the station area as a central node and place within the expanded town centre, a reconfiguration of movement through the area is required. Better connections east-to-west, with the intention of providing a clear pedestrian link all the way from the current town centre to Gunnells Wood Road, require a change to land use and road space allocation outside the station.

Little support for active modes

The station is connected to Stevenage's extensive segregated cycle path network, and hosts 194 cycle parking spaces, which are well used. There is, however, limited space to expand the cycle provision due to site constraints. The Stevenage Cycle Strategy Action Plan calls for additional spaces at the station. Although there is CCTV, bicycle theft remains an issue, the current facilities are only partially covered, and are constricted in space, conflicting with pedestrian movements on pavements. To support Stevenage's ambitious cycle strategy, and build on the New Town legacy of Stevenage as a town built for the bicycle, modern, safe and secure cycle facilities must be provided so that station users can easily interchange between local cycle mobility and regional rail mobility.

Walking to and from the station is also more difficult than it needs to be. Footpaths are narrow, and the main route from the town centre runs across a narrow bridge through the Arts & Leisure Centre complex and above Lytton Way. Although this bridge runs down a ramp by the time it arrives in the town square, this does restrict accessibility and requires all users of the station area to climb a level.

It is vital to improve the station-area environment for active travel modes. As shown in Figure 10, accessibility analysis indicates that the majority of Stevenage is within a 15-minute cycling catchment of the station (around 85-90,000 people), and this catchment is increased with the use of electric bicycles. A significant fraction, approximately 45-50,000 people, are within 10 minutes cycle ride.

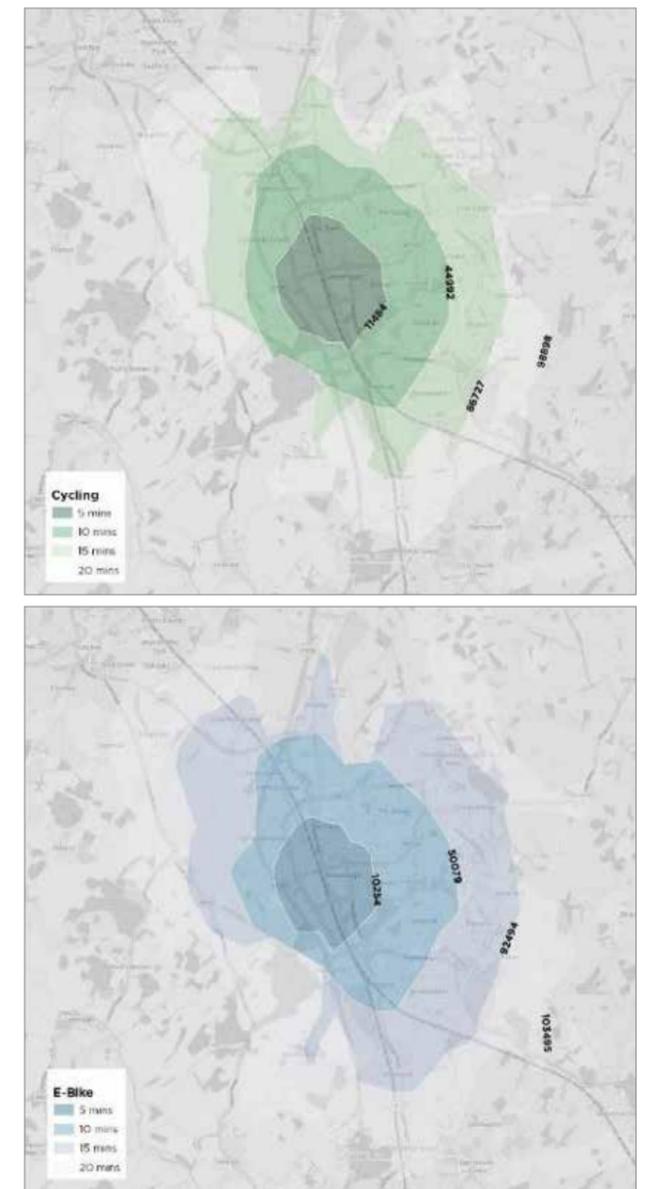


Figure 10: Accessibility isochrones with population enclosed figures (2011) for cycling and e-bike modes

A station in need of an upgrade

Stevenage rail station is one of the three busiest stations in Hertfordshire (along with St Albans and Watford) and is a major stop on the East Coast Main Line. Built in the 1970s, the station buildings are no longer able to adequately cope with the level of passenger traffic through them. With the building of a new terminating platform, and the potential long-term for additional public through traffic using the station bridge to access development on the western side of the tracks, a new station building is necessary.

In 2017 Arup completed a study on different options for a new railway station, based on the parameters set in the Stevenage Central Framework. This reinforced the framework's core principles and the study forms the basis of an understanding for how a new station might interface with the surrounding area. The Arup study found that a new station built on an overbridge to the south of the existing station buildings would be the strongest option. This new axis would align with the Mace SG1 masterplan route into the town centre and the entrance to the new bus station.

Policy TC4 of the Stevenage Local Plan states that within the Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area, planning permission will be granted for an extended and regenerated train station. It is uncertain when a new station would be forthcoming, so it will be necessary for the AAP to include phasing options, which provide future-proofing for accommodating the existing station and the new station, as well as responding to and setting key parameters for a new station building.

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Figure 11: View of 'The Square' from Arup's Rail Station Vision Study

Constricted space – except for cars

The area in front of the station is extremely constricted at ground level for any user other than vehicles. There is little pedestrian space for movement along Lytton Way, particularly outside the station where pavements become cramped and filled with street furniture. Pavements have been reallocated as parking space for bicycles, scooters and motorcycles, and also function as waiting areas for cramped bus stops.

Much pedestrian movement occurs on the first floor level, leaving ground level unoccupied except for essential use.

Contrasting this cramped environment for many users is the extensive space given over to vehicles, in carriageway space, slip lanes and car parking. This creates a very large and over-scaled space with underused land.



Figure 12: Public realm colonised by cramped motorcycle parking



Figure 13: Walking, cycle parking, bus stop and other street furniture in a small space

Safety Issues

A range of safety issues present themselves within the station area. Stations are used day and night, and the area surrounding them must perform the basic function of providing safety and reassurance at all hours. Poor overlooking and passive surveillance of the ground level leads to a perception of a lack of safety, particularly when dark. Cycle paths are also isolated and poorly overlooked. A lack of uses fronting the space other than the rail station, where dwell times are typically low as a place of transit, means there are generally few people about.

The dominance of road infrastructure, with high traffic speeds, no crossing points and barrier fencing down the central reservation creates road safety issues where pedestrians and cyclists are unable to safely navigate the environment.

Accessibility Issues

A single, non-Equalities Act-compliant lift is the only alternative to the stairs to get to concourse level from Lytton Way. This poses frequent challenges and difficulties for wheelchair users, parents with pushchairs, the elderly and infirm.

Development Issues

The station area should also be a key location for a range of land uses, particularly commercial space and high density residential buildings, building on the excellent sustainable mobility options. At present, however, the land around the station is used primarily for surface car parking. The key piece of land between Lytton Way and the railway tracks is too constricted in width to accommodate typical commercial or residential developments, and the street environment is too poor to support an attractive, walkable place within which to site new development.

The area around the station is a key location for economic competitiveness. Locations a similar time distance away from London terminals are seeing considerable commercial growth, such as Reading, Slough, Milton Keynes and Croydon. Stevenage is perfectly placed in terms of mobility, and already hosts major international companies. Only 20 minutes from the major Kings Cross development and the business area around Farringdon (where Thameslink and Crossrail will interchange), the opportunity to establish a significant business environment adjacent to the station is considerable.

As a result, this piece of land is valuable for the town and the wider region, and should be more intensively used than it currently is.

Immediately fronting the station is the existing Arts & Leisure Centre and Gordon Craig Theatre complex, with a high-level walkway running through. It is anticipated that this will remain for the foreseeable future, although the Arts & Leisure Centre part may be moved in the medium-term. As such provision should be made in any options for the area to work well with a fully retained or only half-retained building.

Figure 14: Station Quarter, Slough



Figure 16: Ruskin Square, East Croydon



Figure 15: Construction work in Stevenage Town Centre



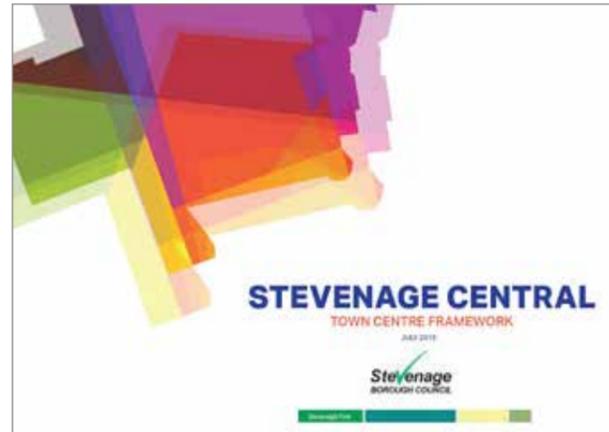
Figure 17: New Santander HQ adjacent to Milton Keynes rail station

Responding to existing work

A significant amount of previous planning and design work has gone on in Stevenage town centre, including the railway station AAP area. The AAP will build upon this work. Much of the previous work undertaken builds in core principles and creates underlying flexibility for future detailed plans to work within.

Stevenage Central Framework (DLA, 2016)

This work established the core principles of movement between the station and town centre, key development sites such as the station, and the principle of removing Lytton Way as a part of the ring road system. It also established the principle of more intensive development to the west of the railway tracks, using the station as a node.



Rail Station Vision (Arup, 2017)

This study was developed by Arup, as Government advisors. It looked at, high-level, urban design options for a new station and how it would interface with the immediate surrounds. All options considered had their merits and there was positive engagement with a wide range of stakeholders. As such the parameters established are key to design options within the AAP area. The preferred option in the report is **The Square**, and this is the option worked up in detail. Other options in the report sought to reduce any day to day disruption for commuters and rail operators.

The design work establishes core parameters to respond to:

- Steps to access the bridge, with a lift to provide step-free access
- Stairways approx. 12m wide at top
- Lift accessed through passage next to retail space
- Bridge at +7m from existing ground level
- Space at +3.5m, which provides access into interior courts at first storey level
- Public right of way across bridge, with entrance and ticket line for station on the bridge above the tracks

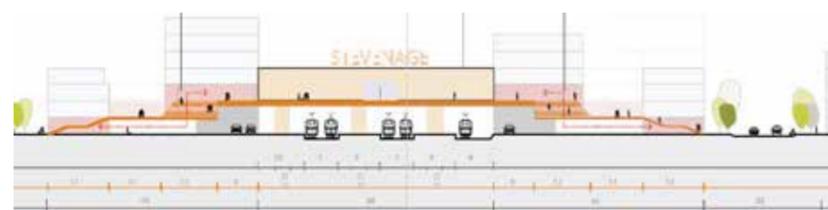


Figure 18: Section of preferred option for new railway station

Although this is a long-term vision of how the station could be configured, in the short and medium-term, the design presents some issues for the AAP to respond to:

- The detailed design presented relies upon the removal of the existing Arts & Leisure Centre complex, to re-route the centreline of Lytton Way across that site. At present this is not considered feasible for SBC, so an alternative configuration must be found
- The taxi and drop-off areas ('kiss and ride') are located on the western side of the station. Although this is a long-term option, the AAP area does not include this land and must include taxi and drop-off movements within its boundaries in order to retain that function

- The steps of the bridge on the eastern side run towards the existing Arts & Leisure Centre and miss the opportunity to align with the routing past the bus station and into town that responds to the Mace SG1 masterplan (see below). The Arts & Leisure Centre building is likely to be redeveloped in the future, allowing for a potential at-grade crossing and making the bridge a secondary form of access.

As such the rail station vision provides core principles and parameters to respond to, but is not at present able to form a detailed spatial plan for the centre of the AAP area immediately adjacent to the station. Further detail will be required on configuration of spaces, streets and different mobility modes in the AAP.



The AAP's spatial proposals will reserve a site for a potential new station or enhanced station entrance, following the parameters set out in Arup's work. Reserving a site in planning policy terms ensures that present-day development and proposals do not prejudice future developments to provide a new or enhanced station. Without this approach a considerable and needed improvement for the town could be prevented, and an opportunity lost.



Figure 19: Renders of proposed new station

SG1 Masterplan (Mace, 2018)

The emerging SG1 masterplan (Mace, 2018), proposes the main station-to-town pedestrian route is placed one block to the south of that in the Framework. This aligns with the front of the Arts & Leisure Centre, past the proposed bus station, and then sets up the potential to align with a new railway station building built to the south of the existing station. It will be important to ensure that desire lines are observed between the Mace Boulevard, leading to the Town Square and towards the Station are as direct as possible and maintain visual connection as much as possible.



Figure 20: SG1 masterplan from Design & Access Statement (2019)

05 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

05 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

Existing Land Uses

At present the following land uses exist:

- Railway station and associated bridge, access and entrance buildings
- Existing cycleway
- Surface car parking for the station
- Lytton Way highways infrastructure
- Some buffer green space
- Adjacent to the TC4 area is:
 - The Gordon Craig Theatre
 - Stevenage Arts & Leisure Centre
 - Stevenage Police Station
 - Tesco supermarket
 - Stevenage Magistrates' Court



Figure 21 Lytton Way
Proposed Enhancements

Existing Movement

- At present a range of different mobility modes cross the area, as shown in Figure 22.
- Pedestrians: an incomplete network of pedestrian links creates a fragmented environment that is difficult to navigate on foot
- Cyclists: the main cycle path runs north-to-south along the railway line edge and through the underpasses at the northern and southern ends of Lytton Way
- Buses: buses currently run north-to-south along Lytton Way and enter the central bus station along Danesgate. There is a bus stop outside the railway station which is constricted in waiting space and must be accessed via the footbridge. The new bus station will occupy space in front of the Arts & Leisure Centre and it is anticipated in the short term that the existing bus loop along Danesgate will be shortened to not include the old bus station
- Taxis and Drop Off: taxis drop off directly outside the station in a combined taxi and public drop-off area. This is very constricted and lacks much space for waiting taxis. It also encourages public drop-off to block the area due to lack of space.
- Parking: there is extensive surface car parking across the TC4 area and it forms the dominant land use. There are a total of 453 surface public car parking spaces within the boundary, along with additional space in a very constricted car park for station staff directly adjacent to the station.
- Servicing: service accesses to the station and neighbouring land uses come from Lytton Way.
- Although the New Town masterplanning approach promoted separation of traffic modes, there are a number of conflict points between cars and active modes, particularly at the station entrance. There are also issues where cars take priority over pedestrians and force more circuitous routes than necessary. Pedestrian flows are expected to change upon completion of the new bus station.
- Level access across the station area is a particular challenge posed by the topography of the Station Gateway site as a whole and may pose some development and mobility issues to address.

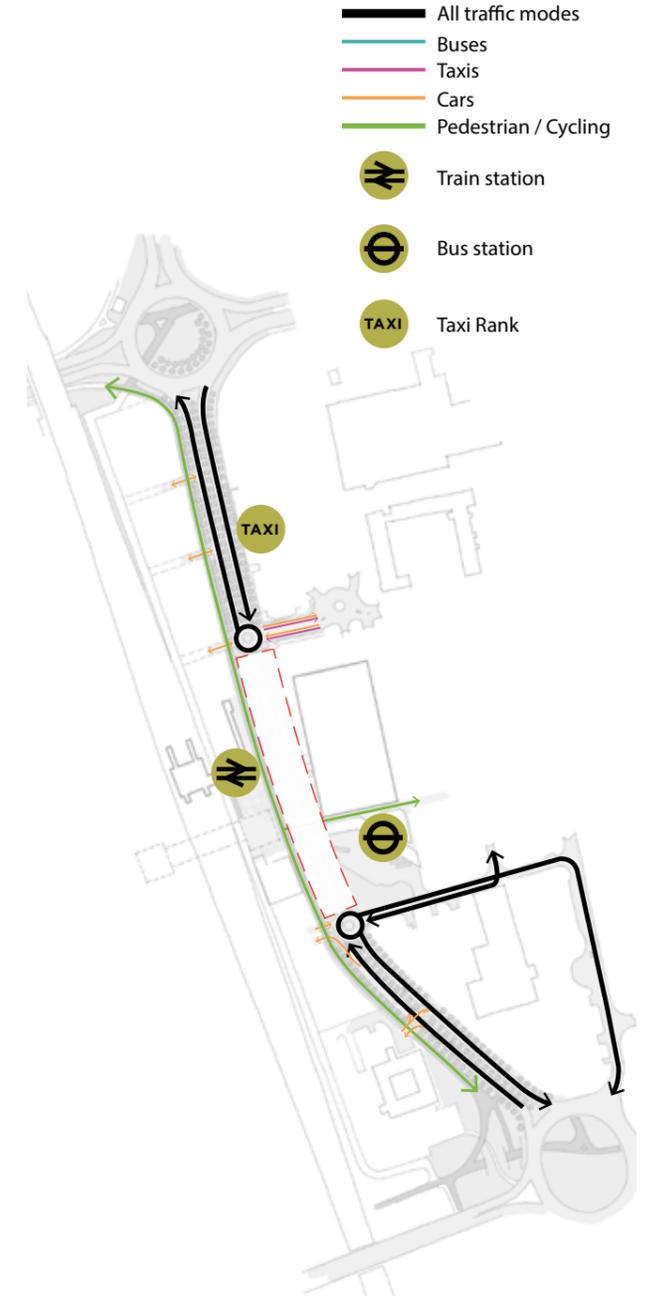


Figure 22 Lytton Way
Access & Movement Strategy

Existing Green Infrastructure

The site contains little green infrastructure (GI) at present, except for highway verges and verges within surface car parking. At the northern end, there is some landscaping and grass adjacent to the roundabout on Lytton Way. Within the car parks, there are some trees that break up the parking. The new bus station (currently under construction) provides some enhancement of GI with trees and grass at the southern edge.

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The new bus station (currently under construction) will fall within the AAP area directly to the south of the Arts & Leisure Centre on the existing car park.



New bus station adjacent to Arts & Leisure Centre



06 EMERGING FRAMEWORK

06 EMERGING FRAMEWORK

Objectives

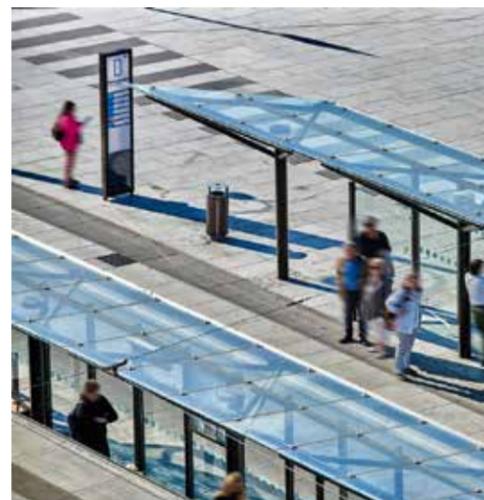
The baseline analysis presented in previous chapters point towards a series of complementary objectives to address the issues facing the station area. Interventions in the AAP area should deliver:

- **A new gateway and arrival experience:** the station area should create a sense of arrival in a distinctive and vibrant place. It should be welcoming, safe, legible and accessible to all and capitalise on helpful wayfinding and positive signposting.
- **Enhanced movement & access for all modes:** rationalisation of space currently given over to vehicles will increase space for walking and cycling, making movement and access better and easier for all, with good segregation to ensure safety. Effective transport interchange between sustainable modes should be facilitated by grouping of activities and modes.
- **Green infrastructure integrated throughout:** 'greening the grey', by converting surfaces to permeable green infrastructure and habitats provides relief from dense urban environments, enhances biodiversity, creates more pleasant microclimates, improves air quality and urban drainage, and contributes to attractive public realm and placemaking.
- **New mixed use development to unlock the economic opportunity:** Stevenage's location and connectivity create the perfect conditions for strong economic growth. The station area is the ideal place to locate new development to support this, with sustainable transport connections and under-used land. The AAP will support this with a new mix of uses designed to create a vibrant and successful place.

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- **Creating a low-carbon urban village:** mixing new homes, employment, retail and other uses with strong placemaking and exceptional mobility has the potential to deliver on Stevenage's ambitious climate change targets, creating an exemplar development in the heart of the town. It must be flexible to accommodate changing lifestyles, encourage low car ownership rates, and including buildings that are adaptable.
- **Sustainability in mobility, built form and landscaping:** the station area has a significant part to play in creating supporting active travel and other low-carbon travel modes, as well as creating sustainable development opportunities. Development must be future-proofed for new technologies, with resilience and adaptability to new forms of micro-mobility such as e-scooters.
- **Celebrating the heritage of the town:** as one of the original New Towns, with a unique heritage and design, Stevenage's station area must reflect what makes the town special and use it to create a sense of place on arrival and departure.
- **Making the most of digital connectivity and high speed broadband:** many firms and some industries already located in Stevenage operate at a global level and have a tradition of research and development, innovation and high-tech solutions. In order to maintain these industries and attract further economic growth, the town must continue to offer the best possible digital connectivity to businesses, residents and visitors, in particular high speed broadband on arrival to Stevenage Station.



Key principles

To deliver on these objectives, a set of design principles has been adopted that will be carried through the process of creating the AAP. These are:

- Enhance the station arrival experience, wayfinding and signposting to create a people-friendly space
- Improve step-free, disabled and accessible pedestrian links with town centre
- Improve links between rail and bus stations
- Turn Lytton Way into a 'town street'
- Create good access for all travel modes with high quality, attractive cycling facilities, and prioritising sustainable and active modes
- Make ground level the place where pedestrians move
- Consolidate surface car parking to make better use of land and enable development opportunities



Image: Georgina Westley



- High quality public realm, green infrastructure and creating space and opportunities for landscaping through rationalisation of vehicle space
- Future proof for possible station upgrade, replacement of the Leisure Centre and improved links and development west of the rail station
- Design in flexibility to accommodate changing behaviours and the most up to date and attractive technology and high speed digital connection
- Celebrate the heritage of the town in the fabric, layout and design of the station gateway
- Creating a lasting legacy of high quality placemaking
- Putting people first, at the heart of the decision-making process

Options for Lytton Way

At the heart of the issues affecting Stevenage's station area is the design and function of Lytton Way. It severs the station from the town centre, provides a barrier and unpleasant environment for active travel modes and the public realm, uses land inefficiently so as to create unusable development parcels between it and the railway line, and undermines SBC and HCC's commitment to sustainable transportation.

The Town Centre Regeneration Framework pinpoints the downgrading and potential removal of Lytton Way to through traffic as a key plank of its strategy for good placemaking and regeneration of the town centre. This has been endorsed by the relevant stakeholders and will be carried forward by the AAP as the basis for policy in the area.

To unlock the potential of the AAP area, it is essential first to determine the preferred option for a redesign of Lytton Way. This chapter of the report presents the core enhancements proposed, a range of options for the key central area between Swingate and Danesgate, and then a series of themes that the reconfiguration of Lytton Way will enable.

Core Enhancements

All proposed options for the reconfiguration of Lytton Way have a set of core enhancements, primarily in the northern and southern zones of the AAP area, north of Swingate and south of Danesgate. These apply to all options:

- A reduction in the width of Lytton Way, with the space reallocated to pedestrian or cycling movement, street trees and other landscaped green infrastructure. In these northern and southern areas Lytton Way will remain open to all modes, providing continued access for other parts of the town centre.

- An additional segregated cycleway adjacent to Lytton Way, away from the railway tracks. Making use of the improved street environment along Lytton Way, cycling along this route will become more attractive. Along with built form development along this route, this offers the advantages of creating an overlooked cycling route that will feel considerably safer to users than the current path adjacent to the tracks. It will add movement and vibrancy to the street and create visibility for all modes.
- Improved vehicle access to and egress from the police station, making use of the reduction in speeds and change in character of Lytton Way to offer a limited use right-turn access box.
- A large public square that creates a flexible entrance space from the existing station building, future-proofed for a new station or enhanced station entrance further to the south.
- Facilitation of the key East-West pedestrian 'boulevard' route running from west of the railway line through to the existing town centre, crossing at the railway station and the proposed public square in front. The enhancements proposed enable this connection to be made and provide the key spaces through which it will pass through within the AAP area.
- A 'cycle hub' compatible with existing and potential new station buildings, that contains secure cycle parking, cycle hire schemes, cycle maintenance facilities and the potential for a local transport information point to aid multi-modal interchange. Above the cycle hub on the ground floor would be development opportunities.
- Development plots made available by the consolidation of surface car parking into a multi-storey car park.

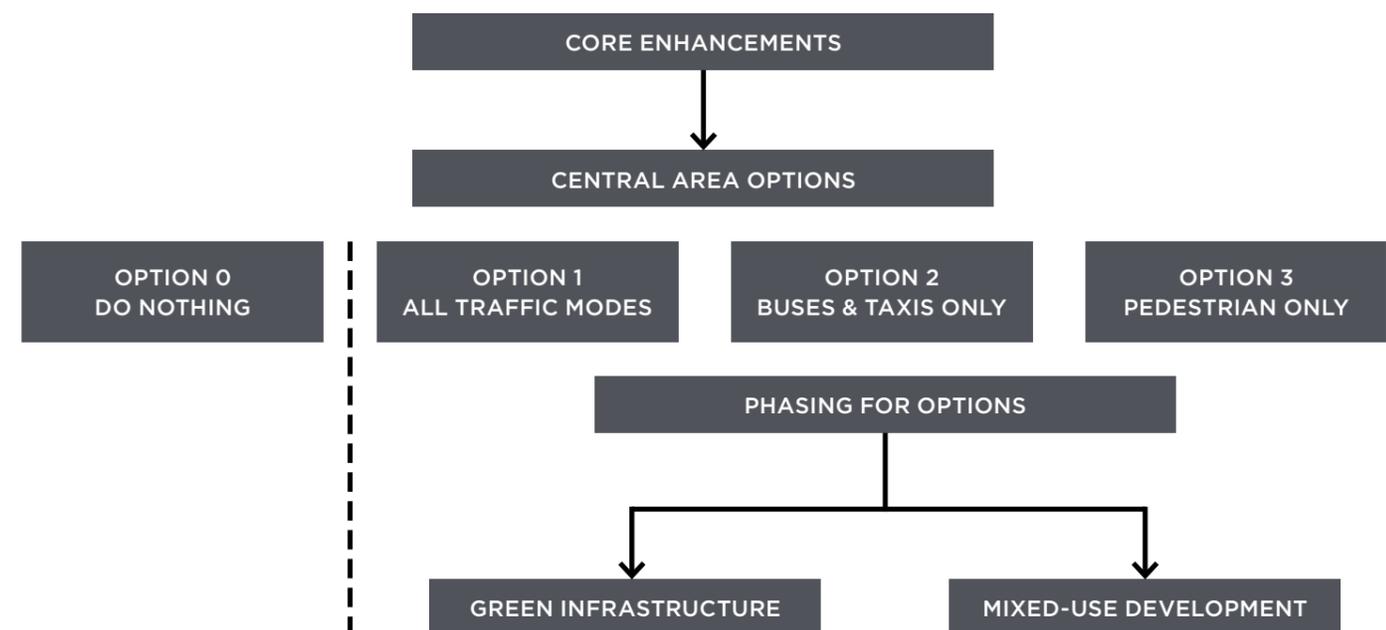
Sections AA, BB and CC demonstrate the re-allocation of land use and street space from underuse vehicle capacity towards active travel and green infrastructure, improving access for all modes while retaining existing functionality and providing a much improved street environment.

The following headings illustrate the core options available within the central area, defined as that south of Swingate and north of Danesgate.

It is important to note that the following Central Area Options 1, 2, and 3 will be subject to detailed highways modelling appraisal which will be carried out by Stevenage Borough Council in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council, the Highway Authority. This will include, for example, the impact of increased traffic flow from the potential reduction in width of Lytton Way, and on access and egress onto and from Lytton Way.

Modelling will also address the impact on key routes in the vicinity. This includes St. George's Way, Gunnels Wood Road and linkages to the A1(M), at peak times in particular. Modelling analysis will inform the Options outlined in this Area Action Plan and help to inform decisions on any Preferred Options chosen for the Area Action Plan.

An additional option, Option 0 for the Stevenage Station Gateway area is for this section of Lytton Way to remain as a 3-lane dual carriageway. This would retain the existing layout of Lytton Way and provide access to the new Bus Interchange. Advantages include retained access for vehicle traffic through this area and linkages with the new Bus Interchange. Disadvantages include the Issues and Challenges, identified in Chapter 4, persisting and not being addressed adequately.



Core Enhancements

All proposed options for the reconfiguration of Lytton Way have a set of core enhancements. These are:

- A reduction in the width of Lytton Way, with the space reallocated from vehicles to people and green infrastructure
- An additional segregated cycleway adjacent to Lytton Way
- Improved vehicle access to and egress from the police station
- A large public square that creates a flexible entrance space from the rail station
- Facilitation of the key East-West pedestrian 'boulevard' route running from west of the railway line through to the existing town

3 options are shown on the following pages for the central area:
1 - ALL TRAFFIC MODES
2 - BUS & TAXI ACCESS ONLY
3 - PEDESTRIANISED CENTRAL PLAZA

3 options are shown on the following pages for the central area:
1 - ALL TRAFFIC MODES
2 - BUS & TAXI ACCESS ONLY
3 - PEDESTRIANISED CENTRAL PLAZA

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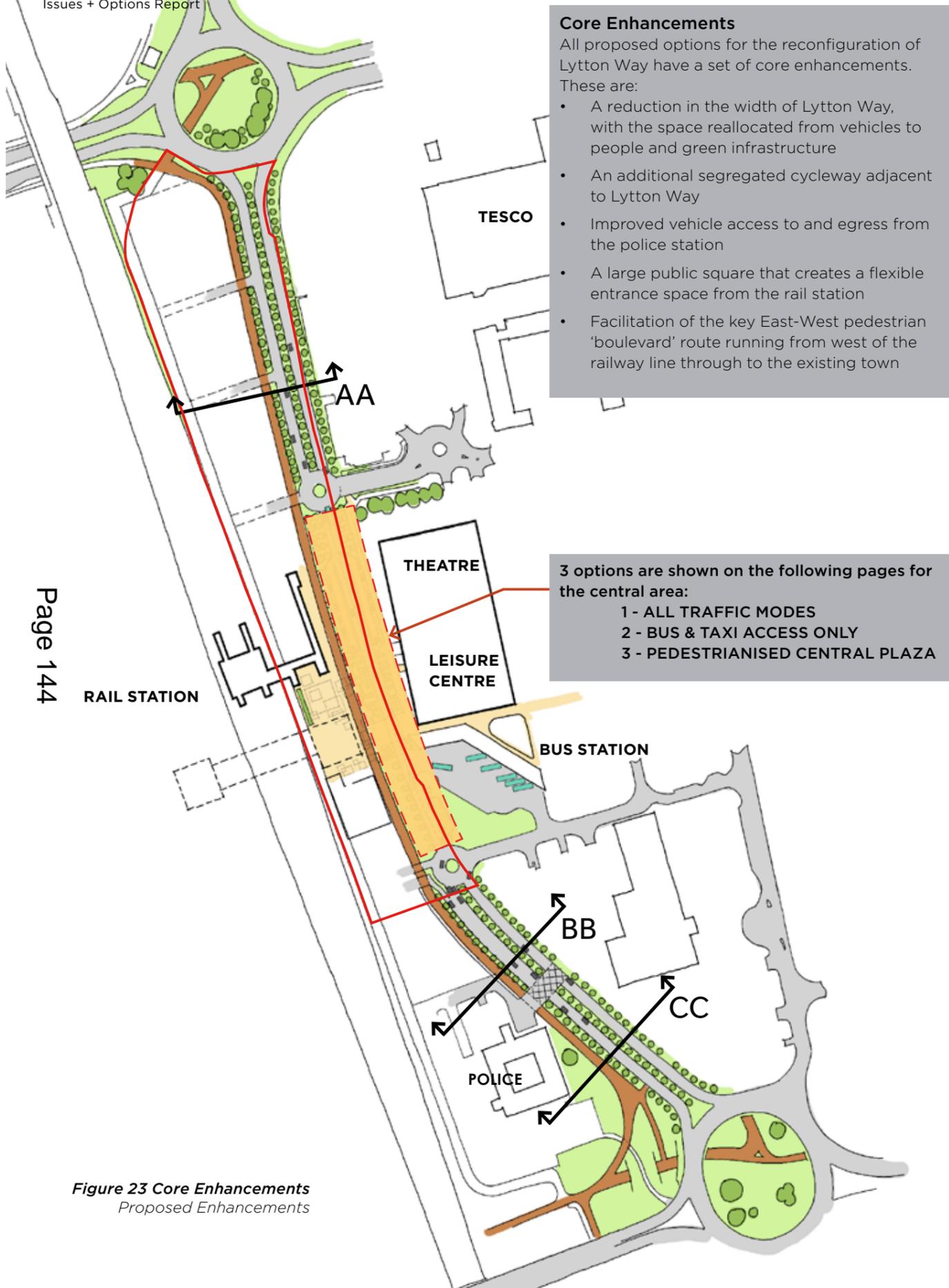


Figure 23 Core Enhancements
Proposed Enhancements

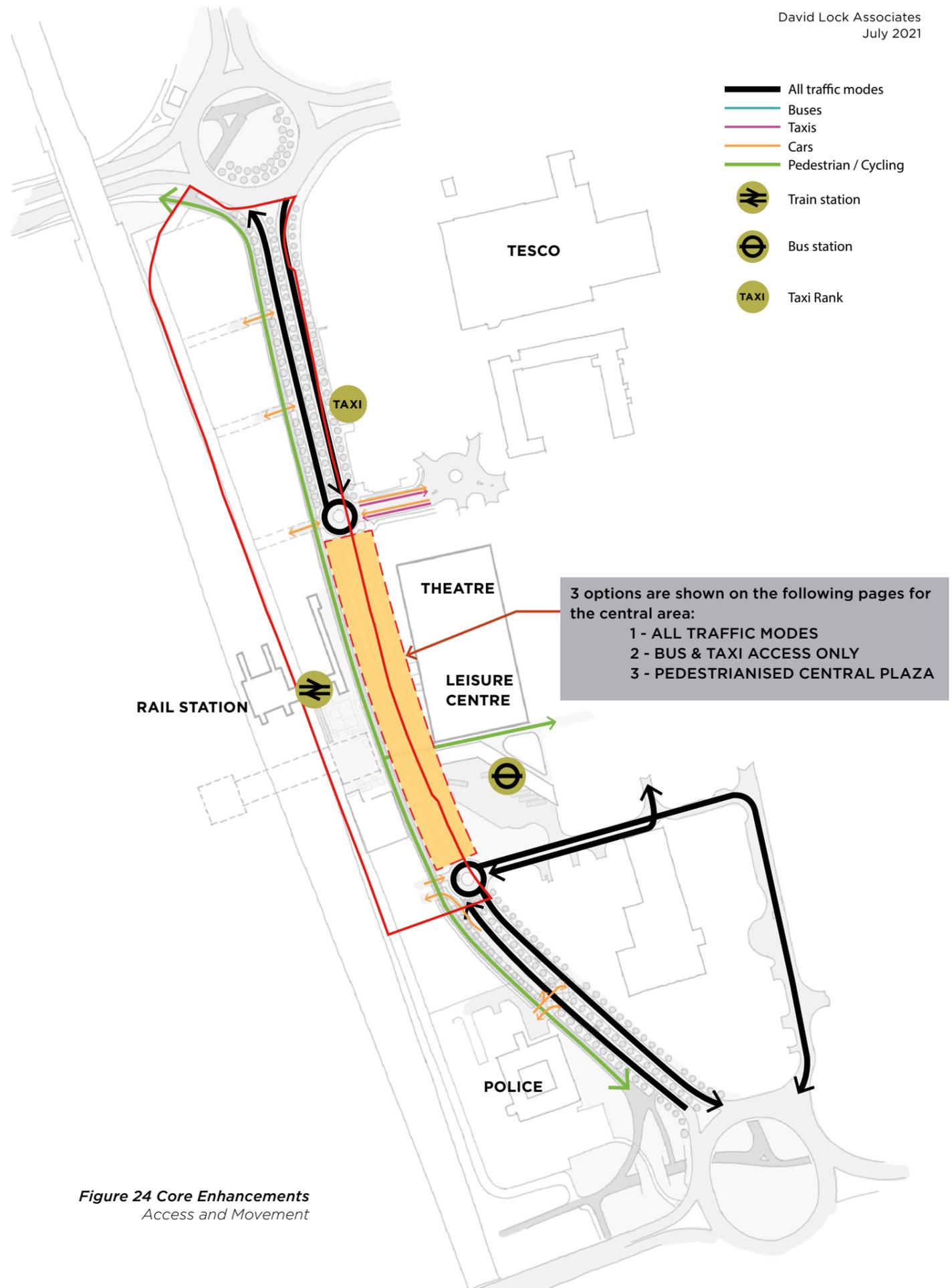


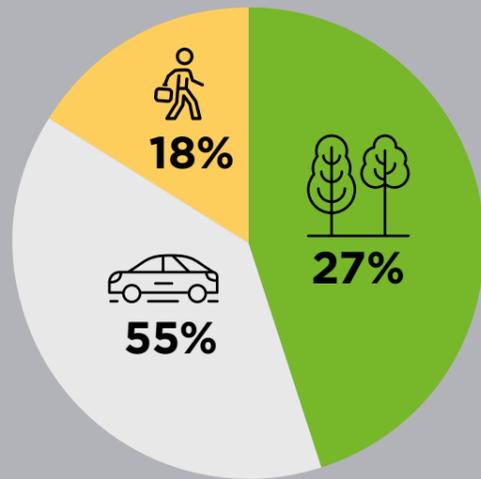
Figure 24 Core Enhancements
Access and Movement

SECTION BB

Illustrative sections showing the existing and proposed sectional profiles of Lytton Way.

The sections also include an analysis of land-use and activity by width, split into green space, pedestrian realm and vehicular realm. This is represented in the diagrams below showing the splits by percentage of the overall cross section.

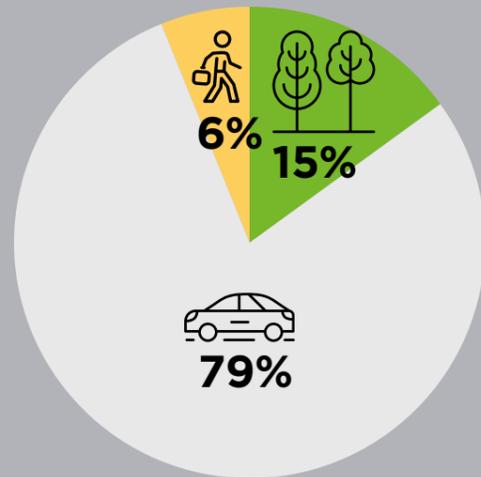
01 Proposed overall percentage



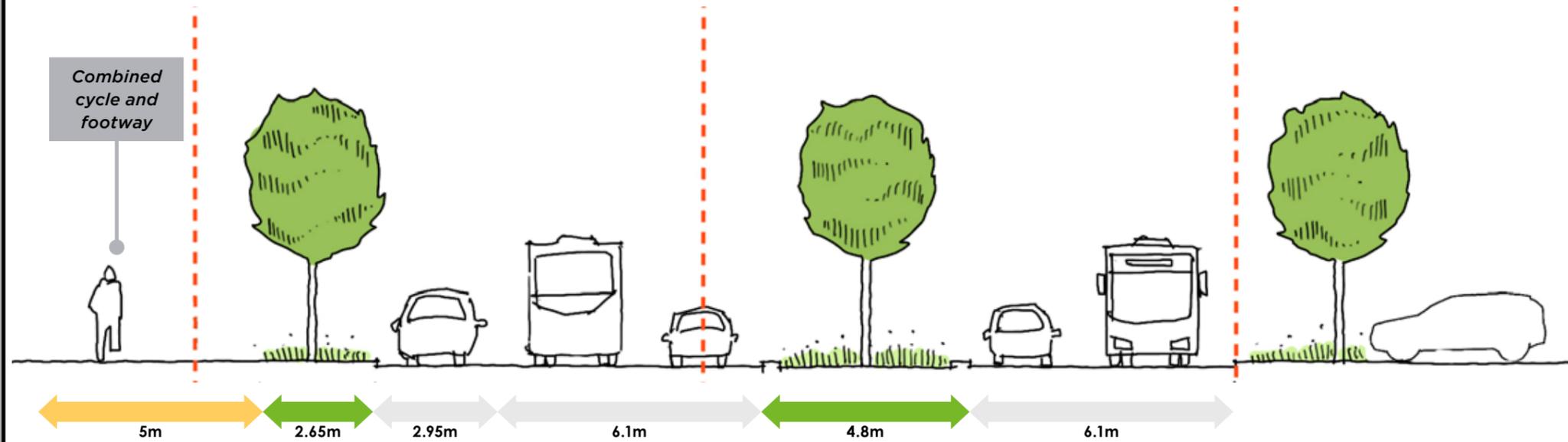
Page 146



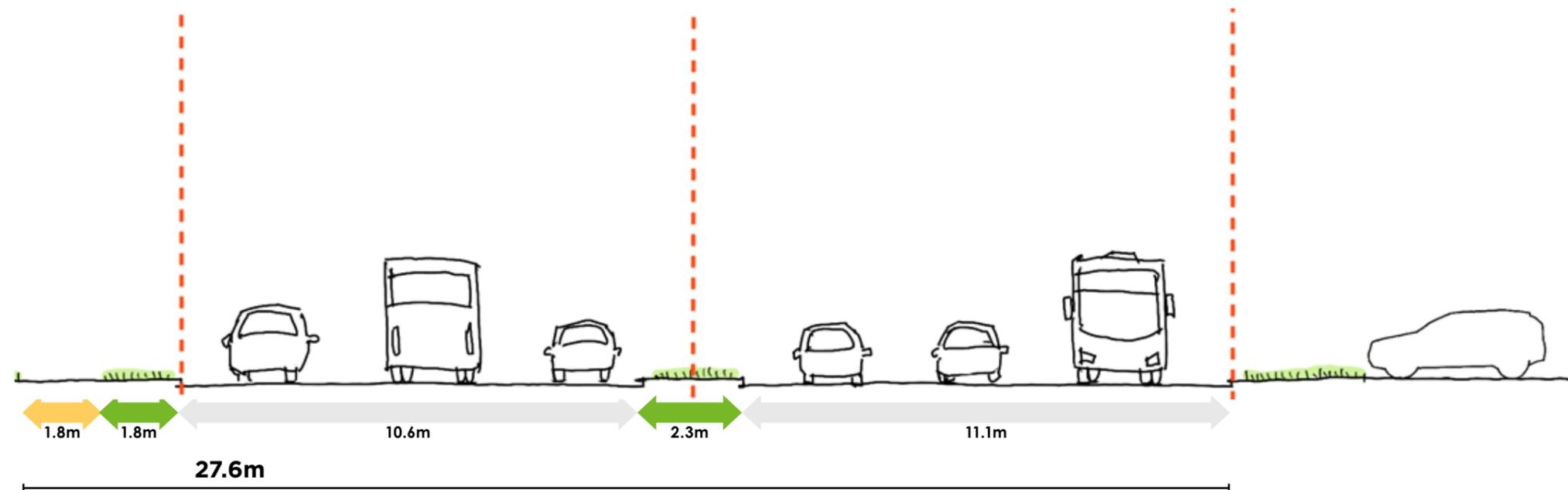
02 Existing overall percentage



01 PROPOSED



02 EXISTING

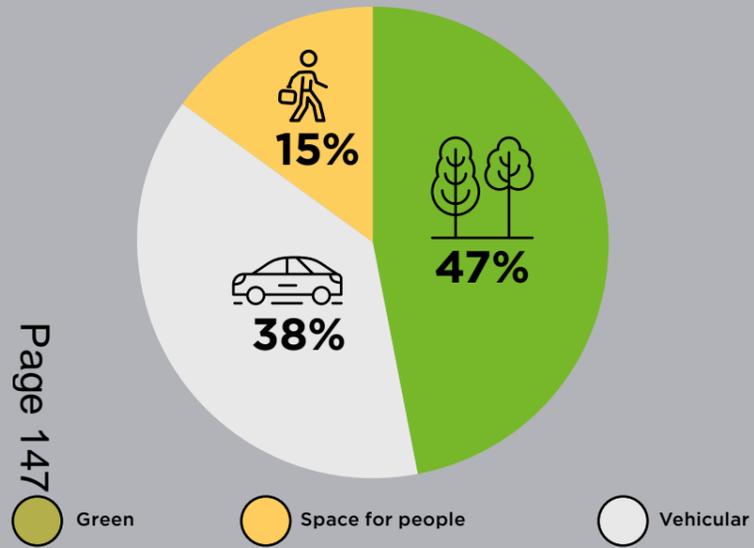


SECTION CC

Illustrative sections showing the existing and proposed sectional profiles of Lytton Way.

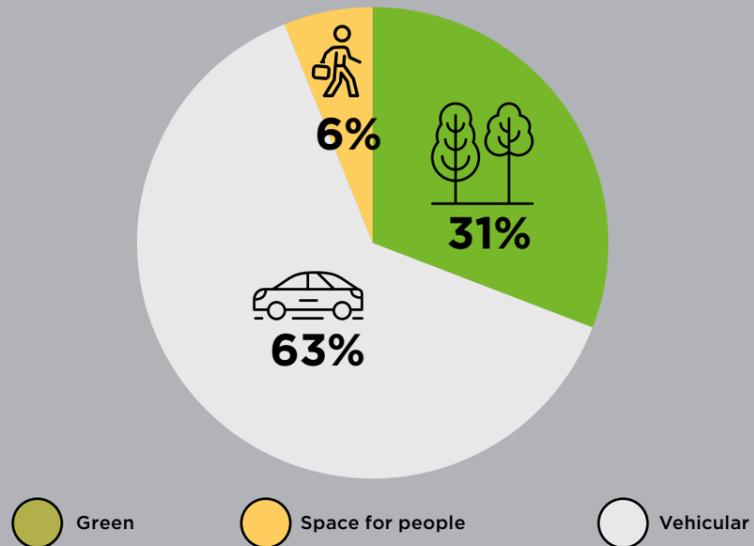
The sections also include an analysis of land-use and activity by width, split into green space, pedestrian realm and vehicular realm. This is represented in the diagrams below showing the splits by percentage of the overall cross section.

01 Proposed overall percentage

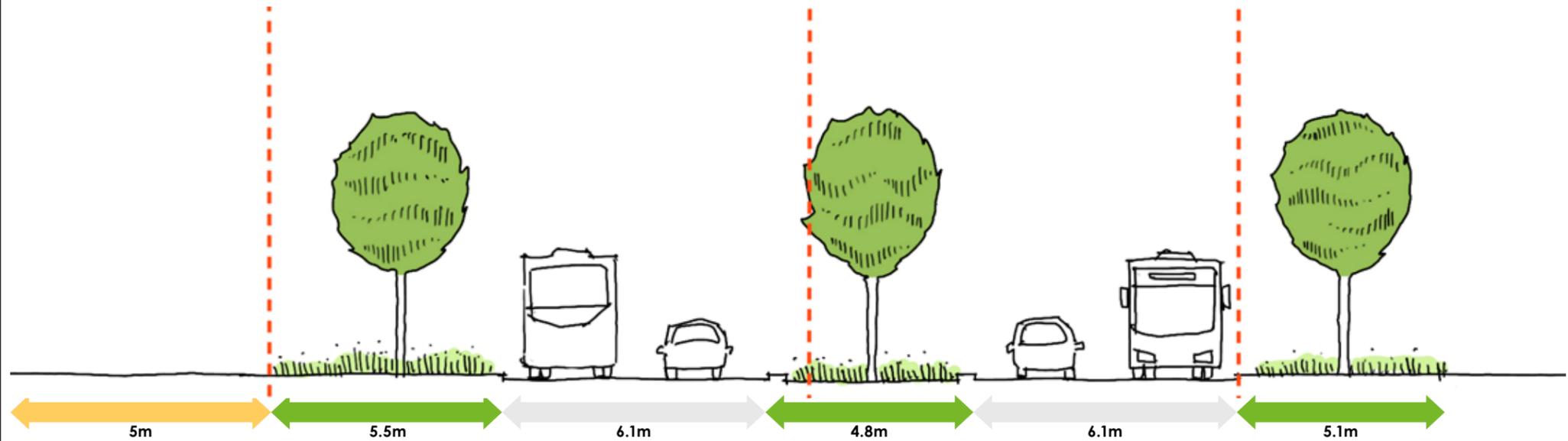


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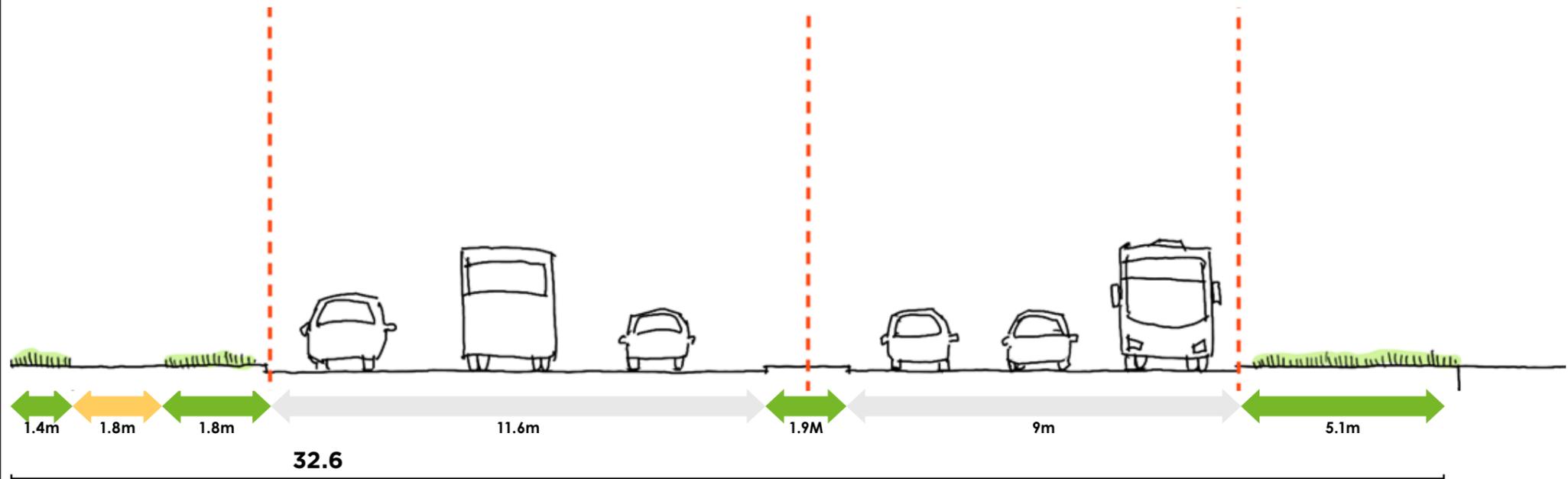
02 Existing overall percentage



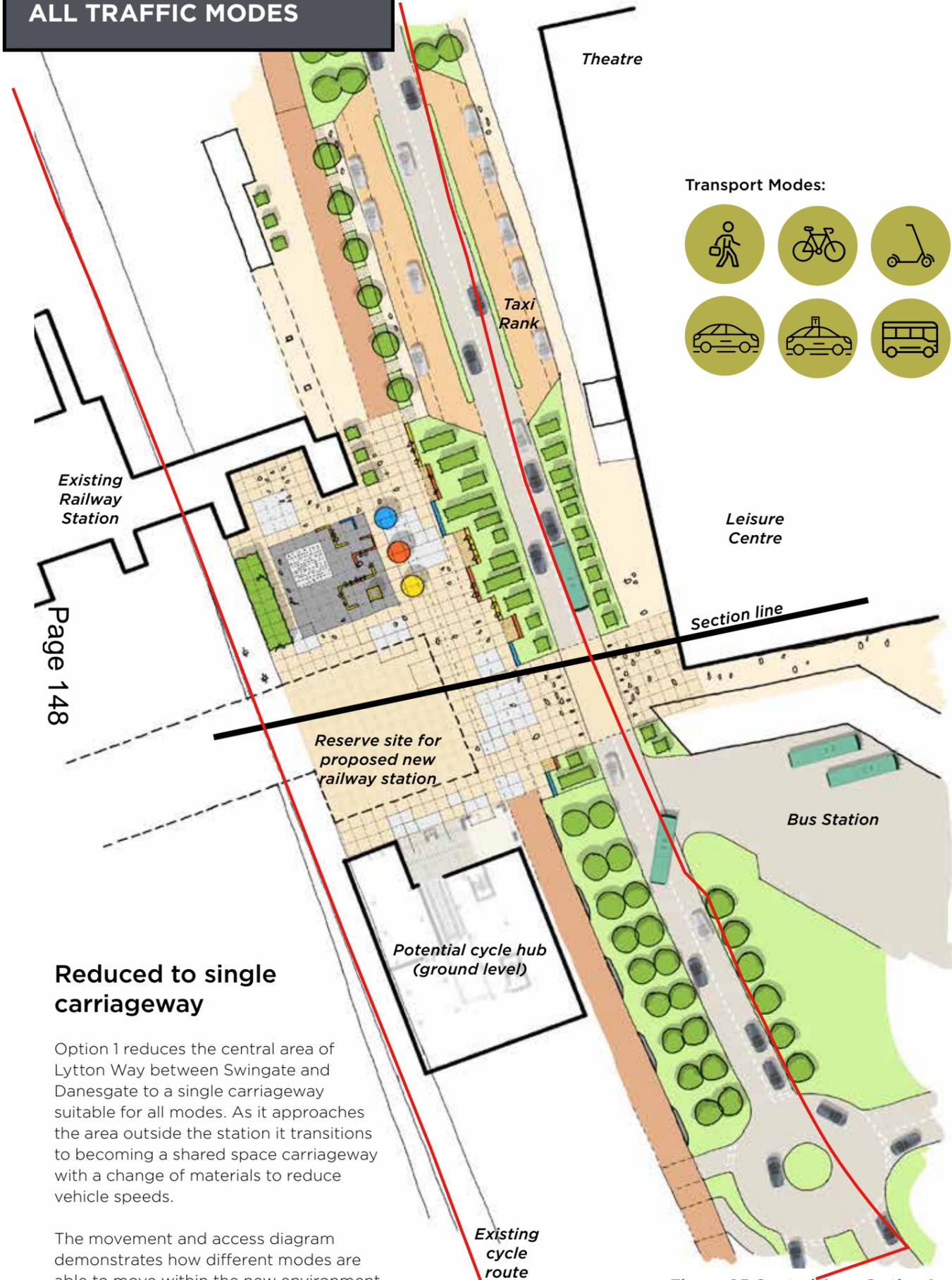
01 PROPOSED



02 EXISTING



**CENTRAL AREA OPTION 1
ALL TRAFFIC MODES**



Transport Modes:

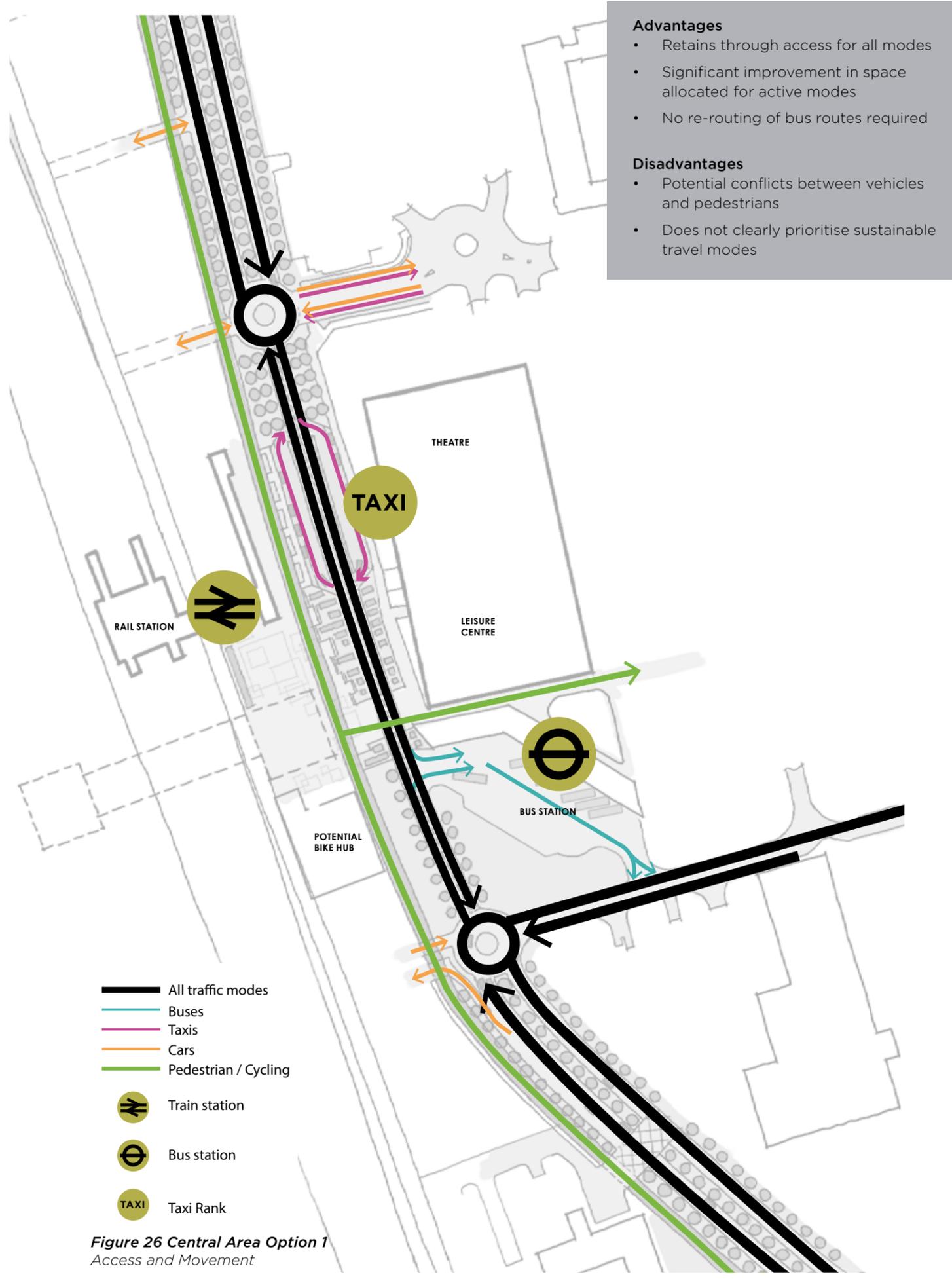
Reduced to single carriageway

Option 1 reduces the central area of Lytton Way between Swingate and Danesgate to a single carriageway suitable for all modes. As it approaches the area outside the station it transitions to becoming a shared space carriageway with a change of materials to reduce vehicle speeds.

The movement and access diagram demonstrates how different modes are able to move within the new environment.

**Figure 25 Central Area Option 1
All Traffic Modes**

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- Advantages**
- Retains through access for all modes
 - Significant improvement in space allocated for active modes
 - No re-routing of bus routes required
- Disadvantages**
- Potential conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians
 - Does not clearly prioritise sustainable travel modes

All traffic modes
 Buses
 Taxis
 Cars
 Pedestrian / Cycling
 Train station
 Bus station
 TAXI Rank

**Figure 26 Central Area Option 1
Access and Movement**

SECTION ALL TRAFFIC MODES

Illustrative sections showing the existing and proposed sectional profiles of Lytton Way.

The sections also include an analysis of land-use and activity by width, split into green space, pedestrian realm and vehicular realm. This is represented in the diagrams below showing the splits by percentage of the overall cross section.



Frideswide Square, Oxford

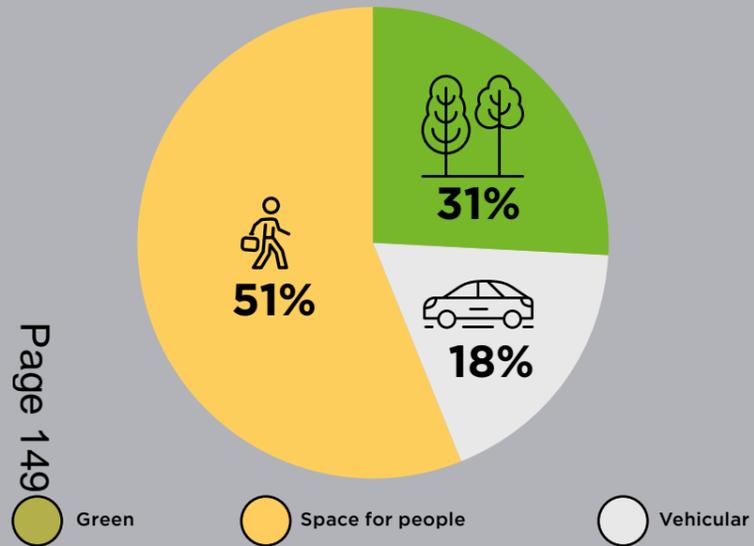


Bahnhofplatz, Aachen, Germany



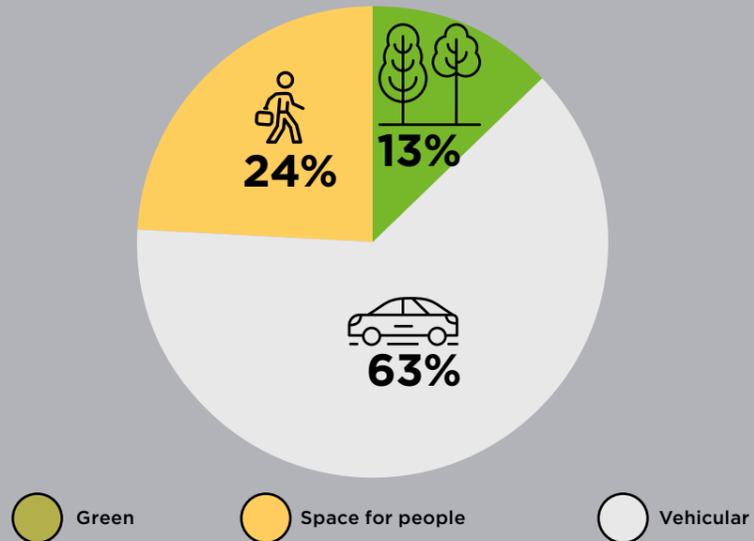
Slough Railway Station

01 Proposed overall percentage

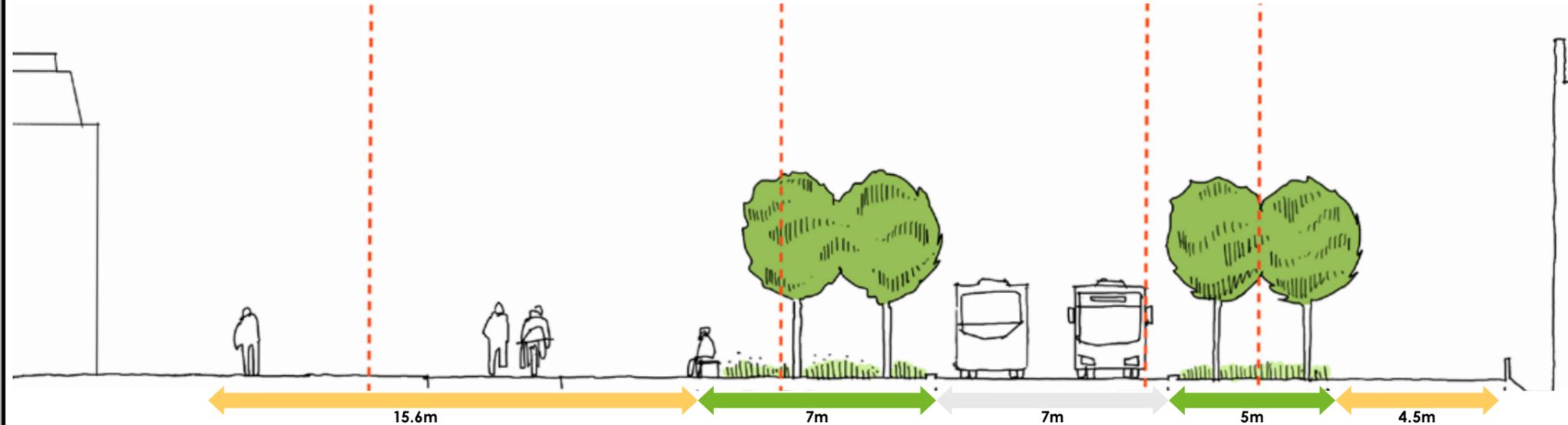


Page 149

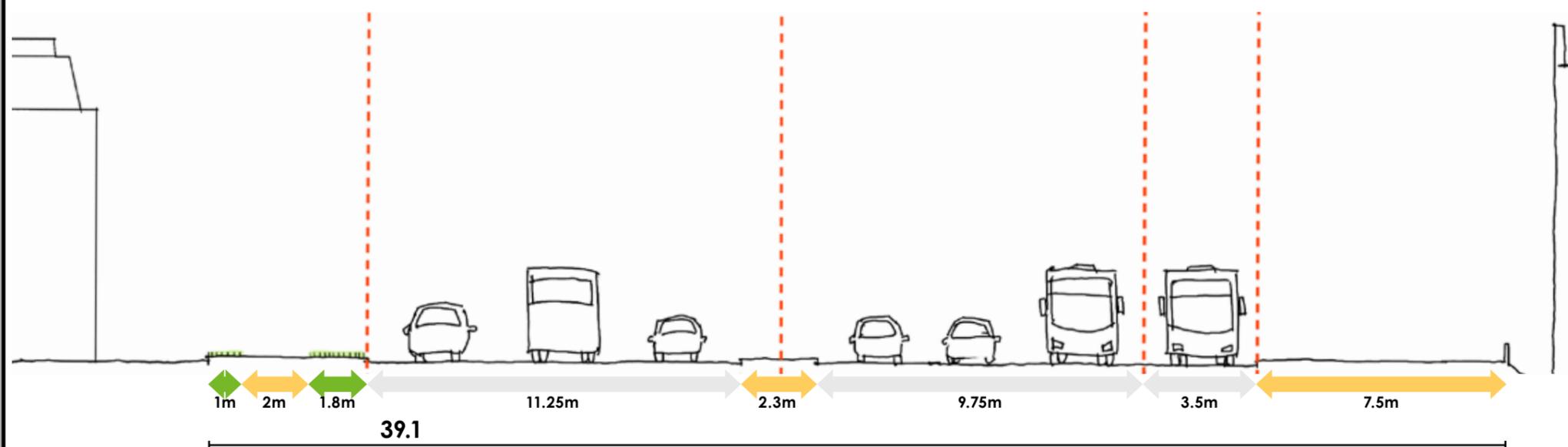
02 Existing overall percentage



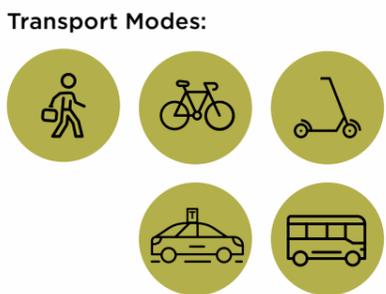
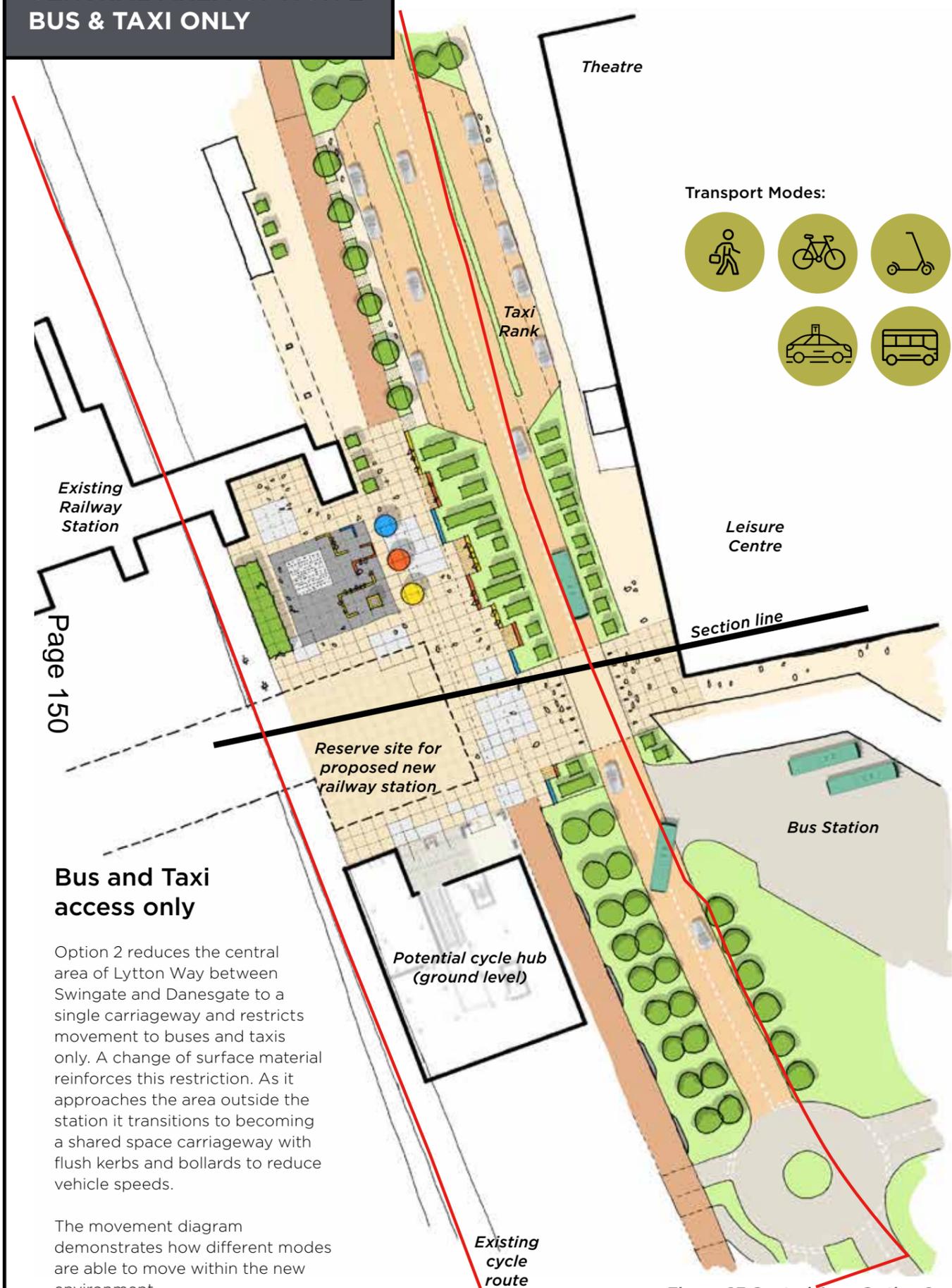
01 PROPOSED



02 EXISTING



**CENTRAL AREA OPTION 2
BUS & TAXI ONLY**

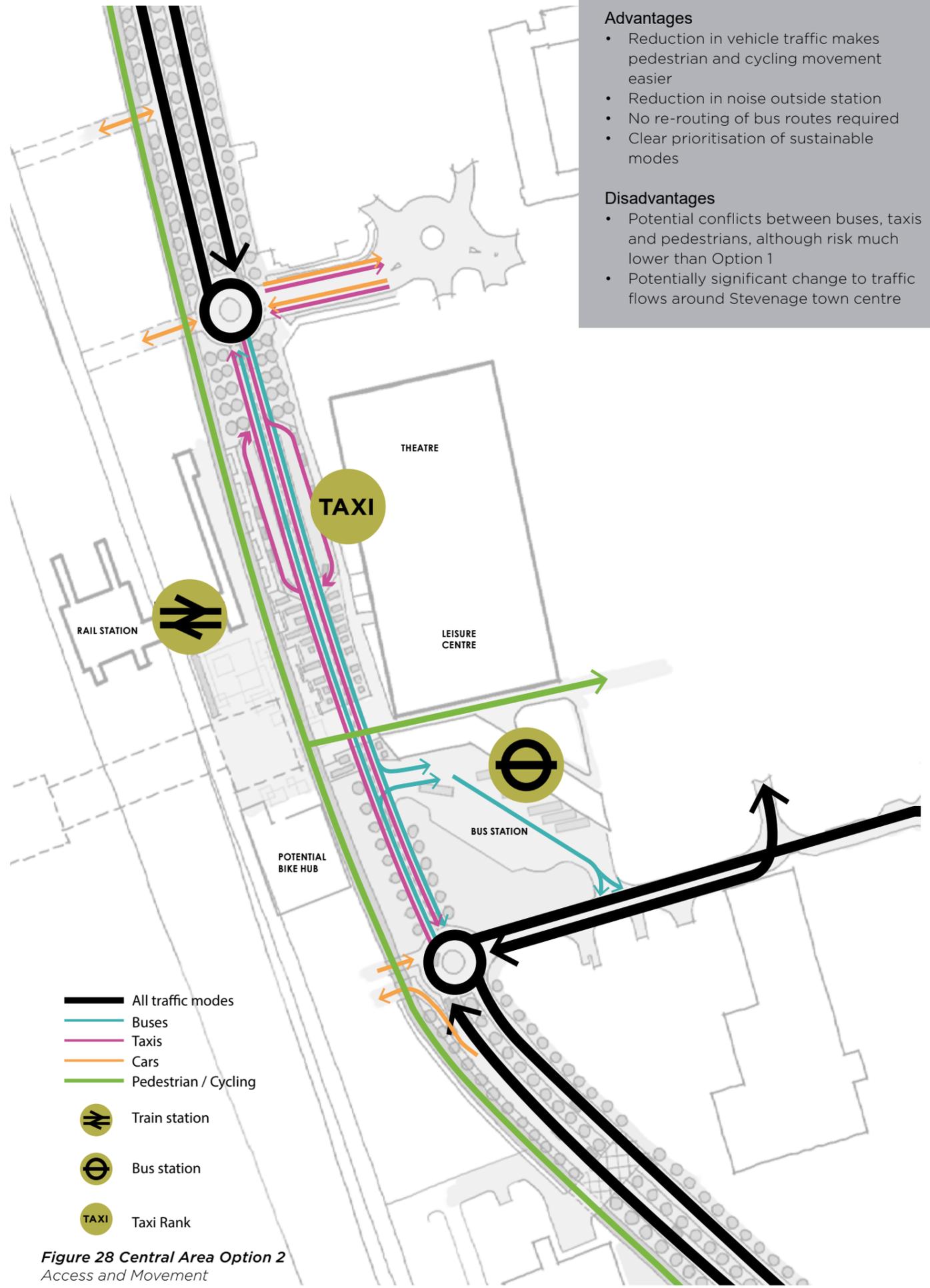


Bus and Taxi access only

Option 2 reduces the central area of Lytton Way between Swinggate and Danesgate to a single carriageway and restricts movement to buses and taxis only. A change of surface material reinforces this restriction. As it approaches the area outside the station it transitions to becoming a shared space carriageway with flush kerbs and bollards to reduce vehicle speeds.

The movement diagram demonstrates how different modes are able to move within the new environment.

**Figure 27 Central Area Option 2
Bus & Taxi only**



**Figure 28 Central Area Option 2
Access and Movement**

Advantages

- Reduction in vehicle traffic makes pedestrian and cycling movement easier
- Reduction in noise outside station
- No re-routing of bus routes required
- Clear prioritisation of sustainable modes

Disadvantages

- Potential conflicts between buses, taxis and pedestrians, although risk much lower than Option 1
- Potentially significant change to traffic flows around Stevenage town centre

SECTION BUS & TAXI ONLY

Illustrative sections showing the existing and proposed sectional profiles of Lytton Way.

The sections also include an analysis of land-use and activity by width, split into green space, pedestrian realm and vehicular realm. This is represented in the diagrams below showing the splits by percentage of the overall cross section.

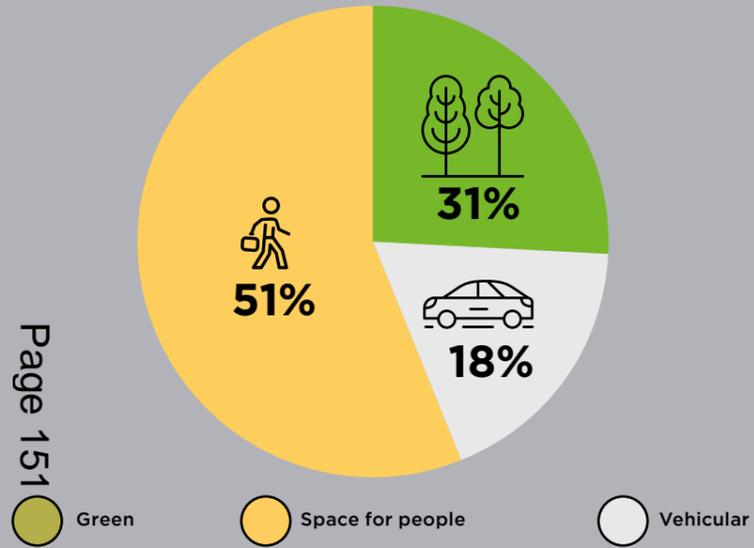


Station Square, Cambridge



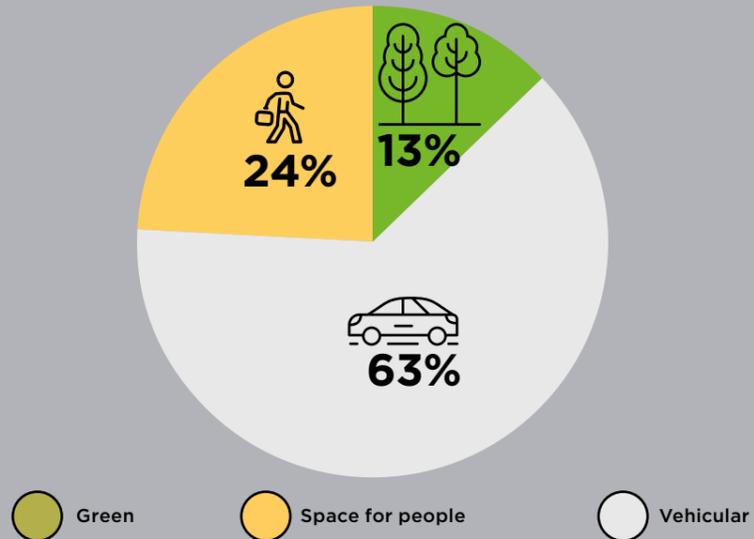
Station Square, Cambridge

01 Proposed overall percentage

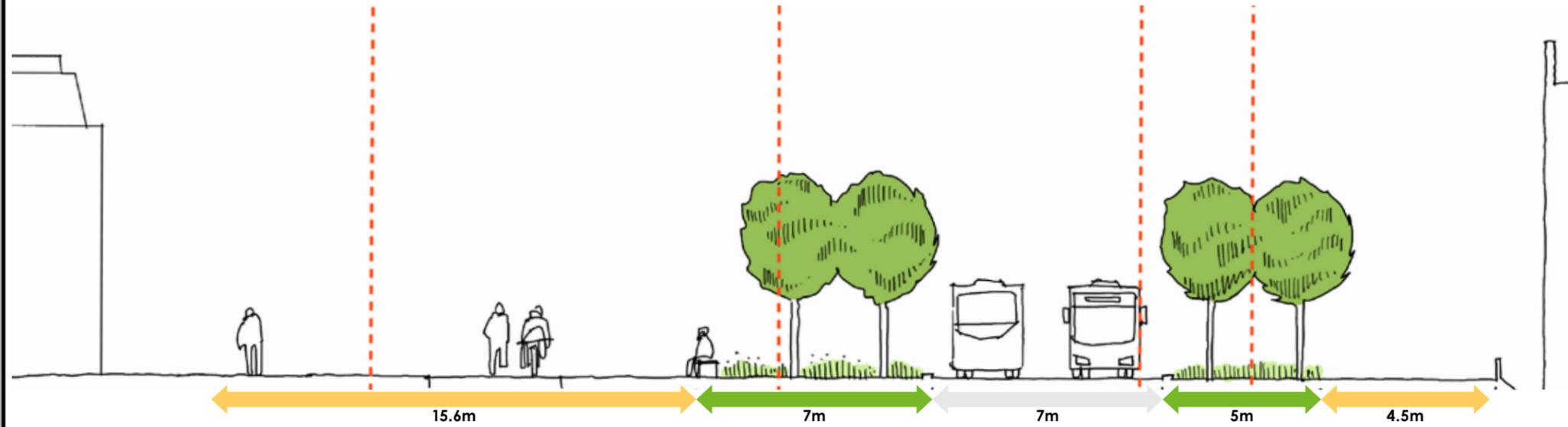


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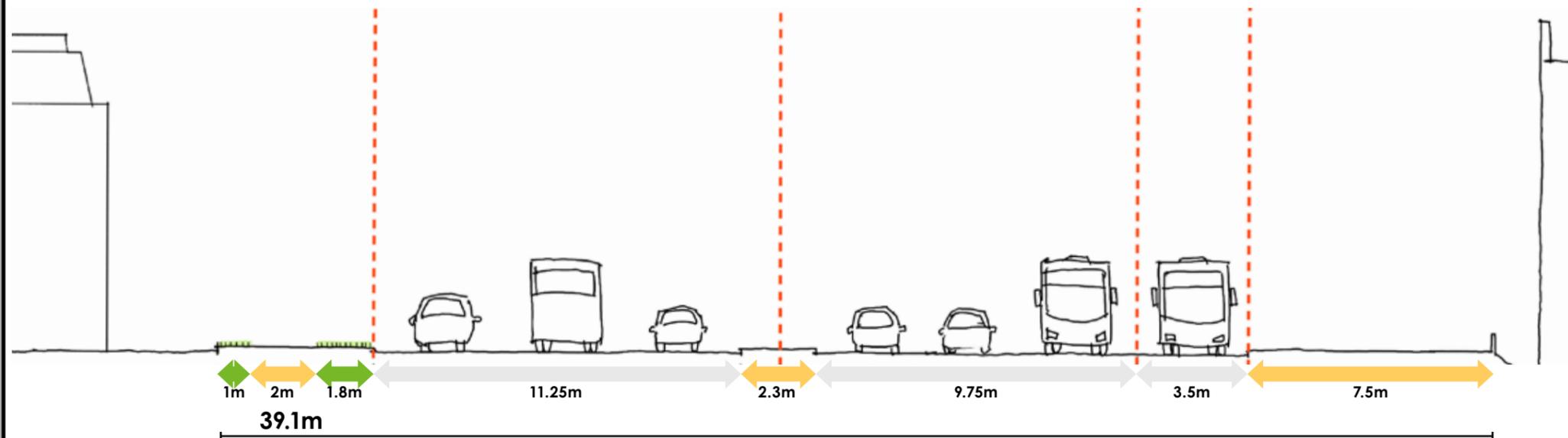
02 Existing overall percentage



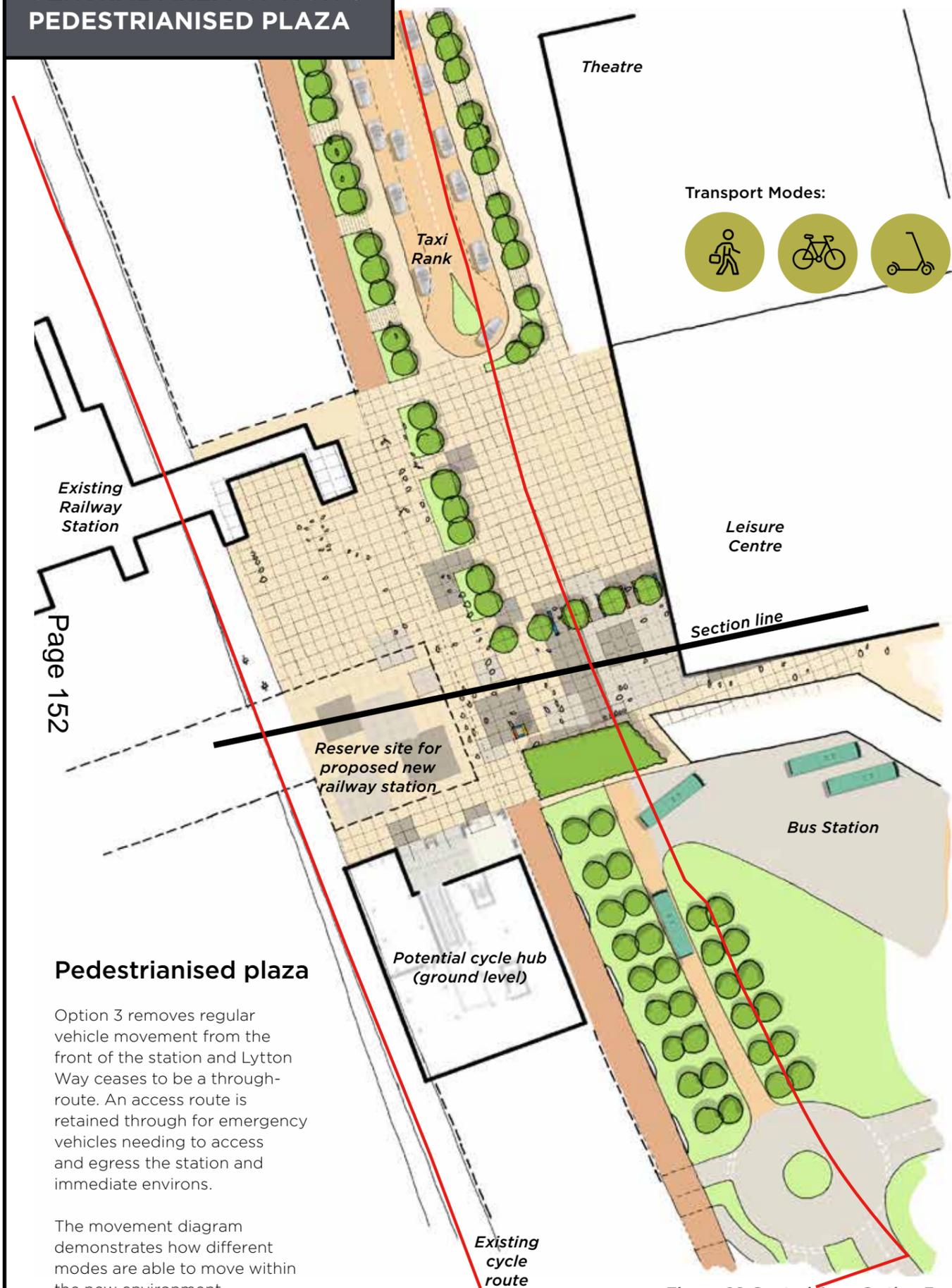
01 PROPOSED



02 EXISTING



CENTRAL AREA OPTION 3 PEDESTRIANISED PLAZA

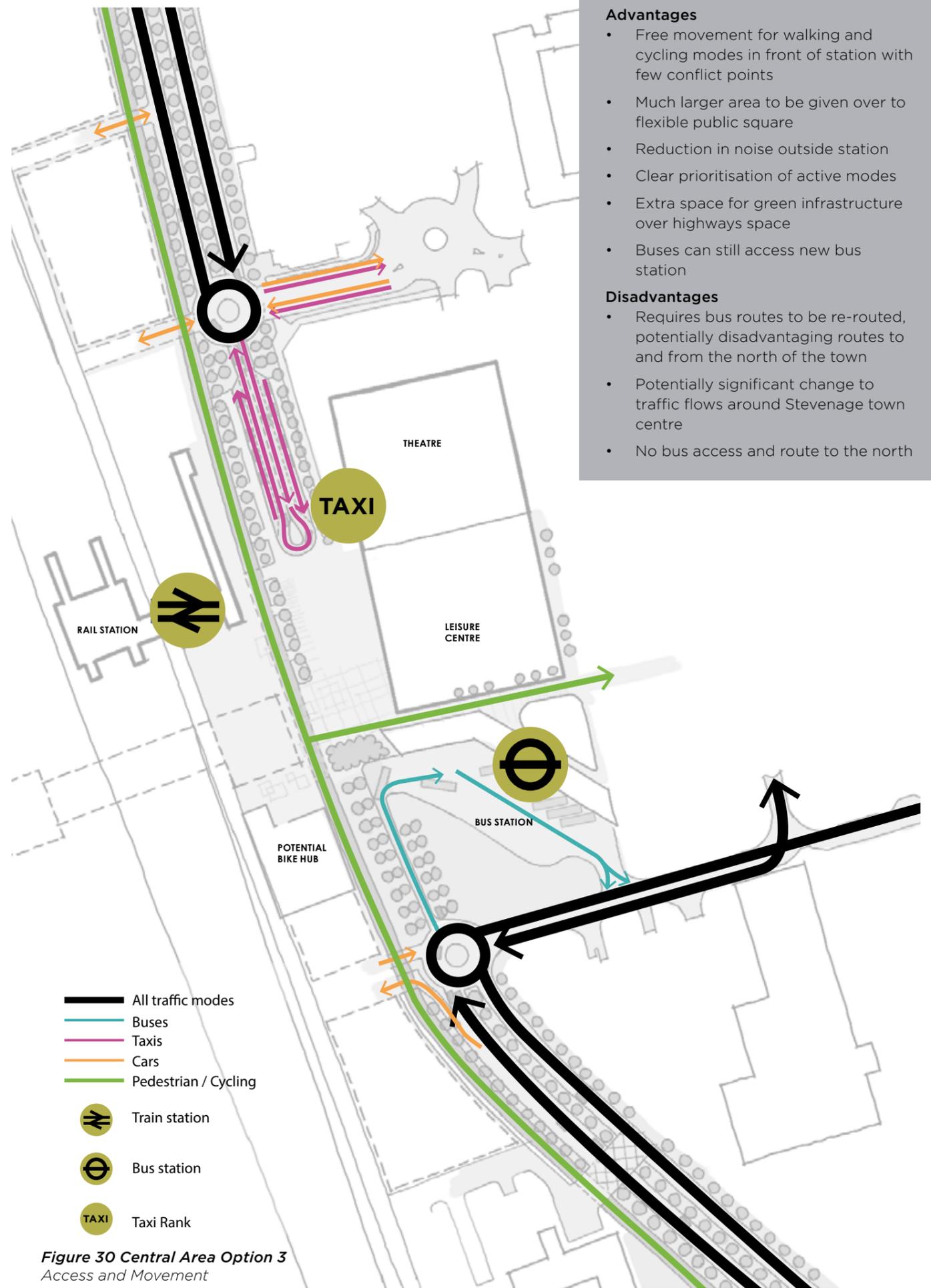


Pedestrianised plaza

Option 3 removes regular vehicle movement from the front of the station and Lytton Way ceases to be a through-route. An access route is retained through for emergency vehicles needing to access and egress the station and immediate environs.

The movement diagram demonstrates how different modes are able to move within the new environment

Figure 29 Central Area Option 3
Pedestrianised Plaza



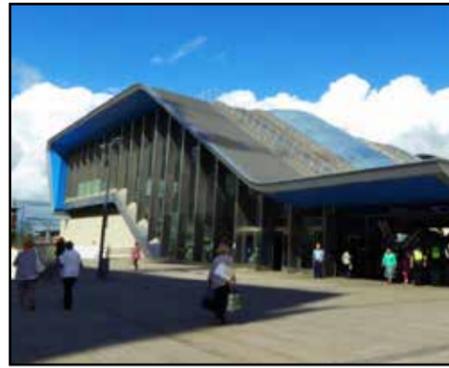
- Advantages**
- Free movement for walking and cycling modes in front of station with few conflict points
 - Much larger area to be given over to flexible public square
 - Reduction in noise outside station
 - Clear prioritisation of active modes
 - Extra space for green infrastructure over highways space
 - Buses can still access new bus station
- Disadvantages**
- Requires bus routes to be re-routed, potentially disadvantaging routes to and from the north of the town
 - Potentially significant change to traffic flows around Stevenage town centre
 - No bus access and route to the north

Figure 30 Central Area Option 3
Access and Movement

SECTION PEDESTRIANISED PLAZA

Illustrative sections showing the existing and proposed sectional profiles of Lytton Way.

The sections also include an analysis of land-use and activity by width, split into green space, pedestrian realm and vehicular realm. This is represented in the diagrams below showing the splits by percentage of the overall cross section.



Station Hill, Reading

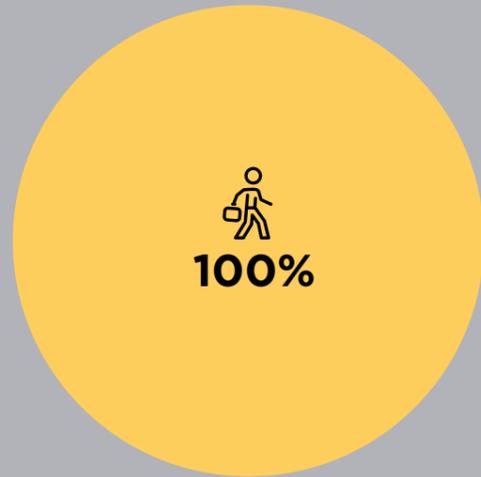


Station Hill, Reading



Utrecht, Netherlands

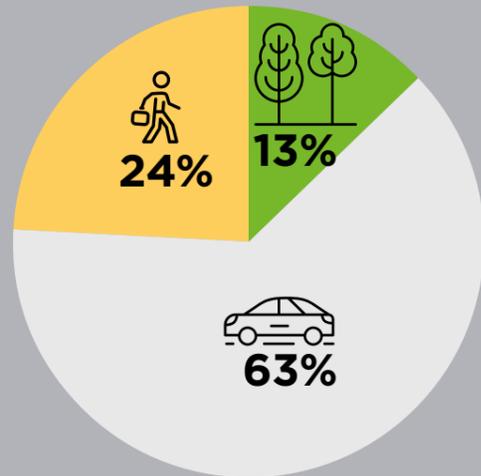
01 Proposed overall percentage



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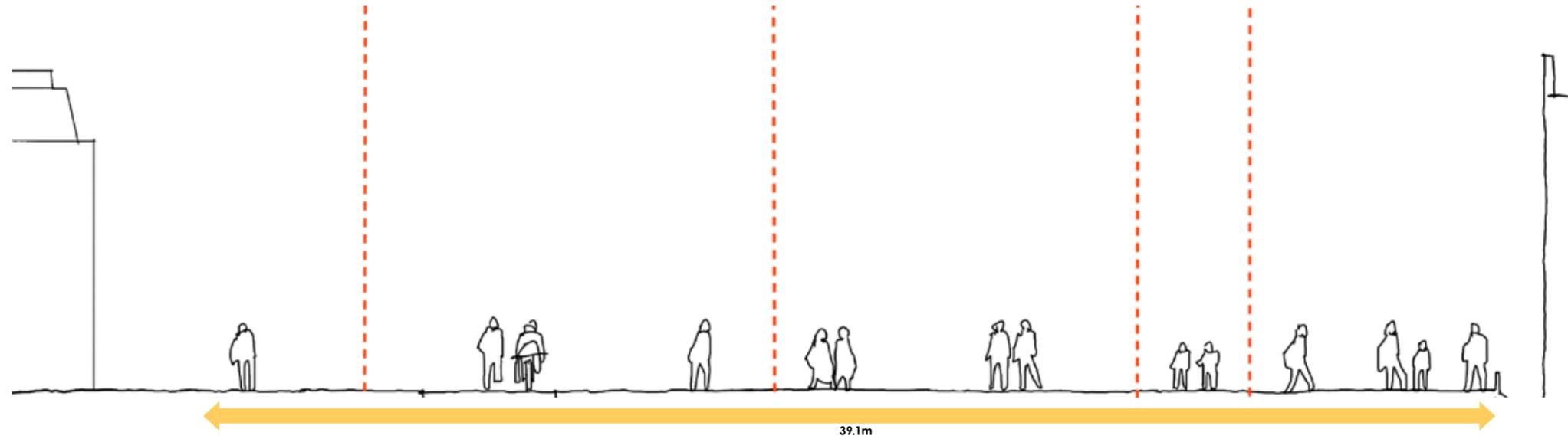
Green Space for people Vehicular

02 Existing overall percentage

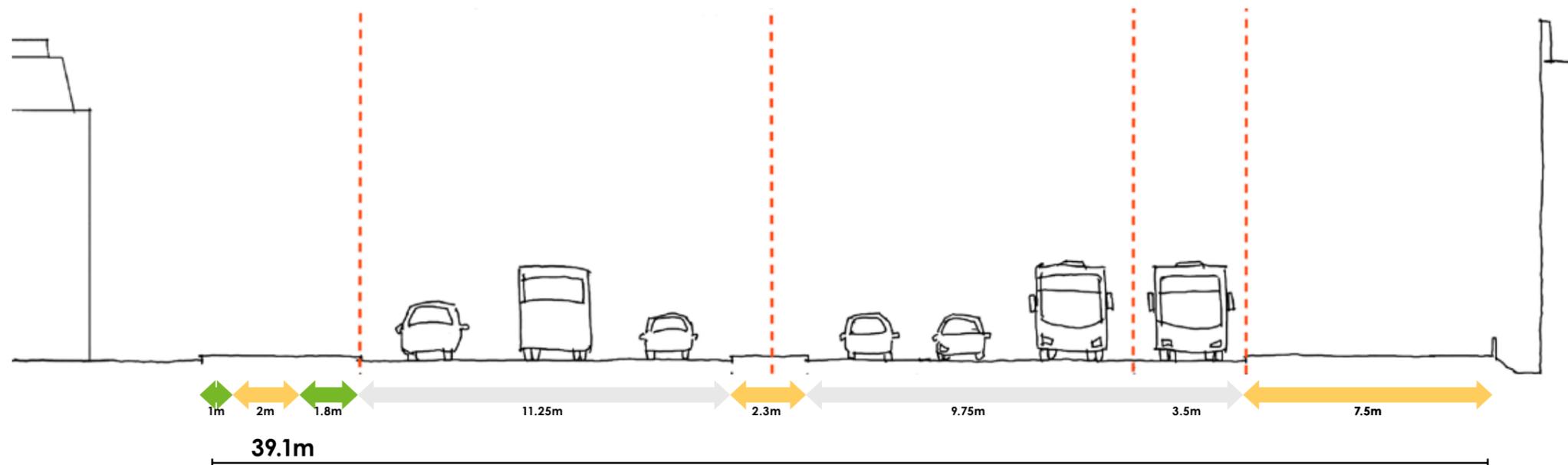


Green Space for people Vehicular

01 PROPOSED



02 EXISTING



CYCLE PATH OPTIONS

The existing cycle path along the edge of the railway tracks has been identified earlier in this document as suffering from a lack of passive surveillance and perceived lack of safety and security. Its position constrains the width of potential development parcels that could otherwise back straight onto the railway tracks. Due to its location pushed to the edge, it appears as a back-of-house or service access and feels secondary to vehicles.

However, the cycle path does provide a direct, uninterrupted and segregated cycle route through the area, although it also functions as the only north-south pedestrian route.

This section proposes two potential options for improving cycle access within the station area, building on its strengths while addressing weaknesses.



1. Looking north. Police station on right



2. Looking south with rail station ahead

At this early stage of the Area Action Plan, Stevenage Borough Council is determined in seeking the very best solutions for sustainable travel. The importance of the cycle link is paramount in any scenario presented. The Council remains committed to providing cycling routes in the town in accordance with the Future Town Future Transport Strategy.

Potential layout 1

This option retains the existing bicycle path and creates a new segregated path within the revised Lytton Way street profile. It is compatible with all three Central Area Options. The provision of a new cycle hub facility can be accessed conveniently from both routes.

Provision of the new path within the enhanced streetscape of Lytton Way contributes to an activated public realm and the increased safety and security this provides. It elevates cycling to the street and makes it more visible as a mobility option.

The new path would be segregated from cyclists by use of a different surface colour and small kerb upstands, as recommended in LTN 1/20 (Cycle Infrastructure Design). The routing along the street would create some potential conflict points with pedestrians, and cars at the multi-storey car park entrance. These would need to be mitigated with clear markings and signage.

Retention of the existing path provides an alternative route for cyclists to follow that would not have conflict points, although a future redesign of the station building could alter its path at that point. However this duplication of routes reduces the efficiency of layout and consequently the area of developable land. It would require development parcels to provide active frontages or overlooking on both aspects, rather than simply backing onto the railway tracks. This would further constraint development options.



Figure 32
Potential layout
option 1

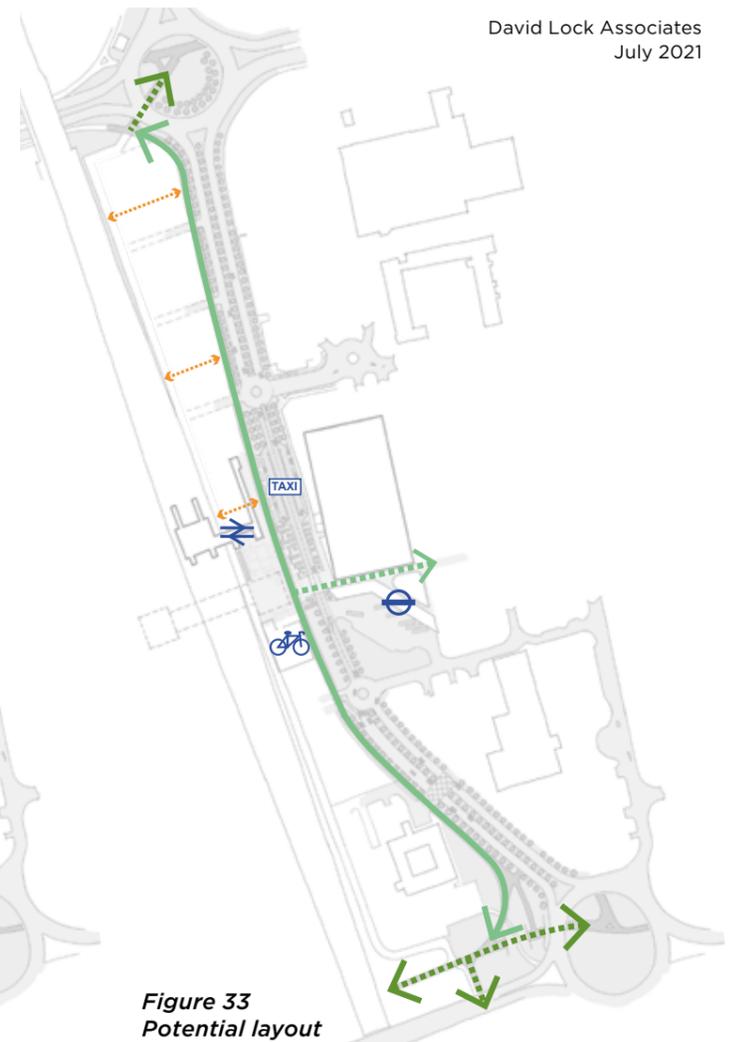


Figure 33
Potential layout
option 2

Potential layout 2

This option removes the existing cycle path but creates a new segregated path within the revised Lytton Way street profile. It is compatible with all three Central Area Options. The provision of a new cycle hub facility can be accessed conveniently from the cycle path.

Provision of the new path within the enhanced streetscape of Lytton Way contributes to an activated public realm and the increased safety and security this provides. It elevates cycling to the street and makes it more visible as a mobility option.

The new path would be segregated from cyclists by use of a different surface colour and small kerb upstands, as recommended in LTN 1/20 (Cycle Infrastructure Design). The routing along the street would create some potential conflict points with pedestrians, and cars at the multi-storey car park entrance. These would need to be mitigated with clear markings and signage.

Removal of the existing path creates a more efficient layout and increases the amount of developable land, and the flexibility of the development parcels as they

are deeper and could place servicing and inactive frontages adjacent to the railway tracks.



Frideswide Square, Oxford

Figure 31 Existing
cycle path layout

PHASING AND TEMPORARY USE

To transform the station area towards one of these options requires a phasing strategy that considers:

- Timing of highway works
- Provision of active travel infrastructure
- Timing of relocation of key mobility uses such as taxi ranks and drop-off
- Relocation and consolidation of station surface car parking

A potential phasing strategy that is robust and flexible enough to accommodate all three options is presented in Figure 34. Phase 1 provides the temporary groundwork for Phase 2, which fully implements the options as presented in this report. Phase 3 considers

potential future developments and how they would interact with the options presented.

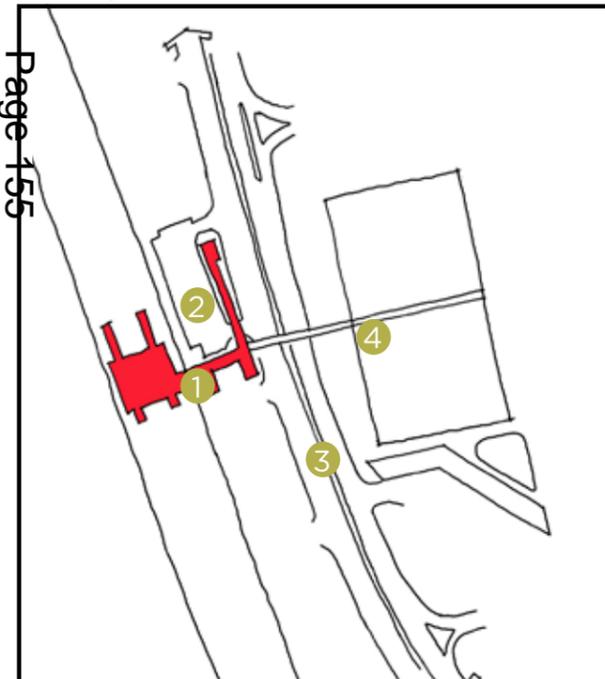
To enable this phased approach, a strategy employing temporary uses should be put in place. The phasing strategy clearly identifies locations suitable for such temporary uses, which can enliven the space around the station and establish the groundwork and footfall for permanent development in the future. This can provide reassurance to potential developers that a location is viable and visited, as well as creating a safer and more vibrant place during the process of transformation.

Precedent studies of temporary or 'meanwhile' uses are presented on the following pages.



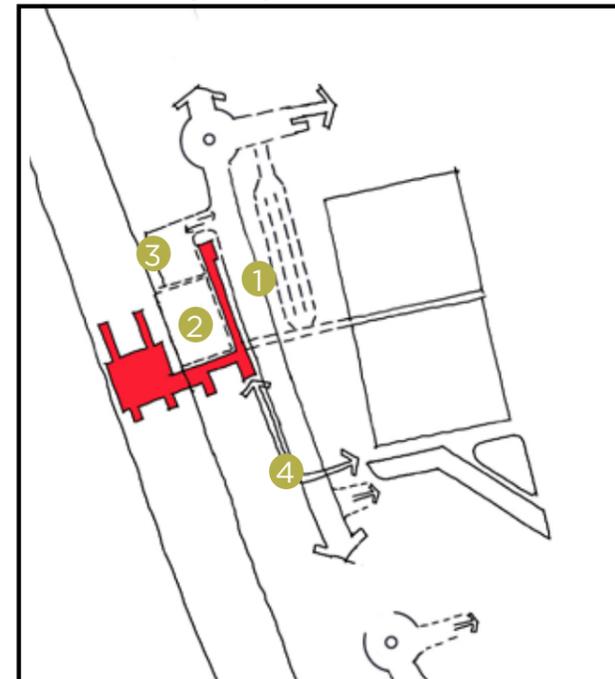
Figure 34 Potential Phasing Strategy

Existing



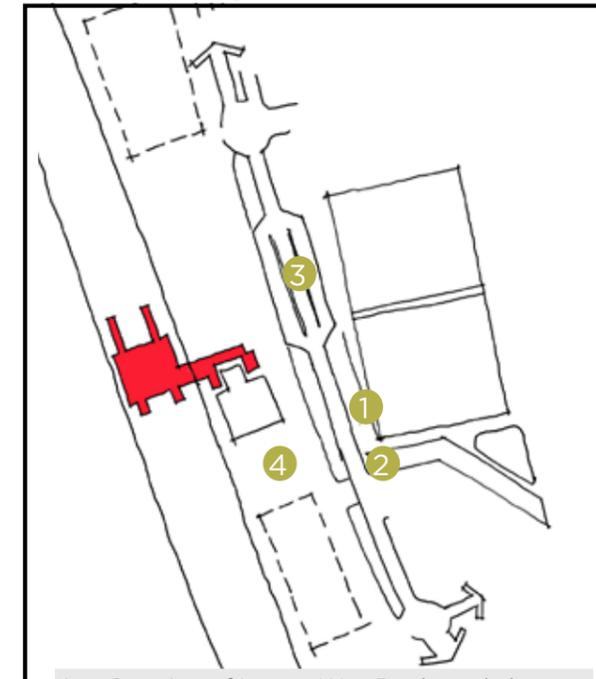
1. Train station
2. Taxi rank and station drop-off
3. Dual carriageway to Lytton Way
4. Sports Centre and bridge link to train station

Phase 1 - Temporary Uses



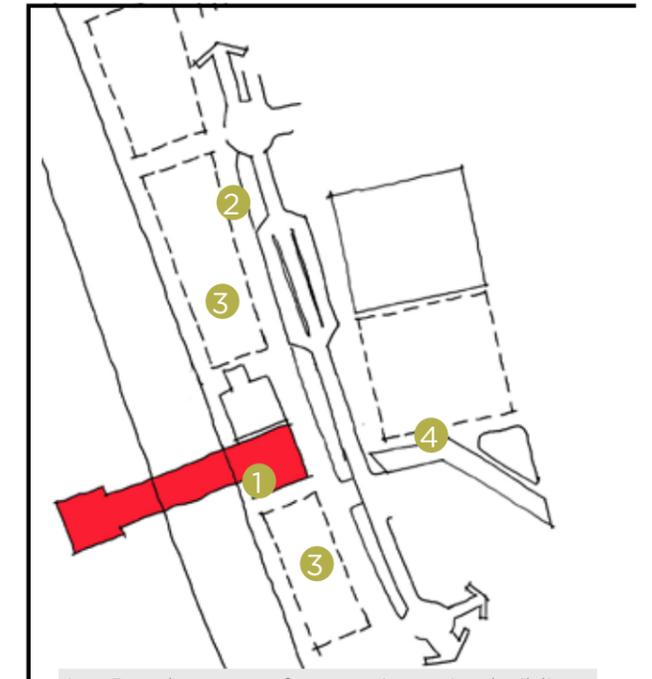
1. Condensing of north and south movements to the western carriageway to enable construction of taxi rank and new Lytton Way Boulevard and removal of pedestrian bridge
2. Temporary pedestrianisation of station drop-off area as 'meanwhile' traffic-free plaza
3. Condensing of taxi rank north of pedestrianised plaza
4. Temporary pedestrian walkway and crossing linking train station to bus station and town centre

Phase 2 - AAP Options



1. Opening of Lytton Way Boulevard along new alignment
2. Creation of a pedestrian super-crossing
3. New taxi rank constructed on-line of Lytton Way Boulevard
4. Creation of new permanent Station Square to south existing train station, future-proofed for new station building to its south

Phase 3 - Future Potential



1. Development of new train station building
2. Completion of Lytton Way Boulevard (shared cycle and footway)
3. Potential development of adjacent parcels
4. Potential redevelopment of the sports centre

PRECEDENT STUDIES 'MEANWHILE USES'

Selection of images of precedent projects to illustrating temporary or 'meanwhile' uses and activation of urban spaces.

The examples include a range of opportunities for planting, exhibitions, seating, play and cafés. Installation and removal is typically quick and straight forwards requiring minimal invasive construction / demolition.



Kalvebod Waves, Copenhagen (JDS Architects)



Southbank Centre, London



Moscow City day: City without borders
Temporary play & interactive sculpture (Studio Fink)

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Deptford project: re-purposed train carriage as cafe and community meeting point



Barbican, City of London



Hammersmith Grove (project centre)

GREENING THE GREY GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION

Stevenage, as the UK's original New Town, was designed to ensure that green open space was accessible to all and integrated within the urban built environment. The station area should reflect this heritage and deliver it as part of a vibrant, rich and interesting urban place. The reconfiguration of Lytton Way outlined in this report, along with all of the Central Area Options, deliver opportunities to re-integrate natural habitats and planted landscaping throughout the environment.

Such a strategy provides relief from hard landscaped environments, gives space for biodiversity, improves microclimates with the cooling or shading effects

of trees and plants, offers sustainable surface water management and enhances the experience and appearance of the environment. Above all, new green infrastructure around the station will create a great gateway experience that reflects the green character of the rest of the town.

Opportunities to include green infrastructure exist throughout the proposed options. These include:

- Street trees
- Planted landscaping
- Sustainable drainage features
- Green roofs and walls on new development

CASE STUDY: SHEFFIELD

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One of the most successful urban schemes to incorporate significant new green infrastructure and biodiversity improvements has been the 'Greening the Grey' scheme in Sheffield. Although the scheme covers a wider area than just the station area, it has created significant change throughout the city centre. The scheme has transformed streets that previously only featured hard landscaping materials into habitat-rich spaces, with seating and significantly improved streetscapes. Vehicle space has been reduced and the planting offers separation between transport infrastructure and pedestrians.

A key function of the areas of planting are the collection and storage of rainwater enabled by the increased area of permeable surface. These help to reduce the quantum and slow the flow of stormwater into the City's sewer system.

The planting palette has been selected for its low maintenance requirements. All planting requires a degree of maintenance but this can be minimised through the selection and specification of the right species. Species have also been selected for their aesthetic qualities to create an enhanced streetscape and also for their ecological value as a food source for insects and birds.



USING DEVELOPMENT TO MAKE A PLACE

The reconfiguration of mobility along Lytton Way enables a range of development opportunities to come forward on land previously used for car parking or transport infrastructure.

Opportunities for investment and development are important to identify within this key location. Beyond this, the design of developments should support the creation of the station area as a functional, vibrant, interesting and useful place for the town – a destination as well as a transit point towards other places.

As well as drawing upon the land uses outlined in Policy TC4, this report also draws upon other documents including the SBC Arts & Culture Strategy to define potential uses that could animate and occupy space around the station.

Key principles that have been adopted include:

- Surface car parking for the railway station can be consolidated into either multi-storey car parks (MSCP) or within basements without losing parking capacity but releasing significant land
- Vertical mixed-use within buildings is possible, particularly with commercial uses such as offices and retail sharing the same building
- Maximisation of active frontages and ground-floor opportunities along the streets, particularly around the new station square environment
- Flexibility of space provided is essential to enable the area to grow and adapt as it is developed. Temporary uses and occupation of space can help bridge the gap between today and the future place.

Flexibility

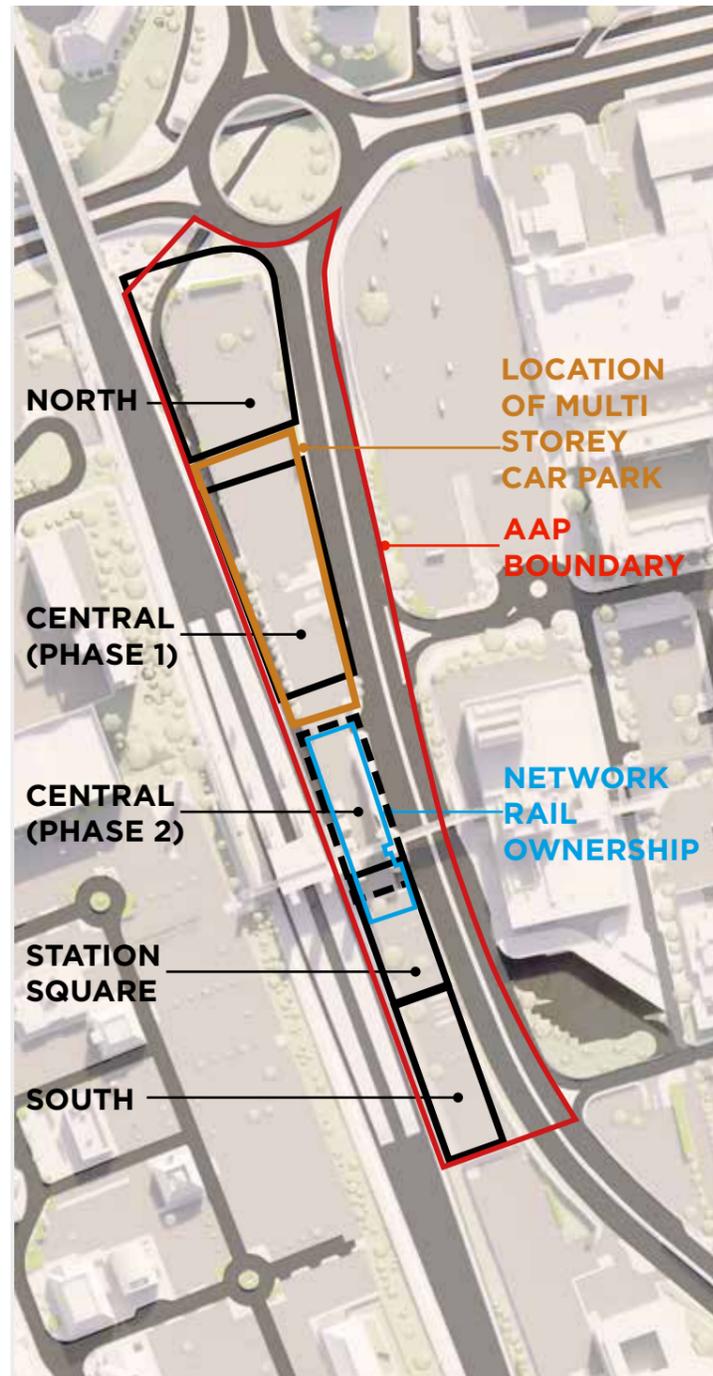
The recent change to the Use Classes Order (UCO) to subsume use classes A1, A2, A3 and B1 into a single class E (subject to some exemptions), presents both issues and opportunities from a planning policy perspective in this location.

At a policy stage it will be less possible for SBC to restrict or specify particular land uses, especially on the ground floor, without more detailed planning policy or restrictions in place. However, this may not be required as the purpose of the use class change is to encourage flexibility to move between different uses as local conditions require. This could present an opportunity for a more adaptive place that can change uses quickly as the area develops over time. From the point of view of the preparation of the AAP, suggested or anticipated uses will still be included in plans for development options, as the space and servicing requirements for retail are considerably different from those of offices.

Development Parcels

Five main development parcels have been identified:

- **North:** made up of the existing surface car parks north of the railway station. This land is currently largely in the ownership of SBC and would have the potential to be developed in an early phase.
- **Central [Phase 1]:** made up of the existing surface car parks north of the railway station. This land is currently largely in the ownership of SBC and has the potential to be developed in an early phase.
- **Central [Phase 2]:** made up of the existing station drop-off areas and immediate surrounds of the existing station, to the north of the proposed square present in all of the Central Area Options. This land is primarily in the ownership of Network Rail, and would only be able to come forward for development after a new railway station building was constructed further to the south, adjacent to the proposed public [station] square.
- **Station Square:** made of the existing surface car parks south of the railway station within the AAP boundary. This land is also currently in the ownership of SBC. This in effect becomes a reserve site, futureproofing the potential to deliver a new rail station should funding become available. As such its delivery is in determinable.
- **South:** made of the existing surface car parks south of the railway station within the AAP boundary. This land is also currently in the ownership of SBC and would have the potential to be developed in an early phase.



Isolated, uncoordinated development proposals that do not effectively respond to the AAP have the potential to compromise effective placemaking efforts and reduce the overall development gains that could be delivered through a comprehensive approach.

It is important to note at this stage that the opportunities offered within each development parcel reflect the very early stage this Area Action Plan is at and are intended to be strategic, high-level details. There will be scope to build on and progress the opportunities identified within each development parcel through the process of developing this Area Action Plan.

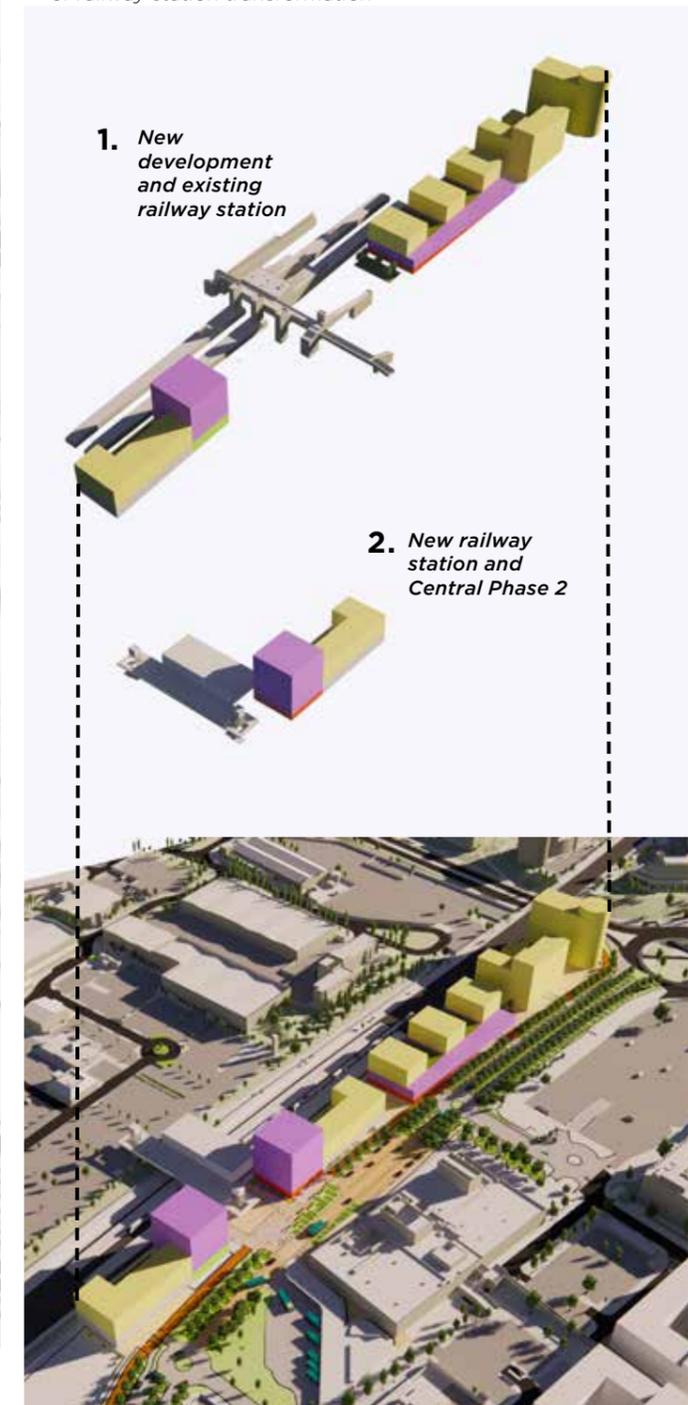
For the most efficient use of land, and to deliver the comprehensive objectives of the regeneration policy, proposals for these development parcels should respond to the AAP's Core Enhancements and mobility options, presented earlier in this chapter. At present, plot widths are compromised by the need to provide pedestrian movement along Lytton Way within curtilage. Redistribution of vehicle space.



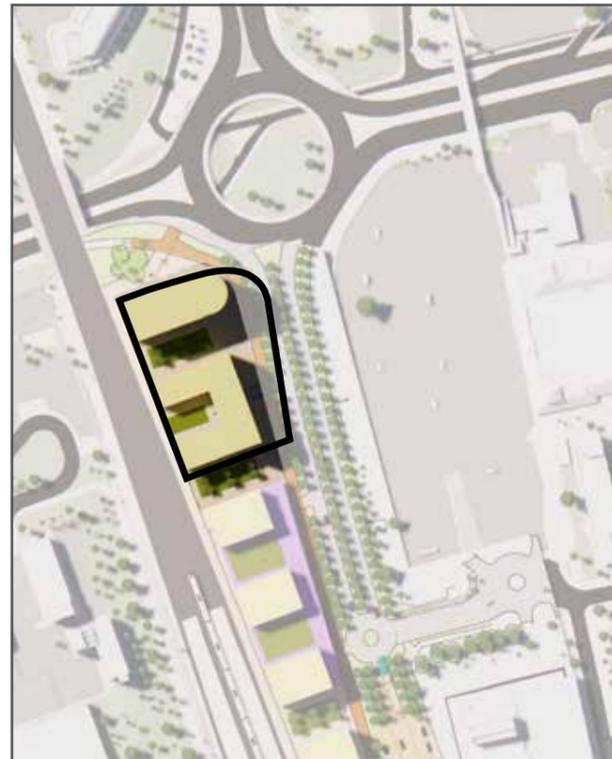
Plan of station area showing new railway station in place

Each development parcel has the potential to support a mix of uses that contribute towards the components of placemaking, as identified in chapter 4. Accompanying the description of the potential uses are some illustrations showing how development in the various locations could be designed. These are illustrative and seek to explore key urban design principles.

Perspective showing potential sequencing of railway station transformation



- North:** this parcel offers an opportunity to create a landmark development which could predominantly be residential-led. This is a prominent gateway site and given the lack of adjoining development and the need to create a gateway development, storey heights should be a minimum of 6 storeys and could rise to over 10 storeys, dependent upon the configuration of the buildings. A basement storey of surface car parking, to retain a proportion of commuter parking provision, as well as an element of development parking will be required as part of this development parcel with due consideration given to safe access and egress for vehicles accessing Lytton Way.



North parcel plan location



Development Option 1

The images below show how a variety of building forms could be developed for the Northern site, and in particular buildings heights can be adjusted to create a fitting gateway development.



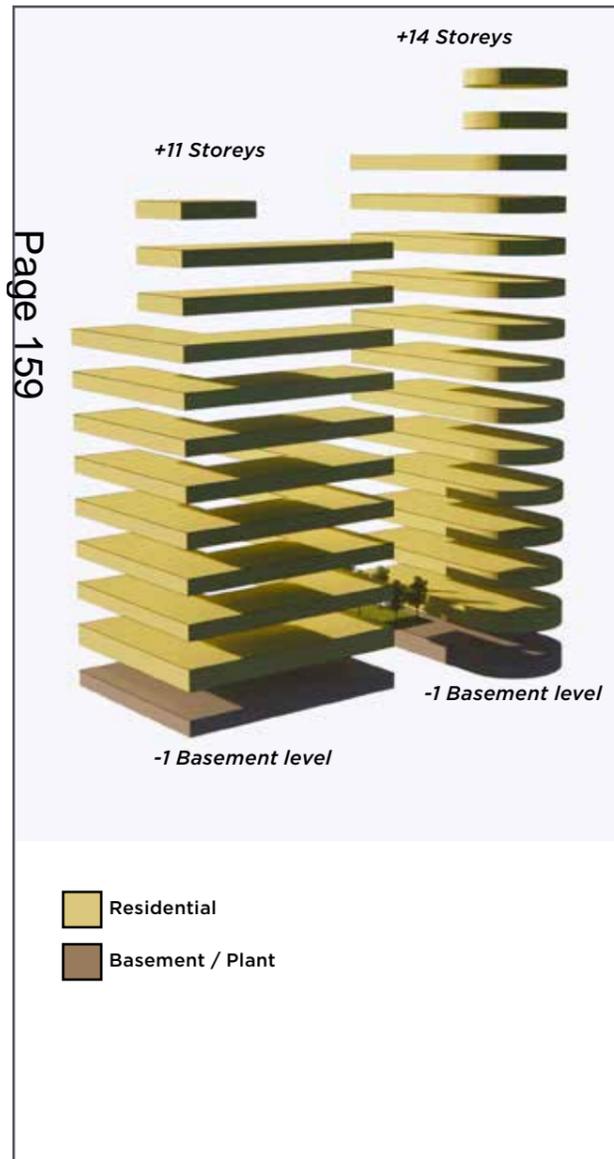
Development Option 1



Development Option 2



Development Option 3



Development Option 1 exploded levels diagram

- **Central [Phase 1]:** this parcel will incorporate the new comprehensive multi-storey car park (MSCP). The MSCP will consist of a minimum 600 car parking spaces, provide capacity for a minimum of 25 motorcycle spaces, minimum 80 cycle spaces and 3 accessible cycle spaces. Electric Car charging is also being considered with a view to future travel demand. To support this, there could be additional opportunity to locate hotel, office space and residential with an active ground floor on the remaining land next to the new MSCP. Due consideration will need to be given to safe access and egress for vehicles accessing Lytton Way.



Central Phase 1 plan location

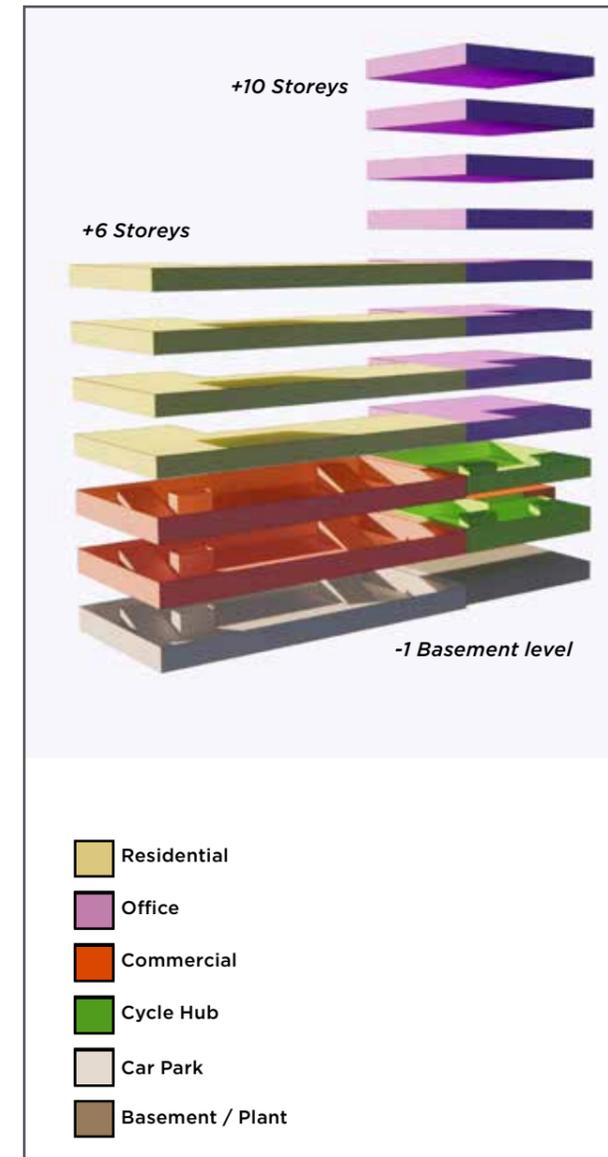
- **South:** The northern end of the parcel could be an ideal location for an additional high-quality cycle hub, such as that seen in Cambridge or in Dutch cities, providing accessible and secure cycle parking and maintenance directly adjacent to the existing and proposed new railway station, as well as the bus station. Offices could be located above the cycle hub, with storey heights determined by market demand and consideration for sunlight into the new public space to the north. A cycle hub would be much closer in this location to a potential future rail station and perhaps allow for futureproofing in this south block.



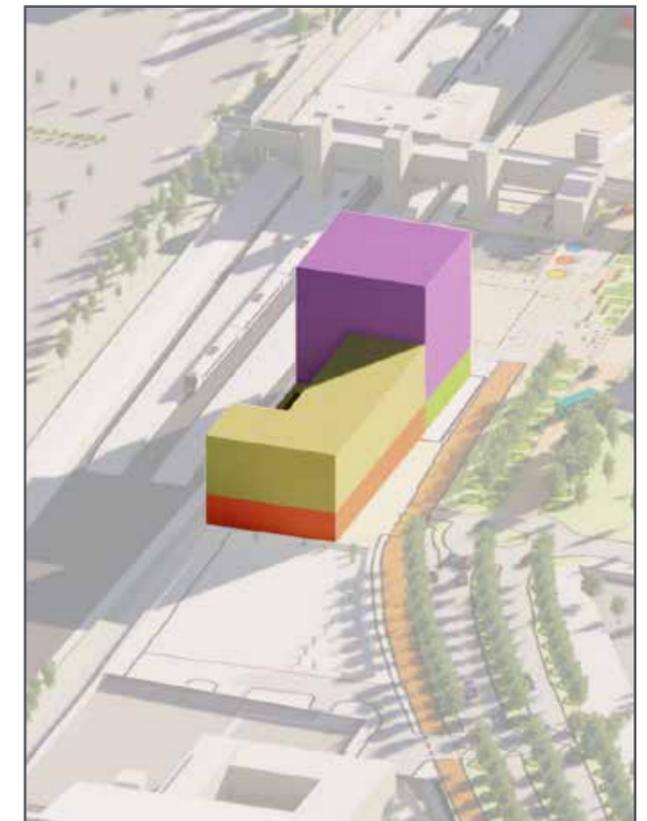
South plan location



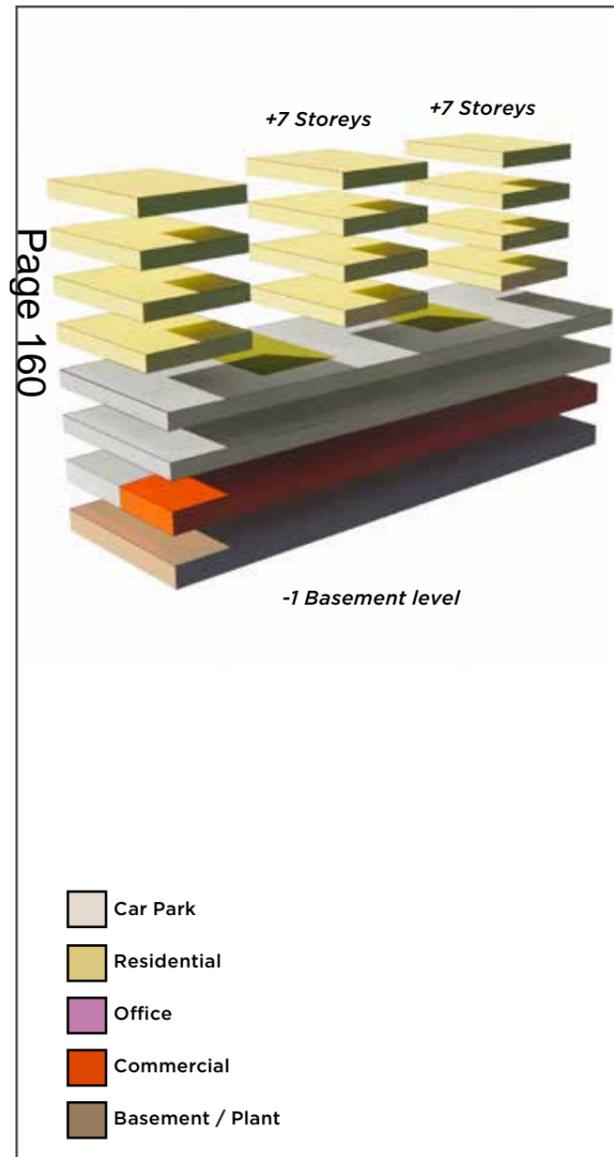
Central Phase 1



South exploded levels diagram

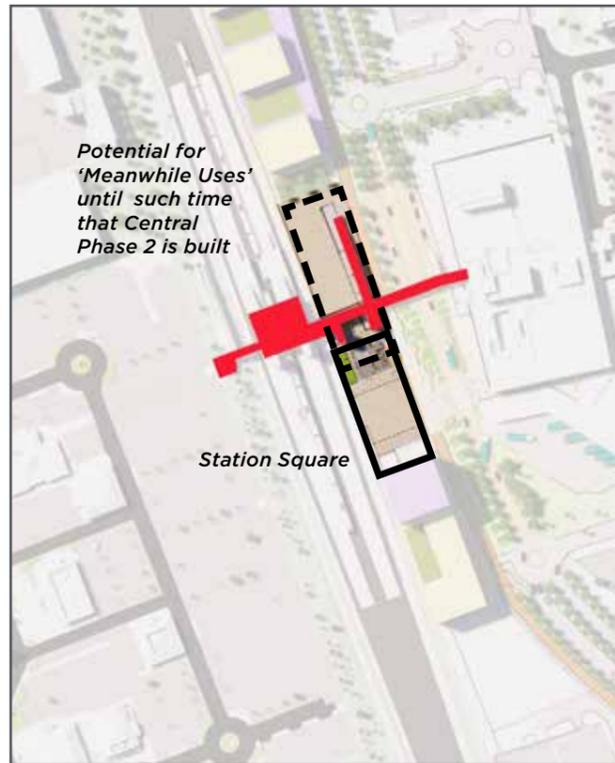


South development



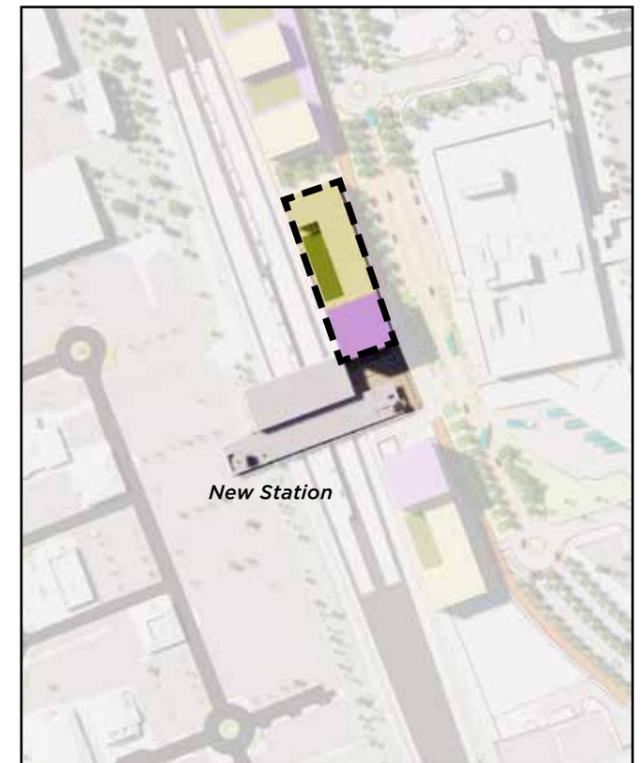
Central Phase 1 exploded levels diagram

- Station Square:** Whilst this is designated as a longer-term development site, primarily being occupied by a new rail station building it will also form part of the public realm that will define the arrival into Stevenage. Until such time that the rail station is built the site will perform an important role in being the arrival and departure space for Stevenage. As such this should be a well-designed space that will be of high quality and act as an extension of the regeneration of the town centre. The design of the space will need to be designed so that it can accommodate a new rail station building or entrance in part of the space. The design of the space is also a perfect opportunity to support 'Meanwhile Uses' that can evolve and change over time. This could also play a role in supporting SBC's Arts and Cultural Strategy.

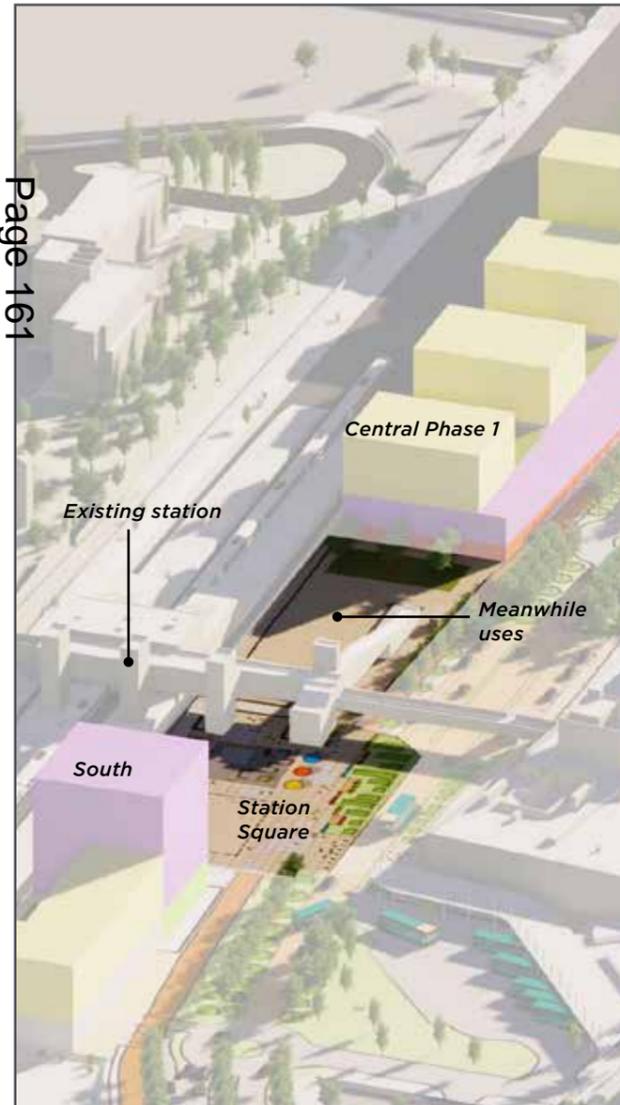


Station Square plan location

- Central [Phase 2]:** this is a longer-term development option that will frame the new public space after a potential new station building is constructed [it would be built largely on the area occupied by the existing rail station]. As such it will have intensive mixed-use, including a vibrant ground floor with retail, café's and other active uses. Above this office uses would successfully capitalise on the highly accessible location. As it is located to the north of the public square, a landmark or feature tower would be appropriate.



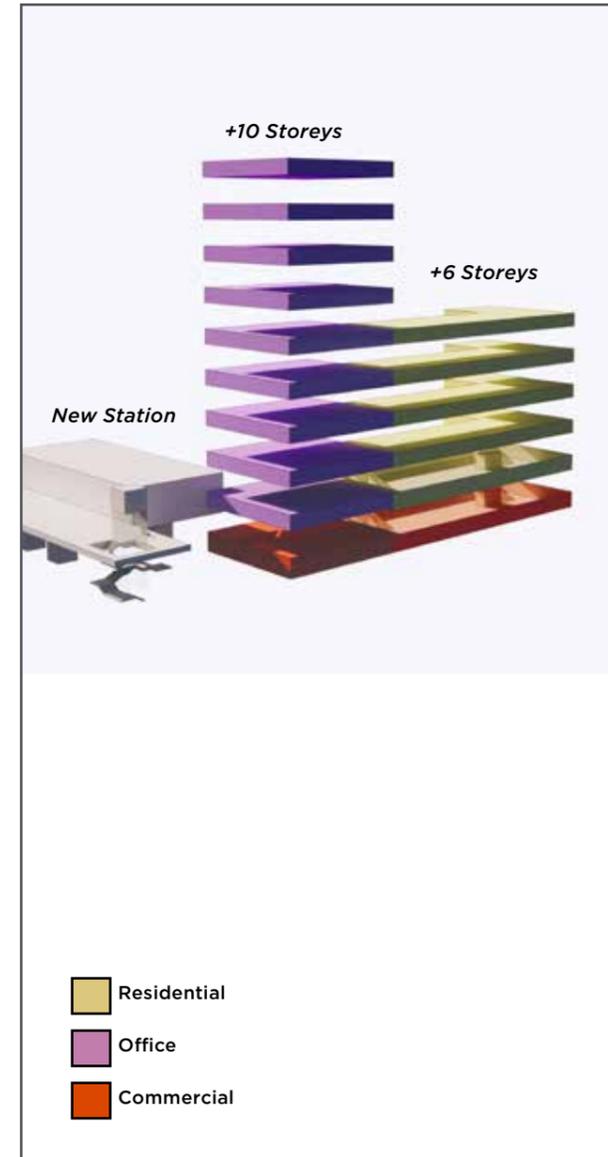
Central Phase 2 plan location



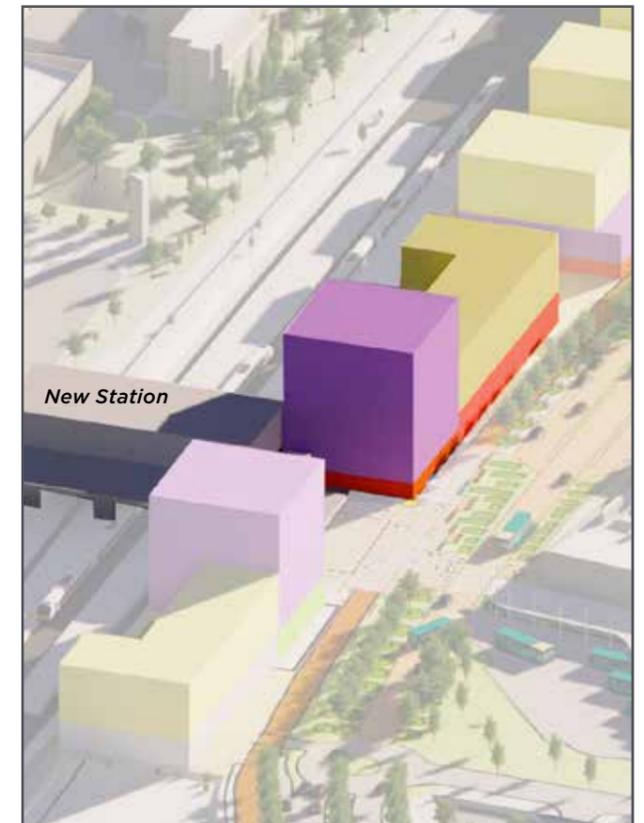
Plan showing Station Square and 'meanwhile uses' area prior to moving the railway station



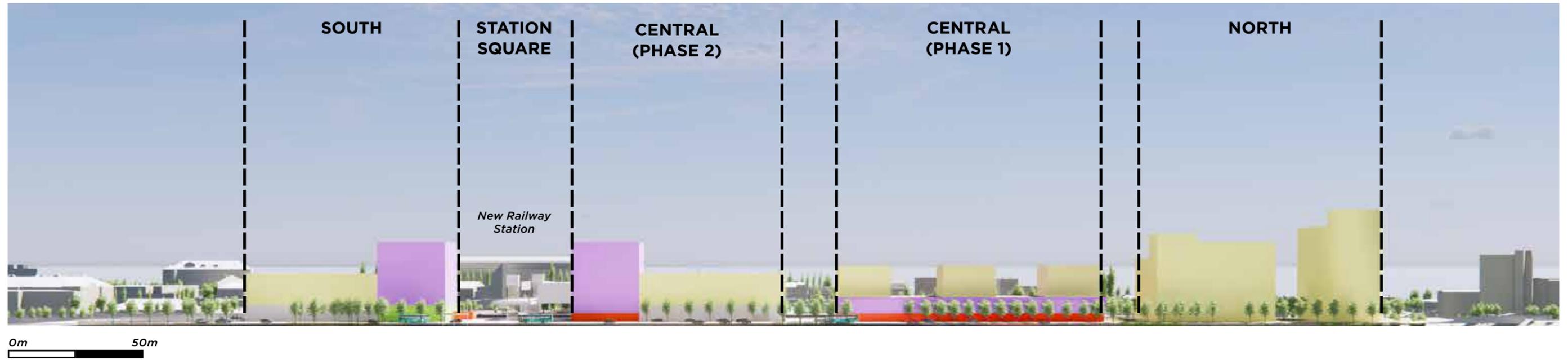
Plan showing new railway station in situ with completion of Central Phase 2 development phase



Central Phase 2 exploded levels diagram



Central Phase 2 development



Perspective view of station area 1



Perspective view of station area 2

Parking Consolidation

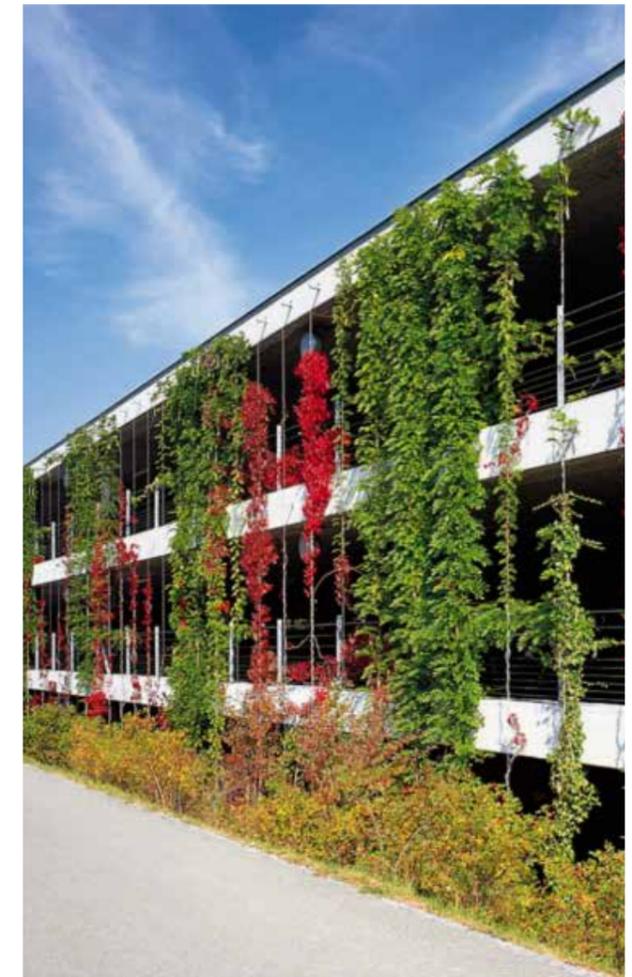
The surface car parks adjacent to the railway station provide around 450 parking spaces, and are typically well-used. Consolidation of the existing surface parking will be an essential component of delivering the objectives of the AAP.

Key considerations that should be followed when developing car parking proposals:

- Development phasing should ensure that the first existing surface car park brought forward for development should provide sufficient parking that either replaces the parking displaced, or a comprehensive multi-storey car park (MSCP) that replaces all station car parking that will be displaced across North, Central and South development parcels in due course.
- MSCPs require a significant vehicle access, ideally onto a roundabout or controlled junction, and should be considered carefully in conjunction with the circulation proposals presented earlier in this document.
- MSCPs should be screened by single-aspect development or ground-floor uses to preserve the streetscape and active frontage
- Assuming two double rows of car parking, each at 16m wide, a 4 storey multi-storey car park of length 70m would provide full replacement of the existing station parking places. This is approximately two-thirds of the length of the Station South car park, demonstrating the efficiency of multi-storey parking.
- New development such as residential uses and offices may require additional car parking provision, but this should be limited due to the excellent sustainable transport accessibility of the location. Basement parking is likely to be appropriate for these uses.

A location for a new comprehensive MSCP is being progressed:

- Station North car park – within Central (phase 1) parcel



07 CONCLUSIONS AND FEEDBACK

07 CONCLUSIONS AND FEEDBACK

This report outlines the core issues that are present within the station area as well as the background policy and wider context that affects its development. This is an early stage of the preparation of an AAP, and initial options that focus on mobility are presented for feedback from targeted stakeholders.

Stakeholder Feedback

This report will be circulated to key stakeholders who operate within and around the area covered by the AAP. It seeks targeted feedback from these stakeholders on the following topics set out in Chapter 6:

- The Enhancements for All Options
- Each of the Central Area Options (1, 2 and 3), with a particular focus on issues and opportunities raised by the different mobility options
- The Cycle Path Options (1 and 2)
- Phasing approaches

In addition to these, this stage of the process seeks informal thoughts and feedback on opportunities for and the form of Temporary Uses, Green Infrastructure and potential Development Options.

The next stage of the process of preparation of the AAP will be a formal public consultation on more developed options that have been influenced by feedback from this report.



Stevenage Borough Council

**Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan
Issues and Options (2021)**

Consultation Statement

12 July 2021 – 5 September 2021

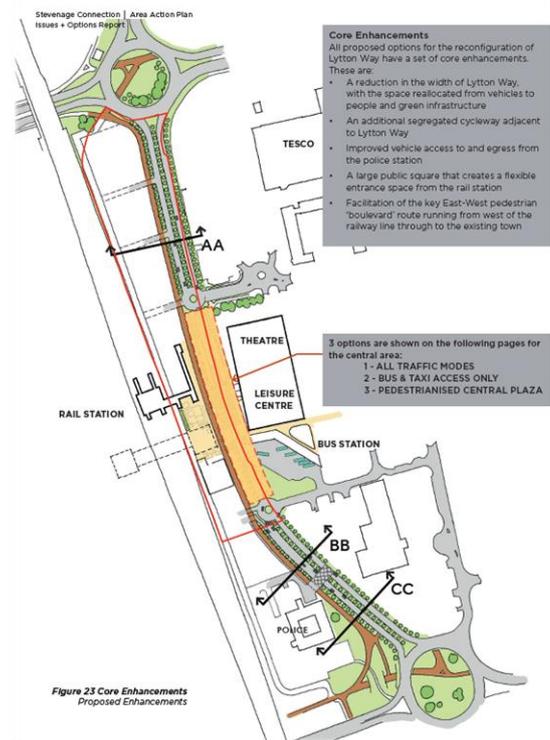


Executive Summary

The Issues and Options Report for the Station Connection Area Action Plan was published for consultation in July 2021. The aim of the report is to develop a sustainable solution for the area around Stevenage Station and improve accessibility and create a sense of arrival whilst supporting the promotion of sustainable forms of transport.

The report set out 4 options for the area adjacent to Stevenage Railway Station incorporating Lytton Way:

- **Option 0** – Do nothing
- **Option 1** – All traffic modes: reduces the central area of Lytton Way between Swingate and Danesgate to a single carriageway suitable for all modes of traffic
- **Option 2** – Bus and Taxi only: reduces the central area of Lytton Way between Swingate and Danesgate to a single carriageway and restricts movement to buses and taxis only
- **Option 3** – Pedestrianised Plaza: removes regular vehicle movement from the front of the station and Lytton Way ceases to be a through-route. An access through-route is retained for emergency vehicles needing to access and egress the station and immediate environs



During the Public Consultation period, officers received upwards of 300 individual representations on the Options set out in the report. These representations came from a variety of mechanisms that officers employed for consultation, including pop up consultation stalls at the Railway Station itself and in and around Stevenage Town Centre, social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram) and our usual formal consultation procedure incorporating email and postal consultation.

The representations came from a combination of members of the public, statutory consultees and other interested parties.

Initially, Options 2 and 3 seem to be favoured by the public and consultees and there may be scope for these Options to be combined in some way. This will be assessed as part of the preparation of the Preferred Options Report.

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out how Stevenage Borough Council has undertaken consultation in the preparation of the Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan; Issues and Options stage. The statement provides an overview on the following:
- Who was invited to make representations;
 - How they were invited to do so;
 - Summaries of the main issues raised in the representations; and
 - Next steps for the Area Action Plan (AAP).
- 1.2 This consultation statement complies with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The document will be updated at each stage of the plan making process. It currently details consultation undertaken in relation to:
- Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options consultation (2021)
- 1.3 The [Local Development Scheme](#) of Stevenage Borough has included the intention to prepare an AAP for this part of Stevenage since 2019 when the Local Plan was adopted. The current Stevenage Borough LDS (2020) continues to include the AAP as a Development Plan Document to be prepared.
- 1.4 The AAP was previously referred to as the Area Action Plan – Railway Station in the LDS; however, in order to reflect the more comprehensive vision being envisaged for the area, and the need to integrate development proposals in the area, the plan has been renamed the Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan.
- 1.5 The adopted Stevenage Borough Local Plan (2019) includes policy allocating land in the area of the railway station for high quality mixed use development, including an extended and regenerated train station, new bus station, high density housing, new multi-storey car parking and new office and retail premises. Revitalisation of the area will be focussed on the updated and enhanced sustainable transport interchange through the development of the new bus station and the regeneration of the train station. The AAP is being developed and involves close collaborative work with Hertfordshire County Council and other stakeholders in the area.
- 1.6 Preparation of the AAP commenced in 2020. The Issues and Options Report was published for consultation in July 2021. Responses to the consultation will be reported to Executive in early 2022.

2 Pre-Public Consultation

2.1 Prior to the Issues and Options Report being circulated for public consultation, the report went through some internal consultation and also the constitutional process.

2.2 The Report was presented to Stevenage Borough Council chief officers and Members at the following meetings:

- SLT 12 January 2021
- Clearance Board 22 January 2021
- Planning and Development Committee 3 February 2021
- Executive 10 February 2021
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee 17 February 2021
- Key stakeholder discussions March – April 2021
- Stevenage Development Board 13 May 2021

2.3 A summary of the comments made in those meetings and other general comments are set out below.

Name/Organisation	Comments	SBC Response
HCC Highways	<i>Bike path options – user experience is a key challenge.</i>	Noted – to be considered further in Issues & Options draft.
HCC Highways	<i>Highways modelling related to the Lytton Way scenarios needs to be developed.</i>	SBC will be working with HCC to produce a report detailing projected impact of the Lytton Way scenarios and model effect on traffic flows.
SLT	<i>Reference to Climate Change and R&D should be made.</i>	Noted – to be included in Issues & Options draft.
Planning & Development Committee	<i>Consultation methods need to go beyond the standard planning policy consultation.</i>	Noted – officers will consider interactive methods of consultation to engage the wider public.
Executive	<i>Accessibility – level access is vital as is the recognition of the need to significantly improve disabled access to the Railway Station.</i>	Noted – additional wording will be reflected in the Issues & Options draft.
O&S	<i>Reference pedestrian crossings.</i>	Noted – will be reflected in the Issues & Options draft.
Key stakeholder discussions	<i>Bike path options – will be a challenge to remove the existing cycle path adjacent to the Station.</i>	Noted – will consider during the Issues & Options public consultation.
Stevenage Development Board	<i>It is important to reference heritage and culture where possible.</i>	Noted – will be reflected in the Issues & Options draft and considered further in AAP drafting.

3 Issues and Options Consultation (2021)

- 3.1 The Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options report set out the main issues for the site and a series of possible options for its future development.
- 3.2 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report was published for consultation in accordance with the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive and Regulations. The consultation formally sought the views of a wide range of consultees, including the three statutory consultees: Historic England; Natural England; and the Environment Agency. The purpose of the consultation was to gauge the views of consultees on the defined scope of the SA and the proposed level of detail that should be included in the SA. The consultation period ran from 12 July until 5 September 2021.
- 3.3 The draft Issues and Options Report was prepared and approved for public consultation by Stevenage Borough Council Executive Committee on 10 February 2021.
- 3.4 An eight-week public consultation exercise was undertaken from 12 July until 5 September 2021. Representations were invited in respect of the Issues and Options Report and the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. Representations could be made using an online consultation system linked to the Council website, alternatively, printed response forms were made available which could be posted or emailed to the Planning Policy Team.
- 3.5 The following methods of notification were used to publicise the consultation exercise.
- 3.6 Following approval by Executive in February 2021 and prior to the consultation period commencing, some early engagement and publicity was carried out to promote the forthcoming public consultation on the AAP. This engagement included:
- Discussions with key stakeholders to gauge early opinion, ahead of their submission of formal representations to the public consultation. At this stage, discussions were held with Sustrans, the Stevenage Cycling UK User Group, East Coast Mainline Authorities and internal colleagues at the Council.
 - A consultation video was produced, which highlighted the current issues with Stevenage Railway Station, Lytton Way and general connectivity and included a series of “fly-through” shots and images. The Planning Policy team procured a local firm, Pearldrop Ltd, to produce the video, which was published on various social media platforms, including the Council’s own YouTube channel – to promote the Area Action Plan consultation.
 - The video, while easily accessible online, was played on location at Stevenage Indoor Market, Stevenage Visitor Centre and other locations across the town.
 - A promotional leaflet and poster were produced and distributed around the town, to highlight that the public could “have their say” on proposals to shape Lytton Way and the wider Station Gateway area over Summer 2021.
 - Ensuring that the AAP consultation could align with the work programme of the broader Communications and Engagement Plan, managed and updated by the Communities & Neighbourhoods team. This was to ensure that the AAP could be added to any events / engagement with the neighbourhoods of Stevenage, to raise awareness as much as possible.

- Engagement with the wider public through “consultation stalls” at the Railway Station. Here, Council officers were present to listen to members of the public and discuss their views regarding the current issues that face the Station, Lytton Way and surrounding area, as well as inviting people to vote (via a colour chip coin) on their preferred option for the central section of Lytton Way.

3.7 The formal consultation consisted of:

- Publicity via the Stevenage Borough Council website and social media platforms (including the Council’s Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn pages).
- A link to the Council’s consultation interface, where the public were able to download the AAP and SEA Screening document and submit their observations and representations.
- The consultation interface included a series of “consultation questions”, designed to cover the varying aspects of the AAP and to generate comments on certain sections of the document, for example the cycle path options or general views on connectivity between the Railway Station and Lytton Way. This was primarily to ensure that the Council received responses on the document as a whole and not just, for example on the proposed options for Lytton Way. The questions were only answered in full by a small number of respondents. However, they proved useful in shaping public opinion across the consultation period and subsequent representations made.
- A series of more formal “key stakeholder meetings” were held virtually; two of the meetings were held in person at Daneshill House, with one meeting followed up by an officer-guided site visit of the AAP area.
- A press release and articles in the Comet newspaper relating to the AAP public consultation.
- Continuation of distribution of leaflets and posters publicising the public consultation. This included distribution at Stevenage Central Library, Daneshill House Reception and Stevenage Railway Station retail outlets.
- Continuation of engagement with the wider public via consultation stalls at the Railway Station and West Gate Shopping Centre, the Town Square and Stevenage Indoor Market.
- The Planning Policy team were assisted by the Communities & Neighbourhoods team and in particular, neighbourhood wardens, in promoting the Area Action Plan consultation across Stevenage to ensure a wide a response as possible.
- The Communities & Neighbourhoods team engaged with community interest groups on the AAP at events that were scheduled for Summer 2021, for example the Irish Centre Social in Bedwell in July 2021. This team placed leaflets and posters on various neighbourhood centre notice boards. This team also engaged with supermarkets and doctor’s surgeries on notice boards, to gauge views on the preferred options for Lytton Way.

3.8 A series of exhibition events were held during July and September 2021 at which Council Officers were in attendance to explain the various options and to answer questions. The events took place at the following venues:

- 6 July 2021 – Stevenage Railway Station
 - 27 July 2021 – Stevenage Railway Station
 - 28 July 2021 – Irish Network Stevenage Social, Bedwell Community Centre
 - 13 August 2021 – Stevenage Railway Station
 - 18 August 2021 – Stevenage Indoor Market
 - 25 August 2021 – Stevenage Westgate Shopping Centre
- 3.9 Copies of the Issues and Options Report were made available for inspection, along with supporting documents at the following locations:
- Stevenage Central Library
 - Stevenage Old Town Library
 - Council Office, Daneshill House, Danestrete
 - Online via the Councils website
- 3.10 Statutory consultees, including Duty to Co-operate Bodies and general consultation bodies as set out in Appendix 1 to this document were notified of the Issues and Options Report consultation by email or letter.
- 3.11 Representations received in respect of the consultation exercise are available to view in full on the Stevenage Borough Council consultation portal. A summary of the representations received is included in this statement.
- 3.12 A total of 9 meetings were held with the key stakeholder groups identified through the early engagement process when the AAP was first drafted and developed. These were as follows:
- Cycling UK Stevenage: 1st July 2021 (prior to public consultation launch)
 - Mace: 2nd July 2021 (prior to public consultation launch)
 - Hertfordshire LEP: 2nd July 2021 (prior to public consultation launch)
 - Hertfordshire County Council: 5th July 2021
 - Govia Thameslink Railway: 7th July 2021
 - Stevenage Bus Users Group: 9th July 2021
 - National Rail: 21st July 2021
 - Sustrans: 23rd July 2021
 - Legal & General: 11th August 2021

In addition, a site visit to the Station Gateway area was held with the Cycling UK Stevenage group on 23rd August 2021.

3.13 At each meeting, officers presented a set of PowerPoint slides to the stakeholder group detailing the Area Action Plan. The stakeholder group were then invited to comment on the content of the AAP from their perspective and comments recorded as part of the overall consultation response. Key issues arising from these meetings included:

Theme	Comments
Vision & Aspirations	<i>Generally supported to provide much needed transformation of this part of the town and to support activities at and around the Railway Station.</i>
Destination & Sense of Place	<i>Potential for exemplary buildings to showcase as a crucial destination. There is a big opportunity for this – this is the ultimate way forward for a sense of place in the area.</i>
Cycling	<i>Consideration needed for cycling past or through the Station, not just to and from it. People use the cycle route to commute and travel to places other than the Railway Station.</i> <i>In Stevenage, the cycle infrastructure in place is interesting. Usage is not as high as is currently interrupted by the pandemic. It would be useful to tie in with a programme of behavioural change, increasing the attractiveness of the network.</i> <i>In some places, the National Cycle Network is split. Signage would be beneficial and clear signage is a must.</i>
Connectivity & Movement	<i>Importance of the boulevard – link to Town Square, a way finder, offering a viewpoint, vista, and series of connection, and the importance of alignment to the Station.</i> <i>Further movement analysis could potentially be used to support any future options. A wider policy rationale could be developed to support a Preferred Option – good to keep in mind for a Preferred Options version of the AAP.</i>
Access	<i>Regarding the road bridge, there are key issues in terms of future access. Step grade drop needs to be part of the proposed solutions in the Preferred Options.</i>
Economy	<i>Grow on space element is important, for example relating to low carbon development.</i> <i>The AAP area could work well as a service industry for the aerospace and R&D cluster at Gunnels Wood, and / or supporting the emerging cell and gene cluster.</i> <i>There needs to be consideration of what businesses need in Stevenage and beyond. Need to link to inward investment and the Town Deal.</i>
Digital	<i>Digital incentives are also very important in this area going forward.</i>
Railway Station	<i>Entrance at grade is a priority.</i> <i>There is pressure on future possibilities for a new Station. This should consider how long this would take, the costs of intervention and</i>

Theme	Comments
	<i>implementation of an option needs to be recognised.</i>
Lytton Way Options	<p><i>Overall, the proposed Options have a positive level of support as they are transformative, positive and will result in a different feel around the Station. They will encourage further walking and cycling in the vicinity.</i></p> <p><i>Option 1 doesn't enable modal shift.</i></p> <p><i>Option 2 – work would need to be undertaken to set out what happens for traffic movements such as drop off, turning and movement.</i></p> <p><i>Option 2 & 3 – opens up the barrier of the ring road but will require detailed modelling and assessment. Will allow the Town Centre to expand, and the Leisure Centre.</i></p>

3.14 The consultation representations were reported to the committees listed below, the minutes of which can be viewed online. In summary, Members noted the responses and agreed that further work should be undertaken on developing the preferred options for the site.

- Planning & Development Committee – 31 January 2022
- Executive – 9 February 2022
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 15 February 2022

3.15 The responses received to the Issues and Options Report were used to inform the preparation of the Preferred Options Report.

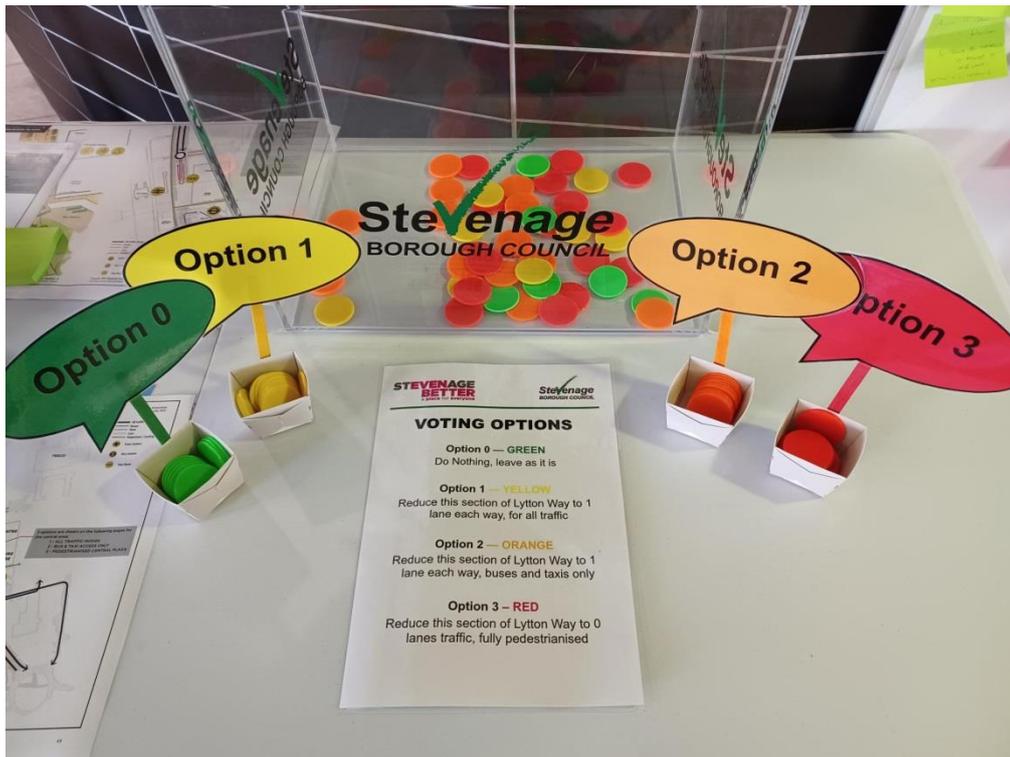
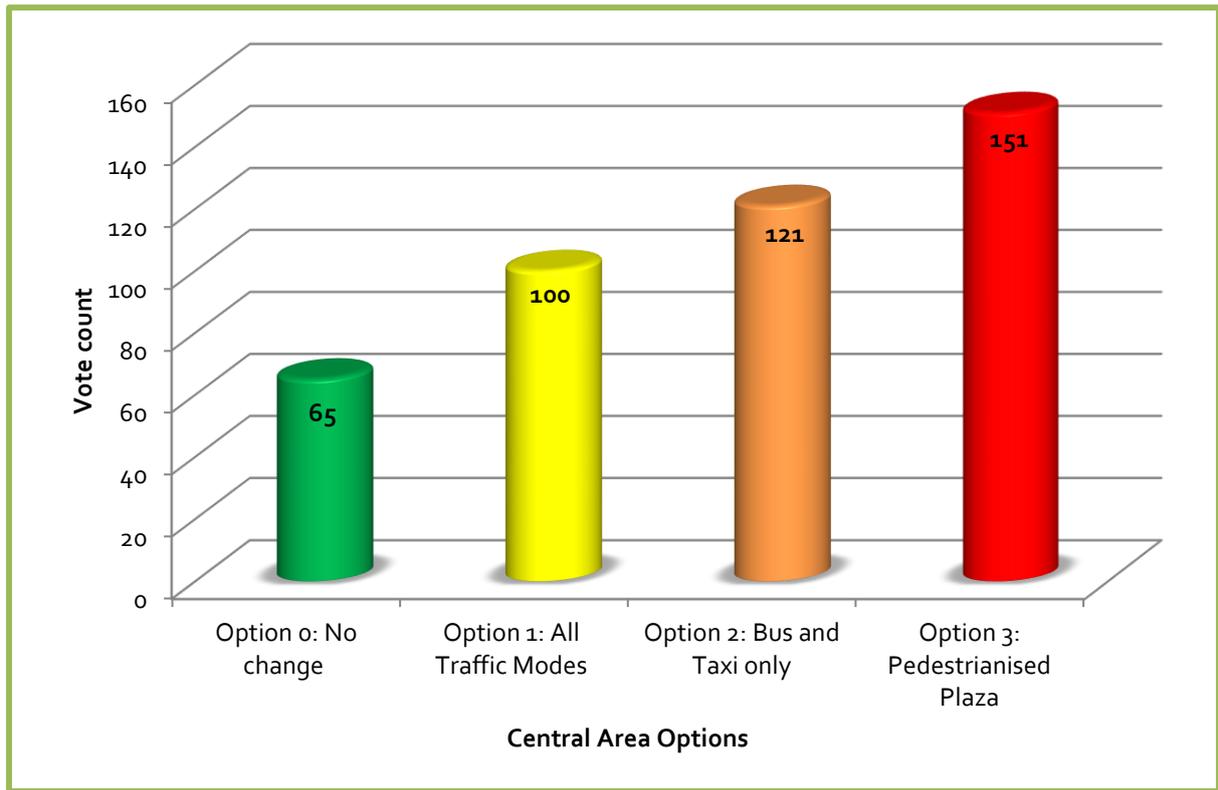
4 What were the main issues raised during the consultation?

4.1 The main topics raised during the consultation were:

- *Vision, ambitions, and aspirations of the AAP.*
- *Transport and highways improvements, in particular the cycle routes and proposed options to reconfigure Lytton Way.*
- *Active travel and sustainability.*
- *Safety and security.*
- *Public realm and sense of arrival at the Railway Station.*
- *Integration of culture, art and heritage.*
- *Traffic flow around the immediate area.*
- *Improved connection, wayfinding and signposting between the Bus Station and Train Station.*
- *Accessibility issues / disabled parking provision.*
- *A series of general comments.*

5 Votes and opinions

- 5.1 As part of the consultation, the Planning Policy team ran a series of “consultation stalls” at Stevenage Railway Station, the Indoor Market and West Gate Shopping Centre to gauge views on the public on the Area Action Plan, while having the indicative options for potential changes to Lytton Way on display.
- 5.2 Members of the public who visited the stalls were provided leaflets with more details regarding the Area Action Plan consultation and where to submit formal comments.
- 5.3 People were asked their general views about the Station in terms of arrival, their thoughts on Lytton Way alongside the Railway Station in its current use as well as about connections from the Railway Station through to the Town Centre and other areas of the town.
- 5.4 People were given an opportunity to express their comments via post-it notes and marking out of 10 on a tally chart, regarding Station arrival, Lytton Way and connectivity.
- 5.5 The main part of the consultation stalls involved the public being invited to vote for their preferred option for Lytton Way by taking chip coins and placing in a Perspex box, with different colour chip coins representing the 4 different options.
- 5.6 Officers asked members of the public to vote for their preferred option, as set out in the Issues and Options Report, as part of the stall events, at the Irish Network Stevenage Social as well as at community centre and neighbourhood notice boards, notice boards at some of the Living Schemes, supermarkets, town centre shops and doctor surgeries.
- 5.7 The early phase of the consultation was held before COVID-19 restrictions in England were eased (on 19th July 2021); all appropriate measures were taken to ensure that public engagement was COVID-secure as much as possible. For example, provision of hand sanitisers at consultation stalls and masks worn when appropriate.
- 5.8 Officers received a total of 437 chip coin votes. The votes are shown overleaf:



5.9 There is a clear appetite for change in the Station Gateway area and a more sustainable change with public transport and pedestrianisation.

**CENTRAL AREA OPTION 2
BUS & TAXI ONLY**

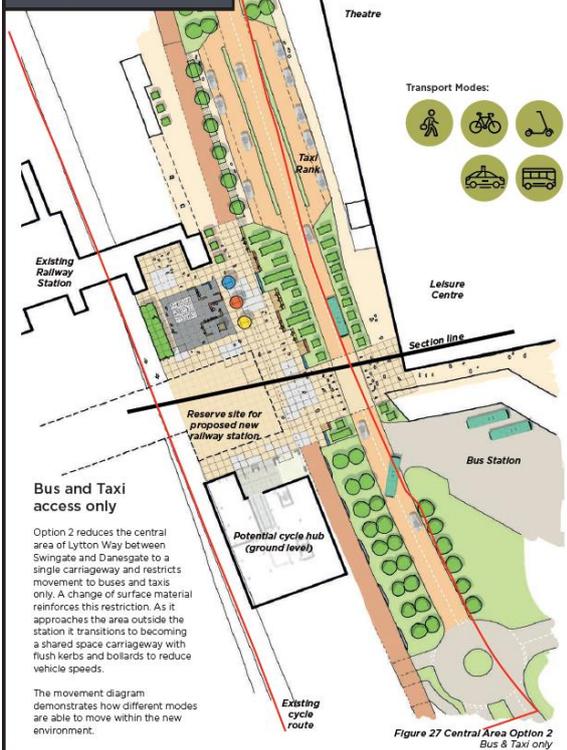


Figure 27 Central Area Option 2 Bus & Taxi only

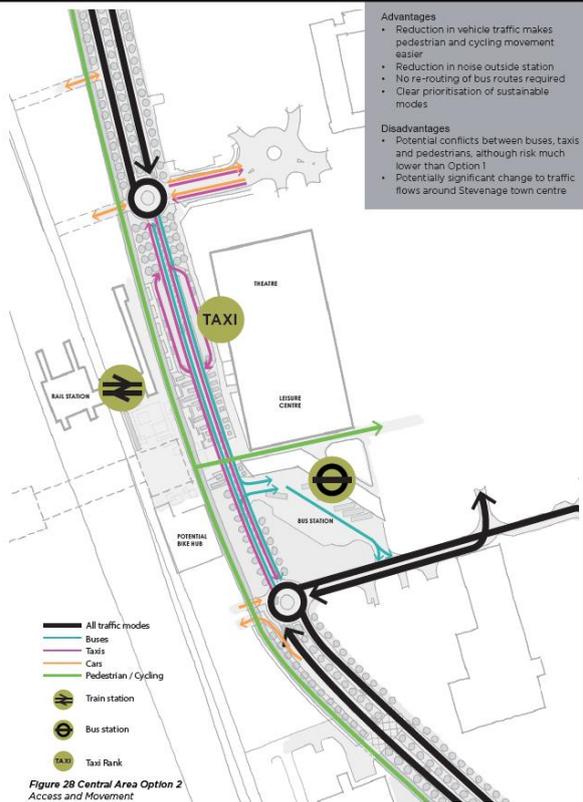


Figure 28 Central Area Option 2 Access and Movement

- Advantages**
- Reduction in vehicle traffic makes pedestrian and cycling movement easier
 - Reduction in noise outside station
 - No re-routing of bus routes required
 - Clear prioritisation of sustainable modes
- Disadvantages**
- Potential conflicts between buses, taxis and pedestrians, although risk much lower than Option 1
 - Potentially significant change to traffic flows around Stevenage town centre

**CENTRAL AREA OPTION 3
PEDESTRIANISED PLAZA**

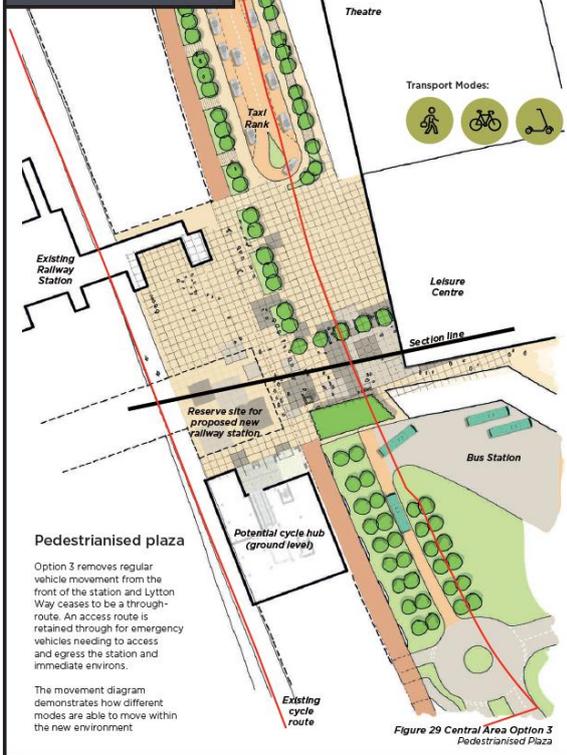


Figure 29 Central Area Option 3 Pedestrianised Plaza

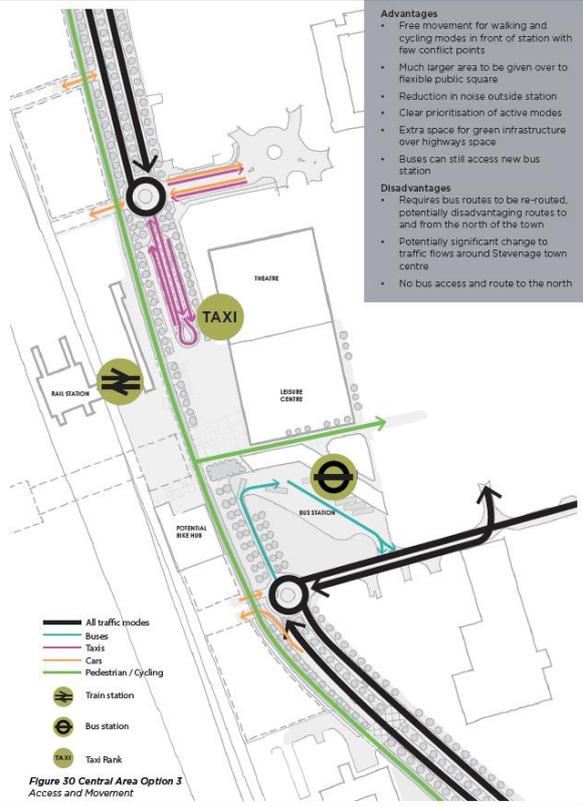
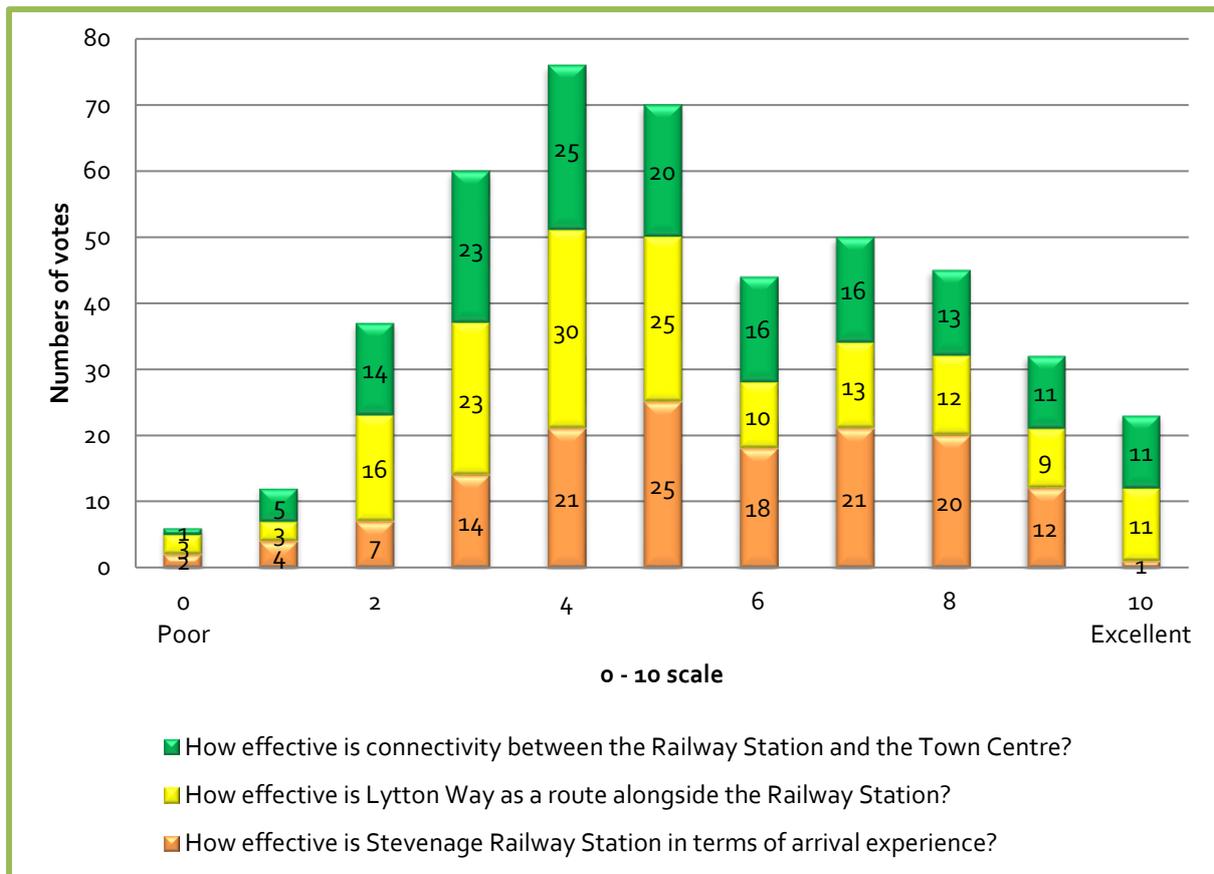


Figure 30 Central Area Option 3 Access and Movement

- Advantages**
- Free movement for walking and cycling modes in front of station with few conflict points
 - Much larger area to be given over to flexible public square
 - Reduction in noise outside station
 - Clear prioritisation of active modes
 - Extra space for green infrastructure over highways space
 - Buses can still access new bus station
- Disadvantages**
- Requires bus routes to be re-routed, potentially disadvantaging routes to and from the north of the town
 - Potentially significant change to traffic flows around Stevenage town centre
 - No bus access and route to the north

5.10 Officers also asked the public’s opinion of current experiences of the Station Gateway area. Officers received a total of 100 votes. These opinions are set out below.



5.11 It is clear that the effectiveness of the experience in the Station Gateway area is currently not particularly positive, with the majority of the votes being in the 3 – 5 range on a scale of 0 (poor) to 10 (excellent).

5.12 There is clearly a public appetite to improve the effectiveness and functionality of the Station Gateway Area in Stevenage.

6 How has the Council responded to these Issues and Options?

6.1 A complete schedule of consultation responses, the Council’s response to the comments is provided overleaf.

6.2 The opinions and views of the public will be considered when officers work through the preferred options stage and this will then be subject to public consultation once again.

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Member of Public	I&O1	General comment	There will be too much traffic if the area is pedestrianised	We are awaiting the results of Hertfordshire Highways modelling and this will be considered prior to moving to the next stage of consultation
Member of Public	I&O2	General comment	Thoroughfare from north - where would this move to under option 1?	This would not be impacted by Option 1 if it were to be implemented.
Member of Public	I&O3	General comment	Traffic flow at the weekends (particularly to the South) will be significantly impacted.	We are awaiting the results of Hertfordshire Highways modelling and this will be considered prior to moving to the next stage of consultation
Member of Public	I&O4	General comment	Will traffic be re-directed along Gunnels Wood Road? Concerns as I live along the road and don't want additional traffic.	We are awaiting the results of Hertfordshire Highways modelling and this will be considered prior to moving to the next stage of consultation
Member of Public	I&O5	General comment	Bus station will significantly improve connection to public transport from the station.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O6	General comment	Will there be a pedestrian crossing to the bus station?	The new Bus Interchange will make provision for at-grade pedestrian crossing; this will be considered when designing the Preferred Option on the AAP.
Member of Public	I&O7	General comment	Connection to the current bus station could be better.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O8	General comment	There should be dedicated bays at the bus station, like at Luton Airport.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O9	General comment	Position of the bus stop next to the station needs looking at.	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Member of Public	I&O10	General comment	Older people need to be considered - the distance from the bus station and the town centre has increased.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O11	General comment	Create an underpass similar to Gunnels Wood Road to keep the traffic flow.	The cost of such a project would make the project unviable
Member of Public	I&O12	General comment	Build a bridge from the bus station to the train station.	The cost of such a project would make the project unviable
Member of Public	I&O13	General comment	Elevated road? Flyover? Would be losing an important part of town with these options, we need traffic going through.	The cost of such a project would make the project unviable
Member of Public	I&O14	General comment	The road should be solely for buses.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O15	General comment	Don't prioritise buses and taxis - combine options 1 and 3.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O16	General comment	Cycle Hub would be useful. Link up to a major transport hub/active travel.	A cycle hub is featured in options 1 - 3
Member of Public	I&O17	General comment	Free Parking as an incentive.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O18	General comment	Leave 2 lanes for traffic with 1 bus lane.	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Member of Public	I&O19	General comment	Access to station would be better at ground level as opposed to its current location.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O20	General comment	Option 1 - still need to have traffic flow on Lytton Way. Consider one way traffic flow?	We are awaiting the results of Hertfordshire Highways modelling and this will be considered prior to moving to the next stage of consultation
Member of Public	I&O21	General comment	Access to Tesco could be impacted if it's reduced to 1 lane.	We are awaiting the results of Hertfordshire Highways modelling and this will be considered prior to moving to the next stage of consultation
Member of Public	I&O22	General comment	Concerned about getting rid of the Stevenage Hall of Fame.	Noted. It is possible that this can be relocated elsewhere
Member of Public	I&O23	General comment	The ramp is useless and the lift is not DDA compliant - needs improvement	Noted
Member of Public	I&O24	General comment	Keen not to see any more light pollution.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O25	General comment	As a pedestrian, there are issues with ground level access to the town centre and bus station.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O26	General comment	Needs more disabled parking	Noted
Member of Public	I&O27	General comment	Better accessibility needed for disabled people coming from the bus station.	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Member of Public	I&O28	General comment	Disabled access challenges if option 3 is chosen.	Noted. Disabled access would be designed into the scheme
Member of Public	I&O29	General comment	Disabled access and position of the bus station near the train station is an issue.	Noted. Disabled access would be designed into the scheme
Member of Public	I&O30	General comment	What are the plans for commuter parking?	A MSCP is being proposed on the northern station carpark to facilitate additional commuter parking
Member of Public	I&O31	General comment	Accessibility at ground level? Will there be future station upgrades going forward?	It is understood that Network Rail as station upgrades scheduled in their future works programme
Member of Public	I&O32	General comment	Have traffic surveys of buses/taxis been undertaken and considered in the modelling?	We are awaiting the results of Hertfordshire Highways modelling and this will be considered prior to moving to the next stage of consultation
Member of Public	I&O33	General comment	Option 2 - will the taxi rank also be a drop off point?	Yes
Member of Public	I&O34	General comment	Where will the drop off area be for the train station?	Yes
Member of Public	I&O35	General comment	How will this impact both sides of Lytton Way?	We are awaiting the results of Hertfordshire Highways modelling and this will be considered prior to moving to the next stage of consultation
Member of Public	I&O36	General comment	How will the emergency services be affected? Can the police get to the Old Town quickly if pedestrianised?	Emergency access is proposed in Option 3

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Member of Public	I&O37	General comment	Need more EV charging points and car park provision at the station. Do the plans account for this?	A MSCP is being proposed on the northern station carpark to facilitate additional commuter parking. EV charging points would be included as part of this redevelopment
Member of Public	I&O38	General comment	Where will the Leisure Centre and Theatre go as part of these proposals?	The Leisure Centre and Theatre are not proposed to be moved as part of these proposals
Member of Public	I&O39	General comment	Bikes are being stolen from the bike racks. Will you consider active surveillance for this in the plans?	This is something that would be considered in the wider context of the area
Member of Public	I&O40	General comment	Option 3 is best for a new sense of arrival.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O41	General comment	This is a good opportunity to link the town centre regeneration to the station as it is currently fragmented.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O42	General comment	Need to be able to walk everywhere to keep people fit.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O43	General comment	Option 1 - improves link to town centre, there are alternative routes to drive.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O44	General comment	Station worker - Access to the rail station for services/working is vital.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O45	General comment	All options are good but need to seriously incorporate safety	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Member of Public	I&O46	General comment	Bulldoze the public toilets in the town centre - it doesn't help the sense of arrival.	Outside the remit of this Station Gateway Area
Member of Public	I&O47	General comment	Pedestrianise the Old Town/High Street.	Outside the remit of this Station Gateway Area
Member of Public	I&O48	General comment	People living in the town won't be using the services as much - is a café culture the thing we need in Stevenage?	Noted
Member of Public	I&O49	General comment	I know for a fact that they haven't got permission for the Bus Station. You're going to do what you want anyway.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O50	General comment	Town Square paving is a waste of money. Paving is slippery when wet and never clean.	Outside the remit of this Station Gateway Area
Member of Public	I&O51	General comment	Rail worker - we ideally need bus/taxi access to be maintained to the rail station.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O52	General comment	Go back to the old station site. We need the travellator back at the ramp to the taxi rank.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O53	General comment	Speed Cameras on Lytton Way.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O54	General comment	Better Toilet facilities.	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Member of Public	I&O55	General comment	Need for disabled parking.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O56	General comment	Bus Station is a long way from Tesco for elderly or those with mobility issues	Noted
Member of Public	I&O57	General comment	Where will the bus stops be?	The bus station is currently being built on the opposite side of Lytton Way to the Railway Station
Member of Public	I&O58	General comment	Park and Ride option would be welcomed.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O59	General comment	Use of SLL car park by commuters leading to no parking for SLL users.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O60	General comment	Talk of a production factory in the Town Centre? It was in the Comet?	Outside the remit of this Station Gateway Area
Member of Public	I&O61	General comment	Many at the Irish Centre don't use the Town Centre anymore as no decent shops and nothing to go there for.	Outside the remit of this Station Gateway Area
Member of Public	I&O62	General comment	Not enough done for / spent on communities.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O63	General comment	Electric scooters on the cycle ways and other pathways - speeding and dangerous driving. People feel unsafe.	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Member of Public	I&O64	General comment	I love this, actually feel optimistic about that whole area being revamped and modernised! Felt for years now that the Station needs a complete overhaul, it feels like one of the most awkward train stations.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O65	General comment	Have you seen that ramp for the new platform at the train station? It's actually criminal how Higley Pigley (sic) it is. I'd start with that. Oh and maybe give the train station a new exterior. The red brick modern Brutalist design makes it look really dated.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O66	General comment	What are the main issues with Stevenage Railway Station? Very well put in the video that there is lack of a sense of arrival. The station is unfriendly and awkwardly shaped, it is not 'aesthetically pleasing' to the eye! It's positioning does not make it feel part of the town centre. For those with mobility issues, buggies/prams or luggage it is a very difficult station to use, it could be laid out far better.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O67	General comment	What improvements would you like to see made at Stevenage Railway Station? It needs to be bigger with nice cafe(s) and shops (little M&S food or Waitrose). It would be far better as a ground level station with underground/multi-storey parking	Noted
Member of Public	I&O68	General comment	For the railway station, could some kind of barrier be put up between the platform and tracks as every year some poor person seems to take their life there? Rather than aesthetics I'd much rather see safety barriers at the train station	Noted
Member of Public	I&O69	General comment	So if the carparks by the station are to be built on, where will people park?	A MSCP is being proposed on the northern station carpark to facilitate additional commuter parking

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Member of Public	I&O70	General comment	Some affordable long stay parking would be great. To be able to shop and not pay high charges or be able to commute easier.	A MSCP is being proposed on the northern station carpark to facilitate additional commuter parking
Member of Public	I&O71	General comment	Either an underground car park beside the station or a multistory (sic) car park, then all those commuters who work in the City will have somewhere to park instead of the surrounding streets. Don't put a pelican or zebra crossing on lytton (sic) way, that is a death scene waiting to happen. As for the lack of sense of arrival, short of employing a brass band playing on the platforms and cheerleaders waving "Welcome to Stevenage" banners, there is not much you can do	A MSCP is being proposed on the northern station carpark to facilitate additional commuter parking
Member of Public	I&O72	General comment	A multi storey carpark, 24 hours, secure and easy to access. The lack of parking near the station is a major, major problem. Stevenage is growing and in order to encourage the use of the train rather than driving, you need parking that stays open past 8pm. Without that everything else is pointless.	A MSCP is being proposed on the northern station carpark to facilitate additional commuter parking
Member of Public	I&O73	General comment	On the other side they should build a multi story that goes up and down. 24 hour.	A MSCP is being proposed on the northern station carpark to facilitate additional commuter parking
Member of Public	I&O74	General comment	A multistorey (sic) car park at the station - like Hatfield got - with lots of bicycle and motorcycle parking at ground level.	A MSCP is being proposed on the northern station carpark to facilitate additional commuter parking
Member of Public	I&O75	General comment	Free parking!!! That is why people choose supermarkets and retail parks! £1.80 for an hour just to nip to a couple of shops.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O76	General comment	Some affordable long stay parking would be great. To be able to shop and not pay high charges or be able to commute easier.	A MSCP is being proposed on the northern station carpark to facilitate additional commuter parking

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Member of Public	I&O77	General comment	We need more car parking not Less	A MSCP is being proposed on the northern station carpark to facilitate additional commuter parking
Member of Public	I&O78	General comment	it would be nice if we had cheaper parking, but that will never happen. Doesn't matter how much money you throw at the town center (sic) if the parking fees are too high people will not go there.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O79	General comment	Free parking will bring in more revenue, from (sic) visiting shoppers. evening (sic) if its couple days a week, better (sic) than nothing. I shop out of town on days I know car parking is free in other towns etc.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O80	General comment	I'm pretty certain that car parks provide much needed revenue to help fund all the other things SBC does for residents... Many councils (sic) are in the same position, financially.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O81	General comment	Free Parking helps fund the pay rises they keep giving themselves	Noted
Member of Public	I&O82	General comment	Isn't very user friendly the website used. Would be better if I could respond as I'm reading along instead of having to read it all first and then having to remember when going through each individual box.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O83	General comment	Can we have a working link please? Much obliged	Noted
Member of Public	I&O84	General comment	The link doesn't work	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Member of Public	I&O85	General comment	Hi there, the portals and various websites that this process takes you through is very confusing, but I know quite a few people who would be more than (sic) willing to share their opinions on this if it were easier to access, could I suggest ideas on other people's behalf?	Noted
Member of Public	I&O86	General comment	What are the main problems with Lytton Way? Pulling out from Tesco car park onto Lytton Way has always felt a little intimidating and for those who do not know the town confusing! You really have to get to where you need to be quick. Lytton Way being a major dual carriageway limits the pedestrian flow to and from the town centre. I suppose it adds to the brutalist nature of 50s Stevenage.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O87	General comment	What improvements to Lytton Way would you like to see? I'd like to see the road basically cut out entirely to through traffic and redesigned to allow for access to the bus and train stations only, perhaps parking. It would be lovely to see a modern pedestrianised 'Avenue' lined with some trees and planters towards the town centre.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O88	General comment	Do you have any suggested improvements to walking and cycling to and from the Railway Station? The entry and exit to the station needs to face onto 'something' such as a plaza of activity rather than a dual carriageway with no clear path links. The main walk way through to the town or the old town needs ground level and pleasant, as above in the style of an avenue featuring plants and flowers. It would be lovely to reposition the cycle track. Need to avoid areas of intimidation and have as much open plan style as possible.	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Member of Public	I&O89	General comment	Do you have any other suggestions for improvements to the Railway Station, Lytton Way and access to and from the Railway Station? I think I've pretty much said everything I am thinking! Please make more of a destination and focal point than a throughway of traffic, there are enough surrounding roads in the town to cater for that. This is a really good opportunity to transform the area, please do start again with it!	Noted
Member of Public	I&O90	General comment	It's interesting SBC asks for views but the works have already started by HCC. Don't you two ever work together, and what happens if SBC or HCC don't agree with the ridiculous idea of a pelican crossing on Lytton way next to the bridge currently there, or closing Lytton way, or having a bus Lane	Noted
Member of Public	I&O91	General comment	The plan is, and always has been to remove Lytton Way to traffic. Not sure how much notice "the leader" and her team of planners will take of comments.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O92	General comment	How can comments help when the work for the new pedestrian crossing/traffic lights are taking place with the electrics in place ready for install. It may be HCC doing it but you guys hould (sic) be working together and not doing separate consultations	Noted
Member of Public	I&O93	General comment	Need to update that swimming pool, it's pants	Outside the remit of this Station Gateway Area
Member of Public	I&O94	General comment	What town centre do you expect commuters to make the most of? There's nothing left in town for residents to bother using it, so commuters will be doing a quick fly past too, unless of course they rally (sic) need a new phone, a coffee or something from a charity shop. What else is there?	Outside the remit of this Station Gateway Area

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Member of Public	I&O95	General comment	The town centre is a mess. Not a lot of great shops left	Outside the remit of this Station Gateway Area
Member of Public	I&O96	General comment	Not sure why you canvass views - this council never seems to take them into consideration and forges on with their own agenda - just look at the town centre - what a jewel in their crown that is! Good job - Hitchin and WGC are only a short journey away.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O97	General comment	SBC ask for input and then do exactly as they please, perhaps they just have to be ssen (sic) going through the motions	Noted
Member of Public	I&O98	General comment	What will people be visiting? All the new flats because there won't be any shops left.	Outside the remit of this Station Gateway Area
Member of Public	I&O99	General comment	Just some of the comments that demonstrates how out of touch you really are. You have failed the people of this town on far too many occasions. You now need to win back people's trust by delivering. I can only echo some of the comments that there are much nicer towns to visit and spend time in close by.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O100	General comment	Why ask us? You'll do what you want anyway, regardless of our views.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O101	General comment	More shops pleas, less flats.	Outside the remit of this Station Gateway Area
Member of Public	I&O102	General comment	Like many other Stevenage residents, I don't go to town anymore and now Matalan has shut too. Ghost town.	Outside the remit of this Station Gateway Area

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Member of Public	I&O103	General comment	I'd love to see more shops on the town, cheaper parking, nicer and cleaner toilet facilities and our poor swimming pool is in desperate need of some investment, it's old and tired on the outside as well as inside. The staff there work hard to make the best of what they have but the place deserves a complete face lift.	Outside the remit of this Station Gateway Area
Member of Public	I&O104	General comment	Also train stations bad for commuters now just wait till you build the high rises on Matalan (sic) and the old staples site also by the post office it's going back to the 60s no one builds high rises anymore	Noted
Member of Public	I&O105	General comment	How can all of this go ahead without Shutter Speed Steve getting his "donation"?	Noted
Member of Public	I&O106	General comment	What is the demolition date of Swingate House or when roughly will it take place? It's not Railway Station I know but it is Town Centre.	Outside the remit of this Station Gateway Area
Member of Public	I&O107	General comment	No point saying anything...have you ever known the council or government to ever listen to the public.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O108	General comment	They will do what they want to do.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O109	General comment	I know the plans are made and accepted beforehand	Noted
Member of Public	I&O110	General comment	Fantastic opportunity for us to have a say well done Sharon Taylor and team	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Member of Public	I&O111	General comment	They don't listen when you have your say especially "the leader"	Noted
Member of Public	I&O112	General comment	I don't believe that the council don't listen. Are you sure it isn't just that your not saying anything? Or perhaps what you want ends up being impractical or incompatible with the majority needs?	Noted
Member of Public Page 195	I&O113	General comment	Stevenage needs to look at enticing people in to the town to shop eat and for entertainment. We need a decent shopping area catering for all taste. Bright and clean facilities that facilitate a pleasant shopping experience where one can browse and be able to grab a coffee or bite to eat . This means there needs to be easy parking that is not restricted by high cost or the fact that there is a football match going on. Even the once pleasant high street with its boutiques and shops has seen drastic change and a loss of many shops. I know many Stevenage residents would rather go elsewhere to Hitchin, Biggleswade, Welwyn Garden and Hatfield rather than shop here in the town it would be lovely to see some improvement.	Outside the remit of this Station Gateway Area
Member of Public	I&O114	General comment	I doubt anything can be done about losing shops, that's down to forces beyond SBC's control - change in consumer behaviour, private landlords, UK Government planning rules, and so on - but perhaps there's some things which can be done by SBC about making this central arrival location a nicer area with fewer tunnels and visual obstacles.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O115	General comment	How many council homes are going in the town centre	Outside the remit of this Station Gateway Area

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Member of Public	I&O116	General comment	You don't take ANY notice of what the residents want so what's the point?	Noted
Member of Public	I&O117	General comment	So, everyone who lives or works in the High St & Old Town "jumped with joy" after the fitting of "parking meters" everywhere "consultation" ??	Outside the remit of this Station Gateway Area
Member of Public	I&O118	General comment	Some new shops in the town centre would be a good addition and some nice little bars	Outside the remit of this Station Gateway Area
Member of Public	I&O119	General comment	Please try to create as many wildlife friendly and green spaces as possible	Outside the remit of this Station Gateway Area
Member of Public	I&O120	General comment	Stevenage has a lot of wildlife friendly places	Outside the remit of this Station Gateway Area
Member of Public	I&O121	General comment	I have lived in Stevenage all my life and I'm aware that Stevenage has made good efforts to protect grass verges and (sic) plant more trees. With a growing population and more buildings being allowed there will never be enough wildlife (sic) areas in the UK nevermind Stevenage. All council building programmers need to consider wildlife corridors, effective planting and the environment much better than they currently do in my opinion.	Outside the remit of this Station Gateway Area
Member of Public	I&O122	General comment	Improving Stevenage. Ambitious.	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Member of Public	I&O123	General comment	Do you think the existing cycleway alongside the Station works well? Yes and no - it links well but is hidden! For many years of my life I did not know it was even there! To be honest, having used the cycle tracks when commuting, the winter dark evenings were a little uncomfortable to use on the way home. There is a sense of anybody could do anything here and not be seen! It's practical but not 'nice'.	Noted
Member of Public	I&O124	General comment	The new bus station is far too far away from the few remaining shops. The only shops worth bothering with are Wilko and Savers. Stevenage has too many cheap and nasty shops. It's much nicer to stroll around Hitchin which has some character which Stevenage will never have.	Outside the remit of this Station Gateway Area
Member of Public	I&O125	General comment	Link isn't working for me on my phone. But accessibility is a must. Ease of access too, not having to go all around buildings and roads to find a ramp or lift. The lift from the taxi rink/car park up to the station is often broken. Also accessibility from Fulton close to the leisure park and train station- there are no drop kerbs. Are these some things you are going to address?	Noted
Cycle UK Stevenage	I&O126	General comment	At the south end of the proposed cycleway, there are some serious infrastructure issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One route crosses an emergency exit from the police station • Significant differences in levels between Six Hills Way and Lytton Way 	Noted
Cycle UK Stevenage	I&O127	General comment	The proposed cycleway would need to cross the main entrance to Stevenage Police Station causing significant safety issues	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Cycle UK Stevenage	I&O128	General comment	There is a conflict travelling north-south across the Station entrance where there is proposed to be in an increase in pedestrians – this may cause a safety issue	Noted
Cycle UK Stevenage	I&O129	General comment	Cyclists will require cycle parking at the north and south of the railway station rather than just one facility	Noted
Cycle UK Stevenage	I&O130	General comment	Cyclists will need to cross the proposed MSCP entrance and this may result in safety issues. A solution may be ramped access for vehicles so that cycles can pass by via underpass	Noted
Cycle UK Stevenage	I&O131	General comment	There are also other crossings that would need to be negotiated; at the drop off zone and also for business deliveries. These would also raise safety issues	Noted
Cycle UK Stevenage	I&O132	General comment	There is no proposed cycleway infrastructure at the north end of the AAP site. Any replacement route would need to take up the same horizontal space to maintain an acceptable gradient and could compromise available space for other developments	Noted
Cycle UK Stevenage	I&O133	General comment	Commercial units should have entrances facing the cycleways to give people reasons to cycle to the premises	Noted
Cycle UK Stevenage	I&O134	General comment	There needs to be good provision to enable cyclists to access the first floor of the rail station	Noted
Cycle UK Stevenage	I&O135	General comment	The cycleways need to be maintained properly to an appropriate standard to encourage cyclists to use them	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Cycle UK Stevenage	I&O136	General comment	The pedestrian footway crosses the cycleway at the southern end of the site adjacent to the Police Station. The footway should be re-routed to stay on one side of the cycleway from the Six Hills Way junction to improve safety and visibility.	Noted
Cycle UK Stevenage	I&O137	General comment	When Tesco's is rebuilt, it should incorporate a covered cycleway and footway with store entrance from the bridge over Fairlands to Swingate	Outside the remit of this Station Gateway Area
Member of Public	I&O138	General comment	The design of the area should incorporate a usable space such as a village green rather than just trees in pavement	Noted
Member of Public	I&O139	General comment	Make Lytton Way buses, taxis, public service vehicles and emergency vehicles only and place stairs that go immediately from the bus station up to the footbridge over Lytton Way	Noted
Member of Public	I&O140	General comment	Make all buses go south down Lytton Way and fully remove all of Lytton Way which can then become the station gateway area	Noted
Member of Public	I&O141	General comment	Remove Lytton Way and make buses go down Danestrete and removes the complicated issue of getting pedestrians from east to west	Noted
Member of Public	I&O142	General comment	Do not put a zebra/pelican crossing in, instead provide lifts and stairs down from inside the bus station, under the road and up and out into the train station or add in an immediate bus station to the Gordon Craig stairs and lifts or ramps	Noted
Coal Authority	I&O143	General comment	No comment	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O144	Introduction	Under section 'Why create an Area Action Plan,' SBC were asked to prepare this to support 'Policy TC4: Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area' rather than site TC4?	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O145	Background	Include the Local Walking Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) in 'other policy documents'. The aim is to make Stevenage a highly vibrant and sustainable town which requires the promotion of all modes of transport to reduce vehicle use and dependency.	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O146	Setting the context	There should be some context to the wider Stevenage Town Centre regeneration project showing the links of the town centre moving west and how this sits with the AAP and not been framed in isolation.	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit		Setting the context	The overall vision for the station as a multi-modal hub, providing a high-quality gateway to the town, is supported. The county Council's Rail Strategy (December 2020) notes that the station "requires a significant rebuild to provide safe circulation space and to create a welcoming gateway to the town".	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit		Setting the context	It should be noted that the final DfT Decarbonising Transport plan has now been published	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit		Setting the context	LTN 1/20 sets out new guidance of cycling infrastructure	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O147	Issues and Challenges	No context or map/drawing is provided to show the relocation of Stevenage Bus Interchange to Lytton Way, which is currently being developed, whilst there is a plan showing the SG1 Masterplan (Mace 2018) the bus interchange has been omitted for consideration of developments/vision for the area. This highlights the fragmented approach in representing SG1 & Bus Interchange on the issues and challenges that will have an impact on the AAP.	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O148	Issues and Challenges	<i>[p.25] "Although this bridge runs down a ramp by the time it arrives in the town square, this does restrict accessibility and requires all users of the station area to climb a level."</i> It should be noted that although the route via the bridge is rather utilitarian, it does provide clear and easy access between the station and the town centre for the majority of users. It is essential that this route is retained until a high-quality alternative has been provided.	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O149	Issues and Challenges	The comment regarding the need to climb a level is unclear. All users of the station will need to climb a level to access the gate lines.	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O150	Issues and Challenges	It is essential that land is safeguarded to enable the Rail Station Vision developed by Arup to be delivered. Greater efforts should be made to push this scheme through as soon as possible.	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O151	Existing Environment	Figure 21 Lytton Way: Consider having a key to identify key buildings e.g. Gordon Craig, new bus station, police station, and car parks etc. Use the labels from Figure 23 to provide definition.	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O152	Existing Environment	Figure 22: Identifies bus and taxis on the key but these modes are not represented on the graphic – are these included in 'All traffic modes?'	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O153	Existing Environment	A full review is required of the routes that people use to walk and cycle to and from the station so that a proper assessment can be made of the adequacy of existing routes.	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O154	Existing Environment	Has any account been taken of the needs for rail replacement buses? Traditionally these have used the bus stops in front of the station, but a new facility was set up in the retail park whilst Platform 5 was being constructed.	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O155	Emerging Framework	<i>"A new gateway and arrival experience"</i> This should also incorporate the concept that the station has a presence in the urban landscape i.e. it is highly visible to people in the town.	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O156	Emerging Framework	<i>"Enhanced movement & access for all modes: - Effective transport interchange between sustainable modes should be facilitated by grouping of activities and modes."</i> The emphasis should be on effective interchange – the activities do not also need to be grouped to be effective.	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O157	Emerging Framework	Needs to refer to the importance of good east west links between the station, town centre and leisure park area.	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O158	Emerging Framework	Consider including the multi-storey car park number of potential spaces (consolidated/being provided), there will be good provision of electrical charging points and cycle parking to support Stevenage BC commitment to their climate change declaration and to deliver net zero carbon emissions by 2030.	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O159	Emerging Framework	<p><i>"Make ground level the place where pedestrians move"</i></p> <p>The principle should be making the ground level much more attractive to pedestrians. However, pedestrians should be enabled to move at whatever level they want to (e.g. the option of using the current footbridge should not be discounted until there is wider redevelopment enabling suitable alternatives to be provided). Suggest rewording to say provide new options for people to move at ground level.</p>	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O160	Emerging Framework	In the areas covered by cross sections BB and CC, why are pedestrian facilities not being provided on the eastern side of the carriageway?	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O161	Emerging Framework	Additional segregated cycleway needs to tie into the existing cycle network at Six Hills Way and Fairlands Way in order to provide safe connected links to key onward destinations such as Gunnels Wood Road and Stevenage old town.	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O162	Emerging Framework	It would be useful if the pie charts of land use differentiated between pedestrians and cyclists.	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O163	Emerging Framework	The plans need to make it clearer how the new Multi Storey Car Park fits into the scheme in all the options.	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O164	Emerging Framework	Option 0 is not clearly illustrated: Page 42 introduces Options 1-3 followed by the cross sections' AA/BB/CC and then to Central Area Option 1: All Traffic Modes.	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O165	Emerging Framework	Hertfordshire County Council do not consider Option o (Do Nothing) is a realistic scenario for the AAP. It is contrary to Stevenage Borough Councils own policies (both the Local Plan and the Town Centre Framework) and does not enable any of the objectives, principles or core enhancements of the AAP to be achieved	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O166	Emerging Framework	It is not a realistic option given the relocation of the bus station site and the requirement to provide pedestrian connectivity with the station and associated bus priority measures	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O167	Emerging Framework	The new multi storey car park will require new access onto Lytton Way. This will be difficult to achieve given the current number of traffic lanes. For these reasons we do not support this option	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O168	Option 1	It is difficult to see how the 'town square' would operate safely given the potential traffic volumes. There is a risk that the road outside the station would be blocked by vehicles dropping off / picking up passengers unless this is strictly monitored and controlled.	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O169	Option 1	It is likely that there would be additional delays to bus services travelling along this section.	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O170	Option 1, 2,& 3	The bus station being delivered at Lytton Way has the provision of coach stands prior to entering the main bus station. This does not look like it has been considered in Figure 25 (Figure 27 or Figure 29), where will the coach stands be provided as it appears to be in conflict with the pedestrian crossing point.	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O171	Option 1, 2,& 3	Confirmation needed on what the two-vehicle access/egress points to the west from the new Swingate roundabout and north of the roundabout will be for?	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O172	Option 1, 2,& 3	Cycling provision in any of the options needs to be considered in line with LTN 1/20 guidance.	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O173	Option 1, 2,& 3	We consider that there are advantages in retaining the existing footbridge until redevelopment of the station and wider area takes place as it does provide a traffic free route for pedestrians at station level	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O174	Option 2	This option will make it easier for the area outside the station to operate more like a town square with a lower volume of vehicles passing through it. Control to prevent other types of vehicles is critical. Vehicle drop off and pick up facilities will need to be provided in the MSCP and southern car park with good direct pedestrian links to the station. Preferred option #1	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O175	Option 2	Option 2 addresses a number of objectives and principles of the AAP, removing the majority of vehicles from in front of the station helping reduce severance with the town centre and supporting the concept of a town square whilst retaining access to the relocated bus station for bus services from both directions.	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O176	Option 3	Access by buses from the north will involve long diversion routes and additional delay for services. Preferred option #2	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O177	Option 3	The taxi rank to the north of the station will result in longer journey times and from the south and disadvantage those travelling to / from this direction.	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O178	Option 3	Hertfordshire County Council have not had direct input on the options proposed in the AAP, we would therefore like to discuss these in further detail with Stevenage Borough Council to understand the impact of them on the network and how they relate to the wider redevelopment proposals in Stevenage	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O179	Potential layout 1	HCC requests that SBC discusses cycling provision options with HCC Officers in more detail and include the Highway Authority in the design process to ensure a route is developed to encourage sustainable/direct and safe access.	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O180	Potential layout 1	Cycling provision in any of the options needs to be considered in line with LTN 1/20 guidance. The new cycle path needs to have dedicated crossing facilities across the side road accesses to the car parks and police station.	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O181	Potential layout 1	Further consideration needs to be given to the connections of the proposed cycle path with the existing cycle network on Six Hills Way and at Fairlands Way. Level differences at Six Hills Way are an issue that need to be overcome. Preferred option #1	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O182	Potential layout 2	Removal of the existing cycle path should only be done if required for redevelopment of the station and other sites. Preferred option #2	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O183	Cycle Path Options	Consideration needs to be given to crossing of side road accesses and also provision for cyclists wanting to access Swingate and Danesgate via the proposed new roundabouts.	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O184	Phasing and temporary use	The existing footbridge should be retained until there is wider redevelopment enabling suitable alternatives to be provided and should not be pursued as part of the first phase.	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O185	Phasing and temporary use	The phasing needs to recognise the changes already planned as part of the bus station relocation. A new crossing is due to be provided as part of this. This will be a permanent facility that will need to be adapted rather than a temporary facility.	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O186	Phasing and temporary use	HCC and stakeholders need to be involved in early discussions regarding any phasing and temporary use options to minimise the impact on the network and ensure a cohesive plan is delivered.	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O187	Greening the grey	HCC is in support of improved urban realm but want to be involved in these discussions to ensure that there are no impacts on Highway assets and any maintenance discussions. HCC wants to ensure that any proposed improvements do not obstruct access for users and support the principles in LTP4.	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O1888	Using development to make a place	HCC needs to be included in any early and ongoing discussions regarding the proposed MSCP particularly the impact this will have on Lytton Way and the surrounding network.	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O189	Using development to make a place	Any development opportunities SBC are considering along Lytton Way, HCC encourage SBC to have early engagement and pre-application discussions meeting with Officers	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O190	Parking consolidation	SBC need to clearly state where the car parks around the town centre are located and spaces they offer, where existing car parks are being lost or numbers of spaces reduced. We require a plan clearly showing existing and proposed parking provision and number of spaces and the balance between short and long stay provision. We also require confirmation on the net number of spaces (compared with existing provision and the likely balance between short and long stay provision. An increase in the number of spaces would be contrary to LTP4 and work against Stevenage’s Climate Change declaration and Sustainable Transport Town status.	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O191	Parking consolidation	Any new parking should include provision for electrical charging points and cycling parking provision.	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O192	Conclusions and feedback	There was no question included on the development parcels. The Highway Authority would expect SBC to have early engagement and pre-application discussions meeting with Officers on these matters due to the impact this would have on the highway network and ensuring LTP4 principles and sustainable connections are sought into the wider network.	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O193	Main issues with Stevenage Railway Station	<p>The county council's Rail Strategy notes the following about the station:</p> <p><i>"The station buildings date from 1973 and are now inadequate in terms of platform widths, staircase capacity and booking hall space. The overall operation and appearance of the station is substandard for a town which is home to international pharmaceutical and aerospace companies".</i></p> <p>The current plans will not address the platform width issue. Discussions should be held with Network Rail to determine what land might be needed if the opportunity ever arose to re-build the platforms, such that any required land can be safeguarded in the development proposals.</p>	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O194	Main issues with Stevenage Railway Station	<p>The current arrangement of the gate line being at a different level to the platforms and Lytton Way results in access difficulties for elderly and disabled users and those with pushchairs and bicycles. The current lift provision is poorly located and inconvenient to use.</p>	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O195	Does Lytton Way work as a main road	<p>Stevenage's central grid highway layout means that there are other appropriate routes for north / south traffic through the town. In its current form, high priority is given to vehicles. This encourages high levels of car trips to the town centre and undermines efforts to encourage people to travel by more sustainable means. The multi lane layout prevents integration of the station and the Leisure Park area to the west with the town centre.</p> <p>Whilst it is currently possible to directly walk from the town centre to the station and leisure park at first floor level via the overbridge, changing land use (e.g. the relocation of the bus station) mean that Lytton Way will increasingly act as a barrier between the station area and the town centre.</p>	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O196	Does the existing cycleway work well	<p>Whilst providing a direct north south route between Six Hills Way and Fairlands Way, the current cycleway has little natural surveillance so can feel unsafe to use. The fences and walls on either side reduce the available width and limit access opportunities to the track.</p> <p>Access to the station and cycle parking area is not clear and is poor (narrow, hidden between walls and badly signed)</p>	Noted
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 210</p> HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O197	What improvements would you like to see at the railway station	<p>The real improvement required is the delivery of the Railway Station Vision as set out by Arup.</p> <p>In advance of this, some improvements could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating an enclosed, but transparent, footbridge across Lytton Way to provide weather protection. • A new set of steps to the footbridge on the leisure centre side of the road to create a more direct route to the new bus station. • Re-instatement of the traveller. • Improved staircases / ramps from the retail park. • Additional high quality cycle parking 	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O198	What improvements would you like to see to Lytton Way	HCC encourages SBC to engage with Officers to discuss the opportunities for Lytton Way to ensure that a deliverable plan is achieved that ensures Lytton Way provides a future proof plan that brings benefit to the area, delivers the SBC's commitment to support the Climate Change agenda and encourages and supports sustainability	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O199	Improvements between Station, Lytton Way and Town Centre	<p>Prior to any wider redevelopment, the current footbridge across Lytton Way should be enclosed in transparent material to provide weather protection. The ramp from the leisure centre towards the town centre needs to be widened.</p> <p>Any surface level pedestrian crossing should align with clear east west routes to the town centre.</p>	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O200	Improvements to walking and cycling from station	<p>Additional cycling parking facilities should be secure, weatherproof and provide convenient access to the station and cycle tracks. The station is an ideal location for a cycle hub. This should include the ability to hire a cycle.</p>	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O201	Any suggested improvements to walking and cycling through station	<p>A full assessment should be made of pedestrian and cycle desire lines from key origins / destinations in the town (e.g. housing, town centre, employment areas) to determine where further improvements may be required.</p>	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O202	Any suggested improvements to walking and cycling through station	<p>Access to the station from the Leisure Park needs to be greatly improved. This includes new staircases and ramps at the station itself, and the creation of safe, direct pedestrian routes across the car parks</p>	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O203	Any suggested improvements to walking and cycling through station	<p>Currently there is no direct access from the station to the Leisure Park with cyclists having to take a circuitous route via Six Hills Way. If this location is redeveloped this should be an aspiration.</p>	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O204	Any suggested improvements to walking and cycling through station	Appropriate artwork and other improvements should be made where these routes pass through subways	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O205	Development replacements on car parks	The station is the gateway to Stevenage and any uses should provide high quality buildings with uses and densities that make the most of the transport hub location. This could include flexible working spaces, uses such as hotels, HQ type offices with potentially some higher density residential development.	Noted
HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit	I&O206	Development replacements on car parks	Thought should also be given as to what the future role of the station will be e.g. might it become a hub for parcels traffic (as currently being developed by Orion in other parts of the country) and hence the need for a transfer depot from rail to perhaps e-cargo bikes.	Noted
Hertfordshire Constabulary	I&O207	General comment	I have heard that there are plans for a crossing at street level from the Railway Station to the Bus Station across the carriageways of Lytton Way. I am unsure why this is necessary when there is an overbridge but it may relate to access for disabled or less mobile pedestrians.	Noted
Hertfordshire Constabulary	I&O208	General comment	I would encourage some thought as to whether this is necessary and safe, given that on many occasions on a daily basis Police Cars leave the Police Station to attend emergencies. A street level crossing will increase the likelihood and frequency of pedestrians encountering moving vehicles, and some of these vehicles will be Police vehicles on an emergency response. The consequence of this could be death or serious injury.	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Historic England	I&O209	General comment	While we accept that the red line area is outside the immediate setting of the Town Square Conservation Area and associated heritage assets and is therefore not a highly sensitive location, the wider town centre area does form an intrinsic part of the setting of the central area and the master planning is itself of historical interest, and this should be borne in mind as proposals are developed	Noted
Historic England	I&O210	General comment	The AAP incorporates the general plan that the railway station - designed and constructed in the early 1970s - is to be redeveloped and demolished - along with the leisure centre. Earlier modernist stations at Harlow and Broxbourne are listed, but this one is not. We have previously highlighted that it may be useful for the Council to seek a Certificate of Immunity (COI) from listing for the station if they wish to demolish it.	Noted
Member of public	I&O211	General comment	There is a critical need for significantly more station parking. You could address the connectivity by having multiple station parking areas, some on leisure park some at the station and some over the road for the main town and theatre. Don't just restrict station parking to the station, give people options	Noted
Member of public	I&O212	General comment	Use living walls, roofs and plant trees and bulbs and shrubs, a more natural approach, wood and water walls would soften the area.	Noted
Member of public	I&O213	General comment	Make sure bike parking is easy to use and safe and plentiful with lockers and seating	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Member of public	I&O214	General comment	So travellers using the station don't worry if there will be a parking space (which is a major issue currently) you could offer a Stevenage station parking Ap allowing users to get updates on how many spaces are free. A simple count of vehicles in is affordable and a great service to your travellers. Also use modern technology for people to pay for their parking	Noted
Member of public	I&O215	General comment	Design does not look out onto Lytton way Parking spaces are not tiny or difficult to park in Green and natural materials so travellers are cocooned by with living walls and simple planting and not cement. Water is also good and not difficult to maintain if designed well.	Noted
Member of public	I&O216	General comment	Include one wow factor it could be a tree that grows from ground floor through to upper station entry level All Walkways to be made greener in the initial design and be consistent in design to connect all areas leisure park, station and town .	Noted
Member of public	I&O217	General comment	The whole design is like a mini town with seats, coffee spots, facilities eg loos , great signage and a map of the town and station and leisure park designed to be cohesive and seem less Keep taxi rank separate from cycle zone and pick up & drop off zones Ensure there are lifts next to disabled parking area and a smooth flow for these customers Electric charges in parking areas	Noted
Member of the public	I&O218	General comment	The cycleway past Stevenage railway station has been a Cycling Super Highway since before they were even dreamt of in London. Stevenage pioneered segregated cycleways in the UK. This is not the time to be going backwards	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Member of public	I&O219	General comment	<p>The route is used by hundreds of cyclists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ who ride to the station. That was clearly demonstrated by the need to increase the number of cycle parking spaces at the station. ☑ who perform cycle – train – cycle journeys i.e. they take their bike on a train (they need that process to be facilitated), and ☑ this is crucially important but overlooked in the consultation documents which concentrate on connections with trains and other modes of transport this is a key through cycle route between the north and south of the town. 	Noted
Member of public	I&O220	General comment	<p>This is a fantastic continuous through cycle route inherited from the new town. The very fact that it is parallel with the railway means it is not interrupted. It is wide enough for two way cycle traffic and there is a separate footway.</p>	Noted
Member of public	I&O221	General comment	<p>Its importance as a through route was emphasised by its inclusion in NCN 12. This is the part of the National Cycle Network which links north London with Peterborough</p>	Noted
Member of public	I&O222	General comment	<p>An allocations deal has been done between the Thomas Alleyne Academy (at the north end of the High Street) and Roebuck School in the south of the Borough. Cycling would be an ideal way for those young people to get to school and that part of NCN 12 is an obvious traffic free part of their route. Already about 140 students cycle to Thomas Alleyne.</p>	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Member of public	I&O223	General comment	There is very little wrong with the existing through route between Six Hills Way and Fairlands Way that would not be solved by regular maintenance and trimming of the trees and bushes at the north end. Branches can obscure the lights as the route dips and curves towards Fairlands Way. Perhaps additional lights could be provided there and where the police station extension meant a see through fence was replaced by a blank wall. For those concerned about community safety the route has the advantage that it is overlooked by passengers on platform one and passes the police station	Noted
Member of public	I&O224	General comment	Other nearby cycle routes have already been lost or degraded in recent years for example the route past Tesco, the route from Fairlands Way to the Queensway and more recently the section of route passing the Leisure Centre and connecting with Six Hills Way. Many cyclists are concerned by the replacement of the London Road route by a narrow shared use squeeze past the new bus station near the leisure centre. We are anxious about future conflicts and complaints. The route by the railway is needed to connect the north and south parts of the cycleway network.	Noted
Member of public	I&O225	General comment	The proposal to replace the continuous route is very two dimensional and takes no account of levels. For example the climb up to the proposed new route up from the Fairlands Way cycleway would be very challenging. At the south end the indicated route is currently a flight of steps up a steep bank.	Noted
Member of public	I&O226	General comment	The current route is used by large numbers of cyclists, runners, joggers and pedestrians	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Member of public	I&O227	General comment	While I would have no objection to, and indeed would support, additional good quality cycle links being provided elsewhere in the town centre area a sub-standard stop start route alongside Lytton Way would be a very poor substitute as a through route. It would be frustrating for cyclists including those who are not as physically able as some and almost inevitably create unnecessary conflicts with pedestrians and motor traffic.	Noted
Member of public	I&O228	General comment	If this "Cycling Super Highway" was lost just as they are being created elsewhere the local authorities would lose all credibility as advocates for sustainable transport and active travel	Noted
Member of public	I&O229	General comment	Inspired by a fairly recent cycle and pedestrian bridge near Cambridge station I suggest a new and additional cycleway bridge from a junction in the existing cycleway just as it starts to descend.	Noted
Member of public	I&O230	General comment	This would go over Fairlands Way and come down again alongside the existing bridge near Ditchmore Lane. By taking advantage of the existing topography any gradients would be realistic. There is no suggestion of not needing the existing links to Fairlands Way and up from Fairlands Way to Saffron Ground (Ditchmore Lane).	Noted
Member of public	I&O231	General comment	There will still be a need to restore and provide cycle links into the town centre have already commented that by concentrating on connections there is a risk of losing sight of the needs of those making local journeys.	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Member of public	I&O232	General comment	I fear that the new bus station will only be a temporary fix. The site is too cramped for the forward in, reverse out style of operating buses and the routes in and out will add to journey times e.g. leaving south to go north. A visit to Luton airport will illustrate the space, safety signals, etc., needed to operate with buses reversing. It does seem that public transport and cycling have been and are being excluded from a larger part of the town centre (which is where a lot of people want to go) while car access and car parks remain.	Noted
Member of public	I&O233	General comment	If a new electric public transport route is going to happen on a Roaring Meg – town centre – old town (or preferably a Roebuck – Roaring Meg – town centre – old town – Lister Hospital) spine route you need to be planning for that as a through route now	Noted
Knebworth Estates	I&O234	General comment	Knebworth Park makes significant use of Stevenage Railway Station. It is generally supportive of the aspirations of the David Lock Associates report, but is concerned by one key omission in the report's proposals.	Noted
Knebworth Estates	I&O235	General comment	Despite saying on p.30 that "the AAP area... must include... drop-off movements within its boundaries", neither 'drop-off' nor 'pick-up' solutions appear to be mentioned anywhere in the proposals.	Noted
Knebworth Estates	I&O236	General comment	However much we wish to encourage walking, cycling and public transport, the reality is that not everyone in Stevenage is able to reach Stevenage Station using these modes of transport, even in fair weather.	Noted
Knebworth Estates	I&O237	General comment	Knebworth Park (SG1 2AX) is a case in point. Crossing the Junction 7 roundabout is a challenge on foot, on a bicycle, or using public transport.	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Knebworth Estates	I&O238	General comment	A provision for 'drop-off' and 'pick-up' by car is a vital for a key transport hub like Stevenage Station – both railway station and bus station. All that is apparent in the report are roundabouts turning vehicle traffic back or away from the railway station. Are the roundabouts to be used for 'drop-off'?	Noted
Knebworth Estates	I&O239	General comment	Even more of an issue is 'pick-up'. A word search for 'pick up'/'pick-up' in the report returns no instances. This cannot be right in a report on a key transport hub. 'Drop-off' requires provision for cars to pull over, then pull away. 'Pick-up' actually requires a place for cars to wait, even for trains that are on time.	Noted
Knebworth Estates	I&O240	General comment	Maybe 'drop-off' and 'pick-up' are intended for the ground floor of new MSCP? If this is the case, the report should say so. It should also reassure that this facility will be sufficient, and perhaps even improve on the existing provision (which is fairly criticised in the report)?	Noted
LNER	I&O241	Preferred area option	Our preference is for Option 3 (Pedestrianised Plaza) as we believe this presents the greatest overall benefit to the Stevenage community as well as those using the station to travel to, from or through the area. It also best aligns with the plans for a future upgrade to the station itself. However, this preference is based on the concerns raised below being addressed.	Noted
LNER	I&O242	Promotion and facilities for active travel	While several segregated cycle routes already exist in the area, our view is that more can be done to encourage their use, including increased provision of safe and secure bicycle parking at and near Stevenage Station.	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
LNER	I&O243	Promotion and facilities for active travel	We welcome the opportunity to work with the Council and Network Rail on the delivery of the proposed bicycle hub adjacent to the new public open space. The hub delivered at Brighton Station could be a good precedent for this	Noted
LNER	I&O244	Promotion and facilities for active travel	Signage and lighting of walking routes should be proactively considered to provide a safer and welcoming option to those within a shorter distance of the station. This includes walking routes within and beyond the town centre.	Noted
LNER	I&O245	Private vehicle access and parking	It is important to note that large numbers of those outside of the centre of areas such as Stevenage have far greater dependency on private vehicles. To ensure residents of these areas are not discouraged or excluded from intercity rail travel, LNER continues to support an increase in car parking at or adjacent to stations where it is appropriate.	Noted
LNER	I&O246	Private vehicle access and parking	Care should be taken to ensure the levels of private vehicle parking at and near Stevenage station are sufficient to meet demand from those without access to local public transport, cycling or walking routes.	Noted
LNER	I&O247	Private vehicle access and parking	We support parking being consolidated and expanded over time as part of the identified development parcels in order to open more space for other community and commercial uses. Any new structures should be adaptable to future community needs (e.g. additional cycle hub facilities).	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
LNER	I&O248	Private vehicle access and parking	Vehicle movements to and from parking facilities must also be considered, with our teams noting the roundabout to the north end of Lytton Way will require particular attention to ensure it does not become a bottleneck. In particular, we are keen to reduce the potential for negative parking experiences to reduce someone's interest in again visiting Stevenage or travelling by rail.	Noted
LNER	I&O249	Universal access	Access to the station for older and disabled people should not be reduced by any changes made or works undertaken as part of this scheme. Any improvement works should be seen as an opportunity to enhance access for all, reduce friction for those changing between modes (e.g. bus to train) and improve accessibility.	Noted
Page 221 LNER	I&O250	Universal access	Enhanced station facilities as part of its future upgrade should complement any changes made as part of these proposals, with every effort made to minimise the need to change any works undertaken (e.g. demolish recently built structures).	Noted
LNER	I&O251	Directions to and space for drop offs and pick ups	Accessible, convenient and well-lit areas for passengers to be dropped off or picked up (e.g. by friends or relatives) do not appear to be highlighted in any of the three options. We would like to see this given greater priority.	Noted
LNER	I&O252	Directions to and space for drop offs and pick ups	We would also encourage the Council to work with ridesharing services to designate a dedicated area away from the taxi rank and private vehicle facilities.	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
LNER	I&O253	Directions to and space for drop offs and pick ups	Directions to Stevenage Station in the area and further away (e.g. on the A1) should be assessed in detail and updated where needed to minimise excess vehicle miles and the potential for conflicts. Drivers should be informed early of the most direct route and, where technology allows, the availability of parking spaces.	Noted
Transport for London	I&O254	General comment	No comments	Noted
Member of public	I&O255	General comment	Close entrance to Tesco from Lytton way, use Fairland Way entrance, Staples area included. (do not accept complaints from Tesco)	Noted
Member of public	I&O256	General comment	Tesco car park shared with GCT for evenings (as reduced car parking in new scheme)	Noted
Member of public	I&O257	General comment	The access to Westgate car park and supplied to shops maintained from R/A One way through road (south only) Maintain the station south car park access from R/A	Noted
Member of public	I&O258	General comment	Taxi and Bus only access through Lytton way to bus terminals and taxi drop off, limited taxi waiting only. Two roundabouts on Lytton way as suggestions	Noted
Member of public	I&O259	General comment	Existing north carriage way used as u turn car drop off from north and south Stevenage Better access to present taxi drop off area converted for bikes and motor bikes only	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Member of public	I&O260	General comment	Maintain and upgrade cycle track and enhance the security of the bikes and CCTV (that works) All security (camera's and monitoring) upgraded	Noted
Member of public	I&O261	General comment	Use the new pathed area for pop up stalls for food drinks and coffee area, maybe market stalls (need something in this large pathed void)	Noted
Member of public	I&O262	General comment	Install moving walk ways from bus station to station	Noted
Member of public	I&O263	General comment	Install sensible sized lifts east of Lytton way to bridge next to GCT.	Noted
Member of public	I&O264	General comment	Walk way across Lytton Way to be covered if not an enclosed and an extended tunnel. Enhance and enclose the ramp from GCT tunnel to the Mecca Bingo	Noted
Member of public	I&O265	General comment	Convert Bingo back to a dance hall or other attraction (the good old days,) Stevenage can't accept one of its main attractions is a bingo hall; we must drive the quality up!	Outside the remit of the Station AAP
Member of public	I&O266	General comment	Two large multi storey Car parks built on Leisure park for station (during the day and leisure at night)	Outside the remit of the Station AAP
Member of public	I&O267	General comment	Station car park north converted for other use as other ideas.	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Member of public	I&O268	General comment	Station should have two accesses to and from platform, one outbound, one inbound, so they can have a narrower mouth and causing less congestion around entrances	Noted
Member of public	I&O269	General comment	Make a bonfire of any plans to move the station! Ditto for plans to knock down GCT as it is the best theatre and sports complex for thirty miles!	There are no plans to move the station and the theatre is outside the remit of the Station AAP
Member of public	I&O270	General comment	Improve the access and signage to the Healthy hub (GCT)	Noted
Member of public	I&O271	General comment	Remove the glass obscuring pattern on glass through the GCT so activities can be seen from the walkway	Noted
Member of public	I&O272	General comment	The Emerging Framework needs to be changed so a central area created to facilitate other options.	Noted
Member of public	I&O273	General comment	The double roundabouts works but still too much traffic!	Noted
Member of public	I&O274	General comment	Option 2 works best but must be one way only giving access to drop off and pick up from bus and taxi must have drop off areas close at hand for cars also	Noted
Member of public	I&O275	General comment	Option 3 is a none starter Just a big open space full of nothing why have all this access to what?	Noted
Member of public	I&O276	General comment	The Central Area must have pop up stalls like drinks and eats market stalls maybe.	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Member of public	I&O277	General comment	Cycle access and storage must be improved and security of equipment.	Noted
Member of public	I&O278	General comment	Lytton way is a main route from North Stevenage to South Stevenage, the three main trunk options are Gresley way, Gunnels wood Road and Lytton. Therefore, it is carrying a lot of traffic not destined for the town centre or the transport hubs. To use the road for what should have been the primary use, through traffic should be eliminated if possible. This could be achieved partially by making the road a one way (South) and accessing car parks etc via alternatives or removing the carparks all together. The present north Station car park should be closed and suitable multi story car parking serving the station created on the leisure park. Access to the Tesco car park should be via Fairlands way only. The bus station will work with a southern route only. It will have access only for bus and taxis. The two ends will have roundabouts as per the options and considerate for car dropping off passengers for the station.	Noted
Member of public	I&O279	General comment	Cycle access should be encouraged and a wider access created to the now taxi drop off where bike storage shall be enhanced.	Noted
Member of public	I&O280	General comment	The width of the accesses to the station are a problem giving width for both those getting on and off, there should be an on and a separate off ramp to the concourse.	Noted
Member of public	I&O281	General comment	Lytton way access to buses and taxis via walkways and covered walk ways. To the town centre via a covered walk way Maybe via moving walkways (like airports)	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Member of public	I&O282	General comment	Pathways from transport drop off area but must be covered!	Noted
Member of public	I&O283	General comment	Roads adjacent to the station should be closed and this used for other purposes. Car parking should be multi-level and in the leisure park are accessed from Six hills way and Fairlands Way	Noted
Member of public	I&O284	General comment	Bus car and taxi drop offs all available with good facilities for cycling.	Noted
Member of public	I&O285	General comment	The leisure centre should not be altered or moved we must retain this facility as it should be serviced and have car parking by sharing the use of the present Tesco car parks. The theatre and facilities are mainly used in the evenings so will not clash with maximum use for the shop.	Noted
Savills on behalf of Legal and General	I&O286	General comment	L&G supports the general requirement for a dedicated plan and strategy for the area around the station given its importance and 'gateway' status.	Noted
Savills on behalf of Legal and General	I&O287		L&G supports the Issues and Challenges that are identified in Section 4.0 of the SCAAP. The current arrival experience does not align with the wider, strategic objectives for Stevenage and Lytton Way acts as a substantial barrier to connectivity (restricting ease of movement east to west).	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Savills on behalf of Legal and General	I&O288		There is also constraint on connectivity between the Leisure Park and the wider Town Centre. A key objective as part of any Area Action Plan should be to enhance accessibility and connectivity to create a more cohesive Town Centre.	Noted
Savills on behalf of Legal and General	I&O289		Increasing connectivity between the Leisure Park (and other commercial uses including the strategic employment area around Gunnels Wood Road) to the west, the station and the Primary Shopping Area and wider Town Centre ¹ to the east will help to deliver the strategic growth objectives across the Local Plan period	Noted
Savills on behalf of Legal and General	I&O290		A more cohesive and connected Town Centre will create greater opportunities for development to meet local needs in a sustainable location	Noted
Savills on behalf of Legal and General	I&O291		L&G supports the Objectives and Key Principles set out in Section 6.0 of the SCAAP. The importance of connecting and integrating the Leisure Park and employment uses to the west with the wider, defined Town Centre through physical improvements should be explicitly identified within this section.	Noted
Savills on behalf of Legal and General	I&O292		In terms of the Core Enhancements, L&G supports Core Area Option 3 which aims to create a 'Pedestrianised Plaza' on Lytton Way. A fully pedestrianised scheme is considered the only effective option to create a transformation in terms of connectivity between the station and the wider Town Centre and modal shifts. A new pedestrianised space will also create an opportunity to create a materially different arrival experience which directly connects the station gateway into the wider Town Centre.	Noted

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Savills on behalf of Legal and General	I&O293		L&G supports the creation of distinct development parcels. It is acknowledged that the scale and form of development in the SCAAP is illustrative at this stage, the station gateway is suitable for tall buildings and denser forms of development	Noted
Savills on behalf of Legal and General	I&O294		Whilst not included within the boundary of the SCAAP, it would be beneficial if some additional detail could be included on how a new station square may interact and connect with the Leisure Park. As set out above, the SCAAP should take into account future opportunities for the intensification of development and alternative land uses at the Leisure Park.	Noted
Page 228 Savills on behalf of Legal and General	I&O295		L&G supports the emerging SCAAP subject to the comments made above. In particular L&G supports 'Core Area Option 3' which includes the creation of a pedestrianised plaza on Lytton Way. This is considered to be the only effective way of delivering transformational change to both modes and patterns of travel and the arrival experience into Stevenage Town Centre	Noted
Savills on behalf of Legal and General	I&O296	General comment	Although the SCAAP focuses on the station and immediate gateway, the emerging plans have the potential to effectively connect the key transport node, Town Centre (including the Leisure Park) and the strategic employment areas to the west.	Noted
Savills on behalf of Legal and General	I&O297		Why it is necessary to have so many steps and stairs while using Stevenage Station? The trains run at ground level.	This is a matter for Network Rail
Member of the public	I&O298		If more land is available why not enlarge the station at ground level, by having the ticket/ booking office/ at ground level.	This is a matter for Network Rail

Name/Organisation	Comment ID	Paragraph	Comments:	SBC Response
Member of the public	I&O299		By all means keep the walkway from the Leisure Park to the Town Centre over Lytton Way, but ground access to the trains. The problem then is crossing Lytton Way from the Town centre. Surely either a walkway underpass, or a ground level bridge over an underpass in Lytton Way as along Gunnels Wood Road for traffic and pedestrians to keep safely apart. Knebworth and occasional user of Stevenage Station.	Noted
Member of the public	I&O300		From being dropped off by car at Stevenage Station you have to walk up the covered causeway to the booking office about twenty steps. having bought your ticket, (or with a rail pass) you then have to walk down some fifteen steps to access the platform. This is inefficient, time wasting and unnecessary.	Noted
Member of the public	I&O301		This would help get rid of that ghastly Seventies covered steps to access the booking office! Up and down, most inefficient and time wasting!	Noted

Appendix 1 – Consultees

Specific Consultee Bodies and Duty to Cooperate Bodies consulted

- *The Coal Authority,*
- *The Environment Agency,*
- *Historic England,*
- *The Marine Management Organisation,*
- *Natural England,*
- *Network Rail,*
- *Highways England,*
- *East And North Herts NHS Trust*
- *East and North Herts Clinical Commissioning Group*
- *Communications operators/organisations (including; Mobile Operators Association, BT Cellnet Limited, Telefónica, O2 UK Limited, Telereal Trillium, T-Mobile, Virgin Media, Virgin Mobile, Vodafone Ltd.,)*
- *The Homes and Communities Agency*
- *North Hertfordshire District Council*
- *East Hertfordshire District Council*
- *Other Hertfordshire authorities (including; Borough of Broxbourne, Dacorum Borough Council, Hertsmere Borough Council, St Albans City And District Council, Three Rivers District Council, Watford Borough Council, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council)*
- *Hertfordshire County Council (including Growth & Infrastructure Unit, Public Health, Passenger Transport)*
- *Hertfordshire Highways*
- *Hertfordshire LEP*
- *Parish councils (including; Aston Parish Council, Codicote Parish Council, Datchworth Parish Council, Graveley Parish Council, Knebworth Parish Council, St Ippolyts Parish Council, Walkern Parish Council, Weston Parish Council, Woolmer Green Parish Council, Wymondley Parish Council)*
- *Hertfordshire Constabulary*
- *Anglian Water*
- *Thames Water*
- *Veolia Water Central (VWC)*
- *National Grid*

General consultation bodies / organisations

<i>5th Stevenage Air Scout Group</i>	<i>Broadwater Community Association</i>
<i>Aberdeen Asset Management</i>	<i>Broom Barns JMI</i>
<i>Active4Less</i>	<i>Brown And Lee</i>
<i>Adlington Planning Team</i>	<i>Brown And Lee Chartered Surveyors</i>
<i>Age Concern Stevenage</i>	<i>Buddhist Centre</i>
<i>Ahmadiyya Muslim Association</i>	<i>Building Research Establishment</i>
<i>Aldi Stores</i>	<i>Bus Users Group Stevenage</i>
<i>Aldwyck Housing Association</i>	<i>C.D.Bayles</i>
<i>Almond Hill Junior Mixed School</i>	<i>Campaign for Real Ale</i>
<i>Alzheimer's Society</i>	<i>Campaign For Real Ale Ltd</i>
<i>Anglian Water</i>	<i>Camps Hill Community Primary School</i>
<i>Aragon Land And Planning</i>	<i>Canyon Play Association</i>
<i>Archangel Michael And St Anthony Coptic Orthodox Church</i>	<i>Carers in Hertfordshire</i>
<i>Arriva</i>	<i>Catesby Property Group</i>
<i>Arriva The Shires And Essex Buses</i>	<i>CBRE Ltd.</i>
<i>Ashtree Primary School</i>	<i>Central Bedfordshire UA</i>
<i>Asian Women Group</i>	<i>Centrebus</i>
<i>Association of North Thames Amenity Societies</i>	<i>Chair North Herts Ramblers Group</i>
<i>Aston Parish Council</i>	<i>Chambers Coaches Stevenage Ltd</i>
<i>Aston Village Society</i>	<i>Chells Community Association</i>
<i>Aviva Investors</i>	<i>Chells Manor Community Association</i>
<i>BAA Safeguarding Team</i>	<i>Chells Scout Group</i>
<i>Barclay School</i>	<i>Chelton Radomes</i>
<i>Barker Parry Town Planning</i>	<i>Christadelphian Community</i>
<i>Barnwell School</i>	<i>Churches Together</i>
<i>BEAMS Ltd</i>	<i>Churches Together in Stevenage</i>
<i>Bedwell Community Association</i>	<i>Circle Anglia</i>
<i>Bedwell Primary And Nursery School</i>	<i>Citizens Advice Bureau</i>
<i>Bell Cornwell LLP</i>	<i>Clague Ashford</i>
<i>Bellway (Northern Home Counties)</i>	<i>Codicote Parish Council</i>
<i>Bellway Homes</i>	<i>Colinade Associates Ltd</i>
<i>Bellway Homes Miller Homes</i>	<i>Colliers International</i>
<i>Bellway Homes, Miller Homes & Wheatley Plc</i>	<i>Commercial Estates Group</i>
<i>Bidwells</i>	<i>Connexions Stevenage</i>
<i>Bloor Homes</i>	<i>Cortex</i>
<i>Bloor Homes South Midlands</i>	<i>Costco Wholesale UK Ltd</i>
<i>Borough of Broxbourne</i>	<i>Countryside Management Service</i>
<i>Bragbury End Residents Group</i>	<i>Countryside Properties plc, Stevenage Rugby Club and the Homes and Communities Agency (Cambridge)</i>
<i>Bridge Builders Christian Trust</i>	<i>CPRE Hertfordshire</i>
<i>British Horse Society</i>	<i>Crossroads Care (Hertfordshire North)</i>

<i>Croudace Strategic Ltd</i>	<i>Finishing Publications Ltd</i>
<i>CTC The National Cycling Charity</i>	<i>First Plan</i>
<i>Cycling UK Stevenage</i>	<i>Fitness First Plc</i>
<i>Dacorum Borough Council</i>	<i>Friends of Forster Country</i>
<i>Datchworth Parish Council</i>	<i>Friends of the Earth (Luton)</i>
<i>Davies And Co</i>	<i>Friends Religious Society</i>
<i>Defence Infrastructure Organisation</i>	<i>Friends, Families and Travellers and Traveller Law Reform Project Community Base</i>
<i>Deloitte</i>	<i>Fusion</i>
<i>Department For Business, Innovation and Skills</i>	<i>Gabriel Securities Ltd</i>
<i>Department For Culture Media And Sport</i>	<i>Genesis Housing Group</i>
<i>Department For Environment Food And Rural Affairs</i>	<i>GHM Consultancy Group Ltd (Logic Homes)</i>
<i>Department For Transport Rail Group</i>	<i>Giles Junior School</i>
<i>Design Council</i>	<i>Giles School</i>
<i>Dixons Dispatch Ltd</i>	<i>Glanville</i>
<i>Douglas Drive Senior Citizens Association</i>	<i>Glasgow City Council</i>
<i>DPDS Consulting Group</i>	<i>GlaxoSmithKline</i>
<i>EADS Astrium</i>	<i>Government Equalities Office</i>
<i>East and North Herts Clinical Commissioning Group</i>	<i>Graveley Against SNAP Proposals (GASP)</i>
<i>East and North Herts NHS Trust</i>	<i>Graveley Parish Council</i>
<i>East Coast</i>	<i>Graveley School</i>
<i>East Hertfordshire District Council</i>	<i>Great Ashby Community Council</i>
<i>East Herts District Council</i>	<i>Great Ashby Community Group</i>
<i>East Herts Footpath Society</i>	<i>Great Ashby Community Resource Centre</i>
<i>East of England Ambulance Service</i>	<i>Greene King Plc</i>
<i>East Of England Local Government Association (formerly EERA)</i>	<i>Greenside School</i>
<i>Eastlake Stevenage Limited</i>	<i>Gregory Gray Associates</i>
<i>Ecovril Ltd</i>	<i>Gujarati Hindu Association</i>
<i>Endurance estates</i>	<i>Hanover Housing Association</i>
<i>Environment Agency</i>	<i>HAPAS</i>
<i>Epping Forest District Council</i>	<i>Heaton Planning Ltd</i>
<i>Essex County Council</i>	<i>Hermes Real Estate Investment Ltd</i>
<i>Executive</i>	<i>Hertford Road Community Association</i>
<i>F&C REIT Asset Management</i>	<i>Hertfordshire Action on Disability</i>
<i>Fairlands Primary School And Nursery</i>	<i>Hertfordshire Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders</i>
<i>Fairlands Valley Sailing Centre</i>	<i>Hertfordshire Association Of Parish And Town Councils</i>
<i>Fairview Road Residents Association</i>	<i>Hertfordshire Association of Parish and Town Councils / Welwyn Hatfield Association of Local Councils</i>
<i>Featherstone Wood Primary School</i>	<i>Hertfordshire Association Of Young People</i>
<i>Fields in Trust</i>	<i>Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre</i>

<i>Hertfordshire Care Trust</i>	<i>Iceni Projects Ltd</i>
<i>Hertfordshire Chamber Of Commerce And Industry</i>	<i>Independent Custody Visitors Scheme</i>
<i>Hertfordshire Constabulary</i>	<i>Intercounty Properties</i>
<i>Hertfordshire County Council</i>	<i>J Young Investments Ltd.</i>
<i>Hertfordshire County Council (Archaeology)</i>	<i>JB Planning Associates</i>
<i>Hertfordshire County Council (Estates)</i>	<i>Jehovah's Witnesses</i>
<i>Hertfordshire County Council (Highways)</i>	<i>John Henry Newman RC School</i>
<i>Hertfordshire County Council Public Health</i>	<i>Jones Day</i>
<i>Hertfordshire Fire And Rescue Service</i>	<i>Jones Lang LaSalle</i>
<i>Hertfordshire Gardens Trust</i>	<i>Kirkwells</i>
<i>Hertfordshire Hearing Advisory Service</i>	<i>Knebworth Estates</i>
<i>Hertfordshire Highways</i>	<i>Knebworth House Education and Preservation Trust</i>
<i>Hertfordshire LEP</i>	<i>Knebworth Parish Council</i>
<i>Hertfordshire Police</i>	<i>Lambert Smith Hampton</i>
<i>Hertfordshire Police Authority</i>	<i>Land Registry Head Office</i>
<i>Hertfordshire Police Eastern Area</i>	<i>Lanes New Homes</i>
<i>Hertfordshire Property (HCC)</i>	<i>Langley Parish Meeting</i>
<i>Hertfordshire Society for the Blind</i>	<i>Larwood School</i>
<i>Hertfordshire Stop Smoking Service</i>	<i>Lepus Consulting</i>
<i>Hertfordshire University</i>	<i>Letchmore Infants And Nursery School</i>
<i>Hertfordshire Visual Arts Forum</i>	<i>Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation</i>
<i>Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust</i>	<i>Leys Primary And Nursery School</i>
<i>Herts Against the Badger Cull</i>	<i>Lincolns Tyre Service Ltd.</i>
<i>Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust</i>	<i>Living Streets</i>
<i>Herts Gay Community</i>	<i>Lodge Farm Primary School</i>
<i>Hertsmere Borough Council</i>	<i>London and Cambridge Properties Ltd</i>
<i>Hightown Praetorian Churches Housing Association</i>	<i>London Borough of Barnet</i>
<i>Highways England</i>	<i>London Borough of Enfield</i>
<i>Hill Residential Limited</i>	<i>London Borough of Harrow</i>
<i>HilliersHRW Solicitors LLP</i>	<i>London Gypsies and Travellers Unit</i>
<i>Historic England</i>	<i>Longmeadow Primary School</i>
<i>Hitchin Town Action Group</i>	<i>Lonsdale School</i>
<i>Holiday Inn Express</i>	<i>Luton Borough Council</i>
<i>Holy Trinity Church</i>	<i>Mantle</i>
<i>Home Builders Federation</i>	<i>Marine Management Organisation</i>
<i>Home Group</i>	<i>Marriotts Gymnastics Club</i>
<i>Homes And Communities Agency</i>	<i>Marriotts School</i>
<i>Howard Cottage Housing Association</i>	<i>Martin Ingram Opticians</i>
<i>Howard Property Group</i>	<i>Martins Wood Primary School</i>
<i>HSBC Trust Company (UK) Limited</i>	<i>Mayor of London</i>
<i>Hubert C Leach Ltd</i>	<i>MBDA UK Ltd</i>
<i>Hythe Ltd</i>	<i>Miller Strategic Land</i>
<i>Mind in Herts</i>	<i>Pin Green Community Centre</i>

<i>MKG Motor Group</i>	<i>Pin Green Residents Association</i>
<i>Moss Bury Primary School</i>	<i>Pin Green Residents Group</i>
<i>Moult Walker Chartered Surveyors</i>	<i>Planning Issues Ltd</i>
<i>MS Society Mid Hertfordshire</i>	<i>Planning Potential Ltd</i>
<i>NaCSBA</i>	<i>Planware Ltd</i>
<i>National Express</i>	<i>Planware Ltd.</i>
<i>National Housing Federation</i>	<i>POhWER</i>
<i>Natural England</i>	<i>Princes Trust</i>
<i>Network Rail</i>	<i>Putterills Of Hertfordshire</i>
<i>NFGLG</i>	<i>Rapleys LLP</i>
<i>NHS East and North Hertfordshire CCG</i>	<i>REACT</i>
<i>North Hertfordshire and Stevenage Green Party</i>	<i>Redrow Homes (Eastern) Ltd</i>
<i>North Hertfordshire College</i>	<i>Redrow Homes Eastern Division</i>
<i>North Hertfordshire District Council</i>	<i>Regional Land Holdings Ltd.</i>
<i>North Hertfordshire Friends Of The Earth</i>	<i>Relate North Hertfordshire And Stevenage</i>
<i>North Hertfordshire People First</i>	<i>Renshaw UK Limited</i>
<i>North Herts & Stevenage Green Party</i>	<i>rg+p Ltd</i>
<i>North Herts and Stevenage Community Learning Disability Team</i>	<i>Richborough Estates</i>
<i>North Herts Homes</i>	<i>Ridgmond Park Training Centre</i>
<i>North Herts People First</i>	<i>River Beane Restoration Association</i>
<i>North Stevenage Consortium</i>	<i>Road Haulage Association</i>
<i>Odyssey Group Holdings</i>	<i>Roebuck and Marymead Residents Association</i>
<i>Office for Rail Regulation</i>	<i>Roebuck Nursery And Primary School</i>
<i>Old Stevenage Community Association</i>	<i>Round Diamond Primary School</i>
<i>On Behalf Of St. Peter's Church</i>	<i>RPF Developments</i>
<i>Origin Housing Group</i>	<i>RPS Planning and Development Ltd</i>
<i>Oval Community Centre</i>	<i>RSPB</i>
<i>PACE</i>	<i>Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd</i>
<i>Paradigm Housing Group</i>	<i>Savils</i>
<i>Passenger Transport Unit, Hertfordshire County Council</i>	<i>Saving North Herts Green Belt</i>
<i>Patient Liaison Group</i>	<i>Secretary of State for Communities</i>
<i>Peacock And Smith</i>	<i>Seebohm Executors</i>
<i>Peartree Spring Junior School</i>	<i>Shephalbury Sports Academy</i>
<i>Pennyroyal Ltd.</i>	<i>Shephall Community Association</i>
<i>Pentangle Design</i>	<i>Shephall Residents Association</i>
<i>Persimmon Homes</i>	<i>Showmen's Guild Of Great Britain</i>
<i>PHD Associates</i>	<i>Simmons And Sons</i>
<i>Physically Handicapped And Able Bodied Club</i>	<i>South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership</i>
<i>Picture Ltd</i>	<i>Sport England</i>
<i>Pigeon Investment Management Ltd</i>	<i>Sport Stevenage</i>
<i>Pigeon Land Ltd</i>	<i>Springfield House Community Association</i>
<i>St Albans City And District Council</i>	<i>Thames Water Property</i>

<i>St Ippolyts Parish Council</i>	<i>The Baha'I Community of Stevenage</i>
<i>St Margaret Clitherow RC Primary School</i>	<i>The Campaign for Real Ale</i>
<i>St Nicholas Community Centre</i>	<i>The Coal Authority</i>
<i>St Nicholas School</i>	<i>The Greens & Great Wymondley Residents Association</i>
<i>St Vincent De Paul RC Primary School</i>	<i>The Guinness Trust</i>
<i>St. Nicholas and Martins Wood Residents Association</i>	<i>The Guinness Partnership</i>
<i>Stanhope Plc</i>	<i>The Gypsy Council</i>
<i>STARCOURT CONSTRUCTION LTD</i>	<i>The Hitchin Forum</i>
<i>Stevenage And North Hertfordshire Indian Cultural Society</i>	<i>The Living Room</i>
<i>Stevenage and North Herts Women's Resource Centre</i>	<i>The National Trust</i>
<i>Stevenage Borough Council</i>	<i>The Nobel School</i>
<i>Stevenage Borough Council Transportation Development</i>	<i>The Salvation Army</i>
<i>Stevenage Business Initiative</i>	<i>The Theatres Trust</i>
<i>Stevenage Caribbean and African Association</i>	<i>The Woodland Trust</i>
<i>Stevenage Caribbean And African Association (SCARAFa)</i>	<i>Theatres Trust</i>
<i>Stevenage Cricket Club</i>	<i>Thomas Alleyne School</i>
<i>Stevenage CVS</i>	<i>T-Mobile</i>
<i>Stevenage Depression Alliance</i>	<i>TRACKS (Autism)</i>
<i>Stevenage Haven</i>	<i>Transport for London</i>
<i>Stevenage Irish Network</i>	<i>Trotts Hill Primary And Nursery School</i>
<i>Stevenage League Of Hospital Friends</i>	<i>Troy Planning</i>
<i>Stevenage Mosque</i>	<i>Turley</i>
<i>Stevenage Polish Association</i>	<i>Universities Superannuation Scheme Ltd</i>
<i>Stevenage Quakers</i>	<i>USF Nominees Ltd.</i>
<i>Stevenage Regeneration Ltd.</i>	<i>Veale Associates</i>
<i>Stevenage Sikh Cultural Association</i>	<i>Veolia Water Central (VWC)</i>
<i>Stevenage Town Rugby Club</i>	<i>VEOLIA WATER CENTRAL LIMITED</i>
<i>Stevenage Women's Refuge</i>	<i>Vincent And Gorbing Planning Associates</i>
<i>Stevenage World Forum For Ethnic Minorities</i>	<i>Virgin Media</i>
<i>Stevenage Youth Council</i>	<i>Visit East Anglia</i>
<i>Stewart Ross Associates</i>	<i>Vodafone Ltd</i>
<i>Strutt and Parker LLP</i>	<i>Waitrose Ltd</i>
<i>Symonds Green Community Association</i>	<i>Walkern Parish Council</i>
<i>Taylor Wimpey</i>	<i>Watford Borough Council</i>
<i>Taylor Wimpey / Persimmon</i>	<i>Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council</i>
<i>Telefónica O2 UK Limited</i>	<i>Welwyn Hatfield Council</i>
<i>Telereal Trillium</i>	<i>West Stevenage Consortium</i>
<i>Terence O'Rourke Ltd</i>	<i>Weston Parish Council</i>
<i>Thames Water</i>	<i>Wheatley Homes</i>
<i>Wheatley Homes Ltd</i>	<i>Woolmer Green Parish Council</i>

<i>Willmott Dixon Housing</i>	<i>WPNPF</i>
<i>Wm Morrisons Supermarket Plc</i>	<i>Wymondley Parish Council</i>
<i>Women's Link</i>	<i>Wyvale Garden Centres Ltd</i>
<i>Woodland Trust</i>	<i>Young Pride in Herts</i>
<i>Woolenwich Infant And Nursery School</i>	<i>Youth Council</i>

Approximately 950 individuals on the Council consultation register were also consulted.

Appendix 2 – Consultation Publicity

Consultation Questions

Chapter	Section	Page ^s	Question
1	Introduction	6–7	1. Do you have any comments on Chapter 1 – Introduction?
2	Background	10–13	2. Do you have any comments on Chapter 2 – Background?
3	Setting the Context	16–19	3. Do you have any comments on Chapter 3 – Setting the Context?
4	Issues and Challenges	22–31	4. Do you have any comments on Chapter 4 – Issues and Challenges?
5	Existing Environment	34–35	5. Do you have any comments on Chapter 5 – Existing Environment?
6	Emerging Framework	38	6. Do you have any comments on the Objectives, outlined in Chapter 6 – Emerging Framework?
6	Emerging Framework	39	7. Do you have any comments on the Key Principles, outlined in Chapter 6 – Emerging Framework?
6	Emerging Framework	40–49	8. Do you have any comments on the Core Enhancements, outlined in Chapter 6 – Emerging Framework?
6	Emerging Framework	41	9. Do you have any comments on Central Area (Option 0), outlined in Chapter 6 – Emerging Framework?
6	Central Area (Option 1)	50–53	10. Do you have any comments on Central Area (Option 1), outlined in Chapter 6 – Emerging Framework?
6	Central Area (Option 2)	54–57	11. Do you have any comments on Central Area (Option 2), outlined in Chapter 6 – Emerging Framework?
6	Central Area (Option 3)	58–61	12. Do you have any comments on Central Area (Option 3), outlined in Chapter 6 – Emerging Framework?
6	Central Area (Preferred Option)	50–61	13. Please indicate your Preferred Option for the Central Area and state your reasons for choosing this Option (or combination of Options / other Options, if appropriate).
6	Central Area (Additional Options)	50–61	14. Please let us know of any other suggestions regarding the Central Area Options.
6	Cycle Path Options (Potential Layout 1)	62	15. Do you have any comments on Cycle Path (Potential Layout 1), outlined in Chapter 6 – Emerging Framework?
6	Cycle Path Options (Potential Layout 2)	63	16. Do you have any comments on Cycle Path (Potential Layout 2), outlined in Chapter 6 – Emerging Framework?
6	Cycle Path (Preferred Option)	62–63	17. Please indicate your Preferred Option for the Cycle Path Potential Layout and state your reasons for choosing this Option (or combination of Options / other Options, if appropriate).
6	Cycle Path (Additional Options)	62–63	18. Please let us know of any other suggestions regarding the Cycle Path Options.
6	Phasing and Temporary Use	64–65	19. Do you have any comments on Phasing and Temporary Use, outlined in Chapter 6 – Emerging Framework?
6	Greening the Grey	68	20. Do you have any comments on Greening the Grey, outlined in Chapter 6 – Emerging Framework?
6	Using Development to Make a Place	69	21. Do you have any comments on Using Development to Make a Place, outlined in Chapter 6 – Emerging Framework?
6	Development Parcels	70–79	22. Do you have any comments on the indicative Development Parcels, outlined in Chapter 6 – Emerging Framework?
6	Parking Consolidation	80	23. Do you have any comments on Parking Consolidation, outlined in Chapter 6 – Emerging Framework?
7	Conclusions and Feedback	84	24. Do you have any comments on Chapter 7 – Conclusions and Feedback?
General	General Comments	–	25. What are the main issues with Stevenage Railway Station at the moment, in your view?
General	General Comments	–	26. Do you think Lytton Way works well as a main road route alongside Stevenage Railway Station? What are the main problems with Lytton Way at the moment, in your view?
General	General Comments	–	27. Do you think the existing cycleway alongside the Station works well? If no, what are the issues with it?
General	General Comments	–	28. What improvements would you like to see made at Stevenage Railway Station?
General	General Comments	–	29. What improvements to Lytton Way would you like to see?
General	General Comments	–	30. How would you improve connections between the Railway Station, Lytton Way and the Town Centre?
General	General Comments	–	31. Do you have any suggested improvements to walking and cycling to and from the Railway Station?
General	General Comments	–	32. Do you have any suggested improvements to walking and cycling through the Railway Station to other destinations?
			33. Any ideas for what types of developments could replace the surface level car parks around the Railway Station?
			34. Do you have any other suggestions for improvements to the Railway Station, Lytton Way and access to and from the Railway Station?
General	General Comments	–	35. Do you have any other / general comments to make on the Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report?
SEA Screening	General Comments	–	36. Do you have any comments on the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening report that accompanies the Area Action Plan?

Promotional Video



STEVENAGE CONNECTION AREA ACTION PLAN:
ISSUES & OPTIONS REPORT

SBC Town Centre Connection Area Action Plan
132 views · Jun 24, 2021

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SBC Town Centre Connection Area Action Plan
132 views · 7 months ago

Stevenage Borough Council

and proposes some high-level strategic options and scenarios. 3:49

We Want Your Views

Have your say in shaping future proposals for Stevenage Station, Lytton Way and beyond...



Consultation on the Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan will take place this summer.

The Area Action Plan is a document which provides specific planning policy and guidance for a particular location or area of significant change.

This is a great opportunity to shape the future of Stevenage Station, Lytton Way and the surrounding area and for your views to make a real difference to the town.



Contact the Planning Policy Team at Stevenage Borough Council at planning.policy@stevenage.gov.uk or on 01438 242158.

The consultation runs from 12 July to 5 September.
Please submit comments and answer our Consultation Questions via our Consultation Portal – www.stevenage.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/planning-policy-consultations



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Have **your** say in how we transform Stevenage Station and surrounding area!

Consultation open until 5 September



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29 July



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Consultation on strategic options and scenarios for the area around Stevenage Railway Station and Lytton Way. Views welcome!



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As part of our plans to transform the Town Centre, our ambition is to regenerate the area around the Railway Station, improving the overall ...see more



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Tweets Tweets & replies Media Likes

1 5

 Stevenage Council · 29/07/2021
Help us with our plans to transform #Stevenage Town Centre. Have your say in our consultation on the regeneration of the Railway Station and surrounding area.

Find out more here: [stevenage.gov.uk/planning-and-b...](https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/planning-and-b...)



 Stevenage Council · 29/07/2021
It's #LoveParksWeek We're lucky to have so many award-winning green spaces in Stevenage. Can you tell us your favourite local park and how you make use of it?

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Stevenage Borough Council

Station Connection Area Action Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Statement

The Purpose of this Statement

This screening statement has been prepared to determine whether the proposed Station Connection Area Action Plan (AAP) should be subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Union Directive 2001/42/EC (SEA Directive) and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SEA Regulations).

The purpose of the Station Connection AAP is to aid the effective implementation of policies in the Stevenage Borough Local Plan, adopted May 2019. Specifically, the AAP is being introduced to support:

- Policy TC4 – Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area

The AAP will be used as a material consideration in determining planning applications and will provide the basis for development to be taken forward, giving developers and stakeholders certainty as to detailed proposals for the area.

Strategic Environmental Assessment – Regulatory requirements

The basis for Strategic Environmental Assessment legislation is European Directive 2001/42/EC. This was transposed into English law by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SEA Regulations). Detailed guidance of these regulations can be found in the Government publication '[A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive](#)' (ODPM, 2005) and [Paragraph 11-008 of the Planning Practice Guidance](#) (PPG), which states that "a sustainability appraisal should be prepared for any of the documents that can form part of a local plan, including core strategies site allocation documents and area action plans".

Under the requirements of the European Union Directive 2001/42/EC and Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004), certain types of plans that set the framework for the consent of future development projects, must be subject to an environmental assessment.

The objective of Strategic Environmental Assessment is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.

The 2001 Directive has been updated a number of times, with the most recent Directive issued in April 2014. While Article numbers cited in the 2005 guidance have been updated/removed, the principle of determining whether a Plan or Programme will have likely significant effects on the environment remain the same. Therefore, this screening statement uses the only Government guidance available.

The Strategic Environmental Appraisal Process

The first stage of the process is for the Council to determine whether or not the AAP is likely to have significant effects on the environment. This screening process includes assessing the AAP against a set of criteria (as set out in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations). The results of this are set out in [Appendix 1](#) of this statement. The aim of this statement is therefore to provide sufficient information to demonstrate whether the AAP is likely to have significant environmental effects.

The Council also has to consult the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England on this screening statement. A final determination cannot be made until the three statutory consultation bodies have been consulted.

Where the Council determines that a SEA is not required, Regulation 9(3) of the SEA Regulations states that the Council must prepare a statement setting out the reasons for this determination. This statement is the draft statement produced by the Council.

Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment?

There is a statutory requirement to undertake a SA appraisal of AAPs. The Council has considered whether an SA might be required. The AAP does not create new policies and verifies existing requirements to help support policies in the Local Plan. The AAP is therefore unlikely to have significant environmental, social or economic effects beyond those of the Local Plan policies which were subject to a comprehensive SA process, incorporating SEA, as part of the Local Plan production requirements.

The Council is required to consider Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). HRA is the process used to determine whether a plan or project would have significant adverse effects on the integrity of internationally designated site of nature conservation importance, known as European sites. The need for a HRA is set out within the [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010](#), which transposed EC Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC into UK law. A HRA Appropriate Assessment Screening Document was produced during Local Plan preparation and concluded that no policies in the Local Plan would have a likely significant effect of the closest SPA at the Lee Valley, nor it's associated SSSI at Rye Meads.

Copies of the SA and HRA documents for the Local Plan are available here:

<http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/149690/planning-policy/90175/>

Conclusion

On the basis of the screening process, the Council believes that the Station Connection AAP does not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (or Sustainability Appraisal or Habitats Regulations Assessment). This is due to the lack of significant environmental, social or economic effects arising from its implementation above and beyond those of the Local Plan policies which have already been appropriately assessed.

Appendix 1

A Practical Guide to the SEA Directive, ODPM 2005

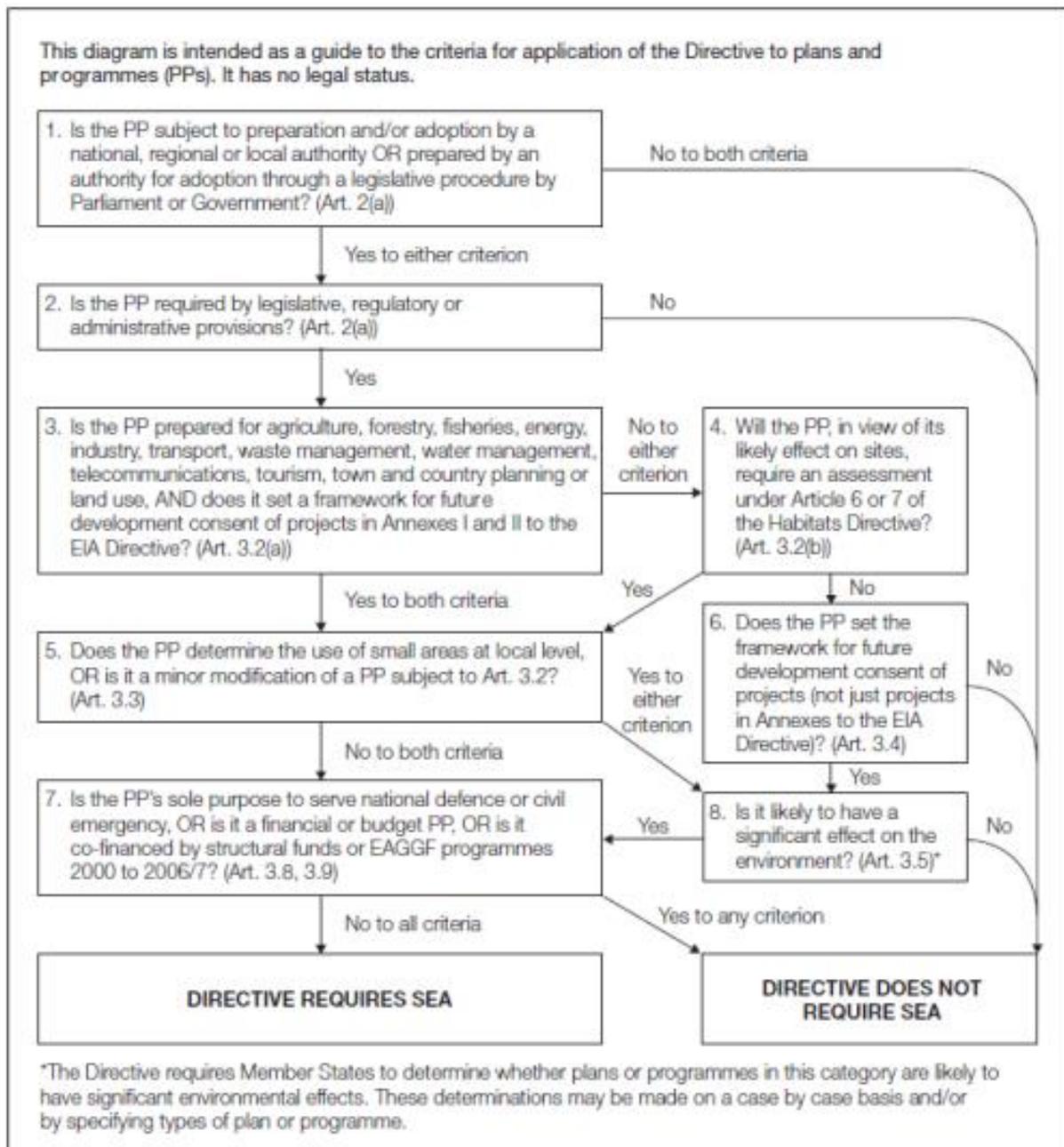


Table 1: Establishing whether these is a need for SEA

Stage	Yes/No	Assessment
1. Is the PP (plan or programme) subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority OR prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government? (Art. 2(a))	Yes to either criterion: proceed to question 2	Yes, the AAP has been prepared by SBC to provide additional detail to polices contained in the adopted Local Plan (2019)
2. Is the PP required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions? (Art. 2(a))	Yes: proceed to question 3	Yes, the AAP will become a material consideration upon adoption and is referred to in the adopted Local Plan (2019)
3. Is the PP prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, town and country planning or land use, AND does it set a framework for future development consent of projects in Annexes I and II to the EIA Directive? (Art 3.2(a))	Yes to both criterion: proceed to question 5	The AAP is prepared for the purpose of Town and Country Planning, to supplement policies in the adopted Local Plan (2019). Yes, the AAP sets a framework for developments that may require EIA although this AAP does not create new policy.
5. Does the PP determine the use of small areas at local level, OR is it a minor modification of a PP subject to Art. 3.2? (Art. 3.3)	Yes to first criterion: proceed to question 8	The AAP supplements Local Plan policies relating to parking provision which can be a form of land use.
8. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the environment? (Art. 3.5)	No	The AAP is not considered to have a significant effect on the environment. DIRECTIVE DOES NOT REQUIRE THE AAP TO UNDERGO SEA

SEA Directive Criteria (Schedule of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004)	Potential effects of AAP
1. Characteristic of the AAP having particular regard to:	
(a) the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources;	The AAP provides guidance on the requirement for development within the Town Centre boundary.
(b) the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	The AAP sits alongside the Local Plan (adopted 2019) which was subject to SA incorporating SEA. It will influence plans for the Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area in an urban locations due to the underbound nature of Stevenage Borough.
(c) the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	The AAP provides additional guidance for meeting the development objectives of the adopted Local Plan (2019).
(d) environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme; and	The SA (inc. SEA) of the Local Plan identified a number of benefits arising from the Station gateway Major Opportunity Area policy. The AAP helps support the implementation of these policies.
(e) the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).	The AAP does not influence the implementation of community legislation on the environment.
2. Characteristics of the effect and area likely to be affected having particular regard to:	
(a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects;	The AAP is not expected to give rise to any significant environmental effects.
(b) the cumulative nature of the effects;	There are no anticipated negative cumulative effects of the AAP.
(c) the trans-boundary nature of the effects;	The AAP is not expected to give rise to any significant cross-boundary environmental effects.
(d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents);	There are no anticipated negative effects of the AAP on human health.
(e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	The AAP is not expected to give rise to any significant effects on population or geographical area.
(f) the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to— (i) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage; (ii) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; or (iii) intensive land-use;	The AAP is not expected to affect any local natural characteristics or cultural heritage, and is not expected to lead to the exceedance of environmental standards or promote intensive land-use.
(g) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status.	The AAP is not expected to have an effect on landscapes of national, community or international protection status.

Appendix 2

Responses from Statutory Consultees

Debbie Coates

From: SM-NE-Consultations (NE) <consultations@naturalengland.org.uk>
Sent: 28 January 2021 08:46
To: Debbie Coates
Subject: [External] Stevenage Area Action Plan - SEA Screening Opinion
Attachments: SA screening opinion - NE.pdf
Categories: Important

Dear Ms Coates

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Natural England does not consider that this Area Action Plan – SEA screening opinion poses any likely risk or opportunity in relation to our statutory purpose, and so does not wish to comment on this consultation.

The lack of comment from Natural England should not be interpreted as a statement that there are no impacts on the natural environment. Other bodies and individuals may wish to make comments that might help the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to fully take account of any environmental risks and opportunities relating to this document.

If you disagree with our assessment of this proposal as low risk, or should the proposal be amended in a way which significantly affects its impact on the natural environment, then in accordance with Section 4 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, please consult Natural England again.

Yours faithfully

Dawn Kinrade
Consultations Team
Operations Delivery
Natural England
Hornbeam House, Electra Way
Crewe, Cheshire, CW1 6GJ

Enquiries line: 0300 060 8349
Email: consultations@naturalengland.org.uk

www.gov.uk/natural-england

During the current coronavirus situation, Natural England staff are working remotely and from some offices to provide our services and support our customers and stakeholders.

Although some offices and our Mail Hub are now open, please continue to send any documents by email or contact us by phone to let us know how we can help you.

See the latest news on the coronavirus at <http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> and Natural England's regularly updated operational update at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/operational-update-covid-19>.

Debbie Coates

From: Marsh, Andrew <Andrew.Marsh@HistoricEngland.org.uk>
Sent: 26 January 2021 12:02
To: Debbie Coates
Subject: [External] Re: Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan – Sustainability Appraisal (SA)/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Opinion

Importance: High

Categories: Important

Dear Debbie

Re: Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan – Sustainability Appraisal (SA)/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Opinion

Thank you for consulting Historic England on the draft SEA Screening Statement for the Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan. As the Government's adviser on the historic environment, Historic England is keen to ensure that the protection of the historic environment is fully taken into account at all stages and levels of the local planning process. We have reviewed the draft SEA Screening Statement and agree with the Council's conclusion that Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required in this instance.

Summary

We hope that the above comments are of assistance, and are very happy to look at and comment on any future drafts if this would assist the Council. Finally, we'd like to stress that and we have not looked at the consultation document exhaustively, and that this opinion is based on the information provided by the Council in its consultation. To avoid any doubt, this does not affect our obligation to provide further advice and, potentially, object to specific proposals, which may subsequently arise where we consider that these would have an adverse effect upon the historic environment.

Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

Andrew Marsh BSc MA MRTPI
Historic Environment Planning Adviser
Development Advice | East of England
Historic England
Mobile: 07557 828181
Direct line: 01223 582734

Historic England
Brooklands | 24 Brooklands Avenue | Cambridge | CB2 8BU
www.historicengland.org.uk



Historic England

Follow us on Twitter at [@HE_EoE](https://twitter.com/HE_EoE)

Debbie Coates

From: HNL Sustainable Places <HNLsustainablePlaces@environment-agency.gov.uk>
Sent: 19 January 2021 14:36
To: Debbie Coates
Subject: [External] RE: SEA screening Opinion

Dear Debbie

Thank you for consulting us on the draft Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Opinion for the Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan.

We are a statutory consultee in the SEA process and aim to reduce flood risk and protect and enhance the water environment. Based on our review of the draft screening statement, we agree with the environmental issues that have been included and do not have any further comments to make.

Kind regards

Hannah Malyon MSc
Planning Advisor, Hertfordshire and North London Sustainable Places
Environment Agency | Alchemy, Bessemer Road, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL7 1HE

HNLsustainablePlaces@environment-agency.gov.uk

☎ 02084 749666

Pronouns: she/her ([why is this here?](#))

Working days: Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm



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for people and wildlife**



Does Your Proposal Have Environmental Issues or Opportunities? Speak To Us Early!

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From: Debbie Coates [mailto:Debbie.Coates@stevenage.gov.uk]
Sent: 18 January 2021 11:00
To: HNL Sustainable Places
Subject: SEA screening Opinion

Dear all,

Meeting Executive
Portfolio Area Environment and Climate Change
Date 14 September 2022



CONFIRMATION OF TWO ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS TO REQUIRE CHANGES OF USE FROM CLASS E(g)(i) (OFFICES AND CLASS E(g)(iii) (LIGHT INDUSTRIAL) TO CLASS C3 (RESIDENTIAL) TO OBTAIN PLANNING PERMISSION

KEY DECISION

Author Lewis Claridge | 2158
Lead Officer Zayd Al-Jawad | 2257
Contact Officer Lewis Claridge | 2158

1 PURPOSE

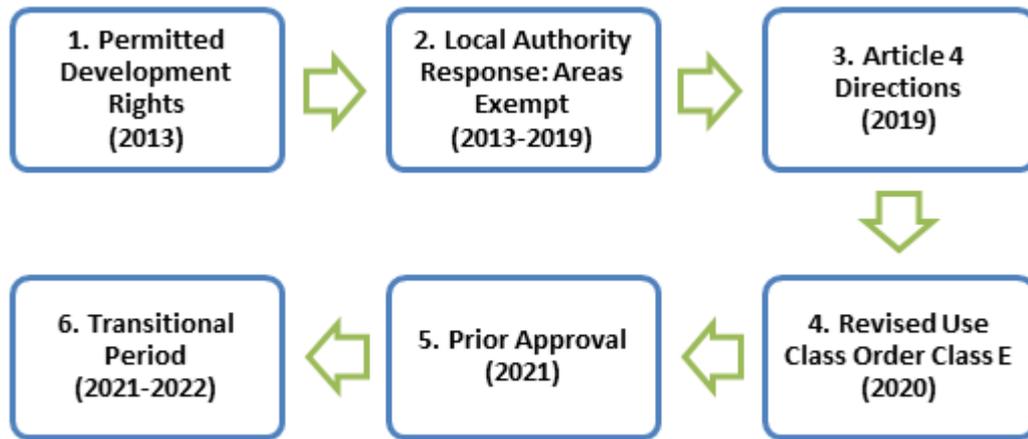
- 1.1 To seek Members' approval of the confirming of two revised Article 4 Directions to remove the permitted development rights in relation to changes of use from office and light industrial uses to residential use in Gunnels Wood and Pin Green.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Executive note the responses from consultation, 20 July to 17 August 2022, on the serving of the notice of the revised Article 4 Directions [Appendix C].
- 2.2 That Executive confirm the Article 4 Directions [Appendix A and B] under Article 4 (1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended), to remove permitted development

rights in relation to changes of use from Use Class E(g)(i) and E(g)(iii) to Use Class C3 (as defined in the Town and County Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended)), effective from 1 October 2022.

3 BACKGROUND



Initial Government Reforms – Permitted Development Rights

- 3.1 In May 2013, the Government announced a series of planning reforms to make the process easier to secure residential development, through “permitted development rights”. A permitted development right is the carrying out of certain types of work or development, without needing to apply for planning permission. Various changes of use could be made without the need for a formal planning consent. The most prominent of these was from office, commercial and employment use (previous Use Class B1) to residential use (Use Class C3).
- 3.2 The impact of the 2013 Government arrangements was to create a significant loss in employment space across many local authority areas of the country. The key implications of this net loss included:
- Constraining growth;
 - Forcing businesses to relocate;
 - Limiting overall performance and productivity of businesses;
 - Limiting the attractiveness of Stevenage and Hertfordshire as a place to invest; and
 - Inhibiting good placemaking.

Local authority response to early reforms

- 3.3 As a response to these reforms, many local authorities across the country began to designate areas to protect against the loss of office, commercial and employment space to residential areas. This was achieved through two main methods:

- Areas exempt from the office to residential change of use permitted development right 2013 – where any proposals to change use from B1 office to C3 residential would remain subject to a full planning application (of the initial designated areas, 13 areas within the Gunnel Wood Employment Area in Stevenage were included). These remained in force until May 2019.
- Imposing Article 4 Directions on additional areas in which the local authority deemed worthy of additional protection from change of use from office, commercial and employment to residential. Local authorities had until May 2019 to ensure appropriate Article 4 Directions were in place to replace any areas exempt from the office to residential change of use permitted development right.

More recent Government Reforms

- 3.4 On 1 September 2020, the Government made a series of changes to the “Use Classes Order”, which categorises different types of building uses for planning purposes such as applications to change the use of a building [BD4].
- 3.5 The Government has argued that the main driver of change for this has been the need to enable a repurposing of buildings on high streets and town centres. The new “Class E” allows for a mix of uses to reflect changing retail requirements. It will allow a building to be used flexibly by having several uses taking place concurrently or by allowing different uses to take place at different times of the day. Changes to another use, or mix of uses, within this class will not require planning permission.
- 3.6 From 1 September 2020 onwards, if a building or other land is being used in a way falling within Class A1 (shops), A2 (financial and professional services), A3 (restaurants and cafés) or B1 (business) then it will be treated as though it is being used for a purpose specified in the new Class E. Change of use to another use within Class E will be allowed without the need for planning permission.
- 3.7 New rules allowing commercial premises to be converted into homes were announced on 31 March 2021, as part of a package of measures to revitalise high streets and town centres [BD5]. The new homes will be delivered through a simpler “prior approval” process instead of a full planning application and will be subject to high standards, ensuring they provide adequate natural light and meet space standards.
- 3.8 The Government has introduced legislation for England to bring forward this right to use prior approval from 1 August 2021. The right allows for local consideration by the local planning authority of specific planning matters through the prior approval process.
- 3.9 Any such prior approval proposals will be determined by the local planning authority and, depending on the scale of the proposal, could be subject to Member oversight and approval.

Transitional Period

- 3.10 As a transitional measure until 31 July 2021, the previous Use Class Order was kept in force relative to permitted development.
- 3.11 Government consulted on proposals to include the change of use of Class E floorspace to residential as permitted development, and the Government confirmed that this new permitted development right would be introduced from 1 August 2021.
- 3.12 Transitional arrangements for existing Article 4 Directions, such as the ones in Stevenage, which restrict the conversion of offices to residential use (under Class O of the General Permitted Development Order) were also outlined; those that remained in place on 31 July 2021 would continue to have effect on equivalent development (i.e. the conversion of offices and light industrial under Class E(g)(i) and E(g)(iii) to Class C3 residential use) until 31 July 2022.

Article 4 Directions

- 3.13 An Article 4 Direction is a Direction under Article 4 of the General Permitted Development Order by which a local planning authority can bring within planning control certain types of development, or changes of use, which would normally be “permitted development” (i.e. not require an application for planning permission). Article 4 Directions are made when the character of an area of acknowledged importance would be threatened.

Article 4 Directions for Stevenage

- 3.14 Guidance relating to Article 4 Directions for Stevenage can be found at: <https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/article-4-directions>
- 3.15 Stevenage has three Article 4 Directions, which remove permitted development rights for changes of use from office (previous Use Class B1a) and light industrial (previous Use Class B1c) to Use Class C3 (residential), as well as requiring planning permission for change of use within the residential Use Class C.
- 3.16 The Article 4 Directions were made on 15 June 2017 and were confirmed on 21 December 2017. These are as follows:
- Change of use from Light Industrial to Residential – only applies to Gunnels Wood and Pin Green Employment areas – came into force on 15 June 2018, expired 31 July 2022.
 - Change of use from Office to Residential – only applies to Gunnels Wood and Pin Green Employment areas – came into force on 30 May 2019, expired 31 July 2022.
 - Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) – requires planning permission to be granted for changes of use from C3 (residential) to C4 (small HMO).
- 3.17 For the purposes of this report, the Article 4 Direction relating to Houses in Multiple Occupation is not under consideration and remains in force.

- 3.18 The Article 4 Direction is not a ban on changes of use to residential; it is a requirement that such changes of use must have planning permission from the Borough Council.
- 3.19 The principle aim of these Directions is to remove these permitted development rights, and allow for local policies, which seek to protect existing employment uses, to be applied to proposals for changes of use from office and industrial to residential dwellings, to ensure employment uses are protected across the town.
- 3.20 The Stevenage Borough Local Plan (2019) continues to be part of the development plan which benefits from the statutory presumption in section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004: “*If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise*”.
- 3.21 The new Use Class “E” will be a material consideration when considering any planning application for development which falls into that Use Class.

Revised Article 4 Directions for Stevenage

- 3.22 The revised Article 4 Direction relating to change of use from light industrial to residential [Appendix A] will replace the expired Article 4 Direction.
- 3.23 The revised Article 4 Direction relating to change of use from office to residential [Appendix B] would replace the expired Article 4 Direction.
- 3.24 In order to ensure a targeted approach to the revised sites to which Article 4 Directions apply, officers surveyed both Gunnels Wood and Pin Green Employment Areas to determine the Use Classes of the businesses and those premises identified as being appropriate for the Article 4 Directions.
- 3.25 The Planning Policy Team have therefore ensured that a targeted, reasonable area be covered in line with the requirements of Government. As such, the Article 4 Directions apply to individual identified premises as opposed to the “blanket” Direction that was previously in force.
- 3.26 The Planning Policy team sought legal advice in May 2022 to confirm the correct wording of both sets of Article 4 Directions.
- 3.27 Not implementing these Directions would mean valuable employment uses could be lost to residential use without the Borough Council having any control over this.
- 3.28 As outlined in previous reports to Executive in July 2021 [BD2] and July 2022 [BD3], there are clearly a wide range of planning policy considerations, consequences and negative impacts if the Council were to simply allow the existing Article 4 Directions to expire. These include:
- Already a shortage of employment land being provided within the town.
 - Lack of land available and potential reliance on neighbouring authorities to meet the shortfall.
 - Commercial property agents have raised concerns over the lack of available sites for new businesses to take up.

- Allowing unrestricted changes of use could upset the balance between homes and jobs.
- The original masterplan for Stevenage separated employment uses from potentially conflicting uses, such as housing. Gunnels Wood accommodates a number of international businesses and corporate headquarters.
- Conversions to residential are unlikely to provide the high-quality homes we would seek for our residents. The amenity of residents of these new homes would likely be affected by the issues that arise from employment uses such as noise, lighting, HGV access and adverse visual impacts.
- There are industrial buildings that would benefit from regeneration, and potentially intensification, but it is crucial that they remain in employment use.
- A risk of creating towns that lack in local shops, facilities and services.
- An increased need for longer journeys, contrary to the objectives of sustainable development and the aspirations of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan.
- Large scale units such as supermarkets or office blocks could be converted to residential use, without securing Section 106 contributions and therefore more affordable homes. This would mean the Local Plan targets for affordable housing not being met as well as loss of important revenue to reinvest in Stevenage.

Support from Hertfordshire LEP and Hertfordshire Growth Board

- 3.29 The Hertfordshire LEP provided a letter of support [BD6], which, as well as providing full support for the revised Article 4 Directions proposed, includes supporting reference to the many economic opportunities the town has to offer, the global level industries the town supports and emerging economic frameworks the LEP are involved in developing, alongside the Council.
- 3.30 The Hertfordshire Growth Board provided a similar letter of support [BD7].

The need to have up to date Article 4 Directions

- 3.31 Although the new legislation has been in force from 1 August 2021, local authorities were given a maximum of 12 months “transitional period” to ensure that Article 4 Directions are in place that cover targeted, rather than blanket, areas of the local authority area. This is to ensure that control can be retained over those areas or elements of permitted development the local authority seeks to protect from change of use from commercial and employment to residential use.
- 3.32 This means that the Article 4 Directions in Stevenage, which protected our employment areas from residential conversions, expired on 31 July 2022. There is a risk that proposals from 31 July 2022 will be subject to planning applications for change of use.

- 3.33 The consultation which ran from 20 July – 17 August 2022 means that the revised Directions do carry some weight before they are confirmed.
- 3.34 Officers within the Planning Policy and Development Management teams in the Planning & Regulation Unit have been fully briefed on the proposed revised sites to which the Directions will apply and the weight which this has carried from 20 July 2022.

Revised Article 4 Directions

- 3.35 The Council has proposed to implement two revised Article 4 Directions to remove these permitted development rights again, and allow for local policies, which seek to protect existing employment uses, to be considered.
- 3.36 However, rather than a “blanket Direction”, we are identifying specific properties that are currently operating as a Use Class E(g)(i) or E(g)(iii) in order to apply the Article 4 Directions to the smallest possible area.
- 3.37 Implementing an Article 4 Direction is a three-stage process:
- The Direction is made;
 - Consultation is undertaken for 28 days;
 - Then the Direction is confirmed.
- 3.38 This Executive Report seeks approval to confirm the making of Article 4 Directions to remove the permitted development rights relating to E(g)(i) (offices) and E(g)(iii) (light industry) to C3 (residential) use.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

Recommendation 2.1: That Executive note the responses from consultation, 20 July to 17 August 2022, on the serving of the notice of the revised Article 4 Directions [Appendix C].

- 4.1 Following approval from Executive in July 2022, public consultation commenced on 20 July 2022 (in line with publication dates for the local press) and ran for 28 days, until 17 August 2022.
www.stevenage.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/consultation-on-two-article-4-directions
- 4.2 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 sets out the statutory requirements for introducing an Article 4 Direction. In line with this, notice of the Directions were;
- Published in the local newspaper [Appendix F];
 - Displayed by two site notices in each employment area, two within Gunnels Wood and two within Pin Green [Appendix G];
 - Sent to the occupiers and owners of all affected businesses within Gunnels Wood and Pin Green [Appendix H];

- Made available to view at the Customer Service Centre, the town’s two libraries and the Council’s website (along with a copy of the Directions);
 - Sent to both the Secretary of State and Hertfordshire County Council (along with a copy of the Directions) [Appendix I & J].
- 4.3 The notice of Directions is available in Appendix D and E. A copy of the Directions is contained within Appendix A and B.
- 4.4 A summary of all consultation comments and responses is provided in Appendix C to this report. No significant objections were raised to the revised Directions during the consultation period. Where comments and objections were raised, the Council has provided a detailed response.
- 4.5 No objections were received from Hertfordshire County Council. The letters received prior to consultation, from the Hertfordshire LEP and Hertfordshire Growth Board, support the Hertfordshire position with regard to the revised Directions.
- 4.6 No objections or comments were received to date from the Secretary of State during the consultation period. However there remains a potential risk that the Directions could still be “called in” by the Secretary of State for further scrutiny before they can be confirmed.

Recommendation 2.2: That Executive confirm the Article 4 Directions [Appendix A and B] under Article 4 (l) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended), to remove permitted development rights in relation to changes of use from Use Class E(g)(i) and E(g)(iii) to Use Class C3 (as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended)), effective from 1 October 2022.



- 4.7 If confirmed, the Article 4 Directions would cover individual buildings in the Employment Areas of Gunnels Wood and Pin Green, as identified in Appendix A and B.
- 4.8 A minimum 28-day notice period is required when implementing Article 4 Directions.

- 4.9 A 12-month notification period was used on the previous Article 4 Directions in 2017 and was designed to ensure that the impact of any financial challenge is mitigated. Being as these Directions will apply to premises already covered by the previous Directions, it is unlikely that there will be any financial implications on owners or occupiers.
- 4.10 As such, the Article 4 Directions, if confirmed, would come into effect on 1 October 2022. The Directions were legally sealed prior to the consultation period and are required to be legally sealed again prior to confirmation.
- 4.11 There is a risk that proposals from 1 August 2022 to 30 September 2022 will be subject to planning applications for change of use on sites identified; the consultation from 20 July 2022 meant that the revised Directions do carry some weight before they are confirmed.
- 4.12 Officers within the Planning Policy and Development Management teams in the Planning & Regulation unit have been fully briefed on the proposed revised sites to which the Directions will apply. At the time of this report to Executive, no applications have been forthcoming and would not be determined before the Directions are confirmed.

5 IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 5.1 Assuming there is 28 days notification of the Directions, there should be little opportunity for challenge resulting in any financial compensation.
- 5.2 Other than staff costs in terms on both consulting upon and reporting the Directions, the principal cost will be staff time processing the any planning applications for these changes of use, which will be un-chargeable. The expected number can be met within existing resources within the Planning & Regulation Unit.

Legal Implications

- 5.3 Once adopted, the Article 4 Directions will remove the permitted development rights in relation to changes of use from Use Class E(g)(i) and E(g)(iii) to Use Class C3 (as defined in the Town and Country Planning [Use Classes] Order 1987, as amended).
- 5.4 Legal advice has been sought in 2021 and 2022 regarding Article 4 Directions in Stevenage.
- 5.5 The Directions were legally sealed prior to the consultation period and are required to be legally sealed again prior to confirmation on 1 October 2022.

Risk Implications

- 5.6 There is a risk that proposals from August to September 2022 will be subject to planning applications for change of use on identified sites; the consultation planned from 20 July 2022 means that the revised Directions carry some weight before they are confirmed. Officers within the Planning Policy and

Development Management teams in the Planning & Regulation unit have been fully briefed on the proposed revised sites to which the Directions will apply.

- 5.7 There remains a potential significant risk that the Directions could still be “called in” by the Secretary of State for further scrutiny before they can be confirmed, even if this occurs after the consultation period 20 July – 17 August 2022.
- 5.8 There are potential risks of not having Article 4 Directions in place, that have been highlighted within this report and in the previous reports to Executive on this subject. These include:
- Constraining growth.
 - Forcing businesses to relocate.
 - Limiting overall performance and productivity of businesses.
 - Limiting the attractiveness of Stevenage as a place to invest.
 - A risk of creating towns that lack in local shops, facilities and services.
 - Local Plan targets for affordable housing not being met as well as loss of important revenue to reinvest in Stevenage.

Policy, Environmental and Climate Change Implications

- 5.9 The consequences of not maintaining the existing Article 4 Directions in Stevenage include an increased need for longer journeys, contrary to the objectives of sustainable development, climate change and the wider aspirations of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan.

Planning Implications

- 5.10 The Planning & Development Committee met on 22 June 2022 and were presented with a summary of the proposed changes to the Article 4 Directions regarding office and light industrial use. No substantive comments or objections were raised by the Committee.
- 5.11 Once confirmed, the Article 4 Directions will remove the permitted development rights in relation to changes of use from Use Class E(g)(i) and E(g)(iii) to Use Class C3 (as defined in the Town and Country Planning [Use Classes] Order 1987, as amended). Instead, planning permission will be required for these changes of use. Local Planning policies will be used to assess any resulting planning applications.

Economic Implications

- 5.12 An absence of any required size limits for development secured through permitted development rights to change use from any “Class E” building could have some serious impacts on the economy of the borough. This would risk, for example, large scale supermarkets or office blocks being converted to residential use, creating many dwellings without any Section 106

contributions and affordable homes; thus, risking the borough falling short of affordable housing targets as well as loss of important revenue to reinvest in the town.

- 5.13 The latest set of permitted development rights and prior approval process, if sites were left with less protection, would only serve to place additional pressure on local businesses as they continue to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and other recent economic pressures as businesses are moved on by landlords seeking to profit from higher residential values.
- 5.14 There could be a potential loss of income for local authorities if developers commence large scale delivery based on schemes that have progressed via permitted development rights, instead of submitting proper applications that can be assessed against the Local Plan, scrutinised and implemented to ensure more sustainable delivery and outcomes for local residents and workers.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.15 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed to assess the consultation process and the proposal to implement the Article 4 Directions [BD8].

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- BD1 Stevenage Borough Local Plan, 2011-2031
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/planning-policy/stevenage-borough-local-plan/stevenage-borough-local-plan.pdf>
- BD2 Stevenage Borough Council Executive (14 July 2021) Item 5: Review of Article 4 Directions and Employment Sites in Stevenage
<https://democracy.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/s28776/Item%205%20-%20Article%204%20Directions%20Report.pdf>
- BD3 Stevenage Borough Council Executive (12 July 2022) Item 5: Consultation on Two Article 4 Directions to require changes of use from Class e(g)(i) (offices and Class e(g)(iii) (light industrial) to Class C3 (residential) to obtain planning permission
[https://democracy.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/s32049/Article 4 Directions Report.pdf](https://democracy.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/s32049/Article%204%20Directions%20Report.pdf)
- BD4 Use Classes Order (September 2020)
https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common_projects/9/change_of_use
- BD5 New Government Arrangements from August 2021 (March 2021) [New freedoms to support high streets and fast track delivery of schools and hospitals across England introduced today - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-freedoms-to-support-high-streets-and-fast-track-delivery-of-schools-and-hospitals-across-england-introduced-today)
- BD6 Hertfordshire LEP Letter of Support for Revised Article 4 Directions in Stevenage (June 2021)
- BD7 Hertfordshire Growth Board Letter of Support for Revised Article 4 Directions in Stevenage (June 2021) *Unattributed*
- BD8 Article 4 Directions: Equalities Impact Assessment

APPENDICES

- A Revised Article 4 Direction for change of use from Light Industrial to Residential (Gunnels Wood and Pin Green Employment Areas)
- B Revised Article 4 Direction for change of use from Office to Residential (Gunnels Wood and Pin Green Employment Areas)
- C Summary of Consultation Comments and Council Responses to Article 4 Directions Consultation, 20 July – 17 August 2022
- D Notice of Article 4 Direction for change of use from Light Industrial to Residential (Gunnels Wood and Pin Green Employment Areas)
- E Notice of Article 4 Direction for change of use from Office to Residential (Gunnels Wood and Pin Green Employment Areas)
- F Revised Article 4 Directions: Advertisement in Comet newspaper, July 2022
- G Revised Article 4 Directions: Site Notices, July 2022
- H Revised Article 4 Directions: Copy of Consultation Letter to Landowners and Owner Occupiers, July 2022

- I Revised Article 4 Directions: Copy of Consultation Letter to Secretary of State, July 2022
- J Revised Article 4 Directions: Copy of Consultation Letter to Hertfordshire County Council, July 2022

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Stevenage Borough Council

Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015

Direction made under Article 4(1) to which Schedule 3 applies

WHEREAS Stevenage Borough Council (“the Council”) being the appropriate local planning authority within the meaning of article 4(5) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (“the Order”) is satisfied that it is expedient that development of the description set out in the First Schedule of this Direction should not be carried out on land described in the Second Schedule of this Direction unless planning permission is granted by the local planning authority on an application made under Part III of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

NOW THEREFORE the Council in pursuance of the power conferred on it by Article 4(1) of the Order hereby directs that permitted development granted by Article 3 of the Order shall not apply to development specified in the First Schedule of this Direction on the land described in the Second Schedule of this Direction and shown outlined in red on the attached plan.

FIRST SCHEDULE

Development comprising the change of use of a building and any land within its curtilage from a use falling within Class E(g)(iii) (light industrial) of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended), to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of that Schedule, being development comprised within Class PA of Part 3 (Changes of Use) of Schedule 2 of the Order and not being development comprised within any other Class.

SECOND SCHEDULE

This Direction shall apply only to the land edged and hatched in red shown on the attached plans.

The Article 4 Direction will come into effect on 1 October 2022.

Made under the Common seal of Stevenage Borough Council on the ^{14th} Day of ^{JULY}
2022. The Common Seal of the Council was affixed to this Direction in the presence of:

Thomas Pirze.....

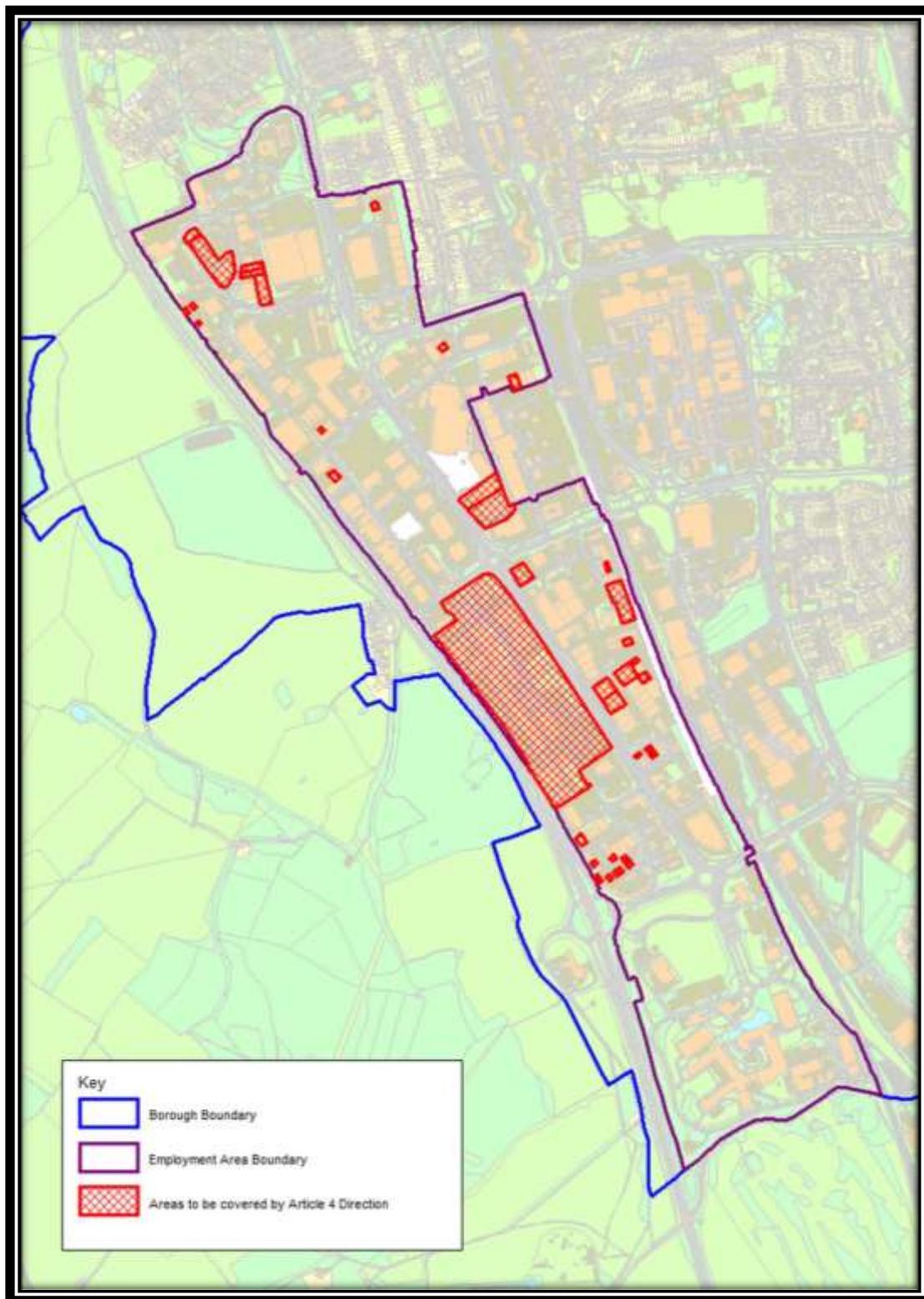
Thomas Pirze

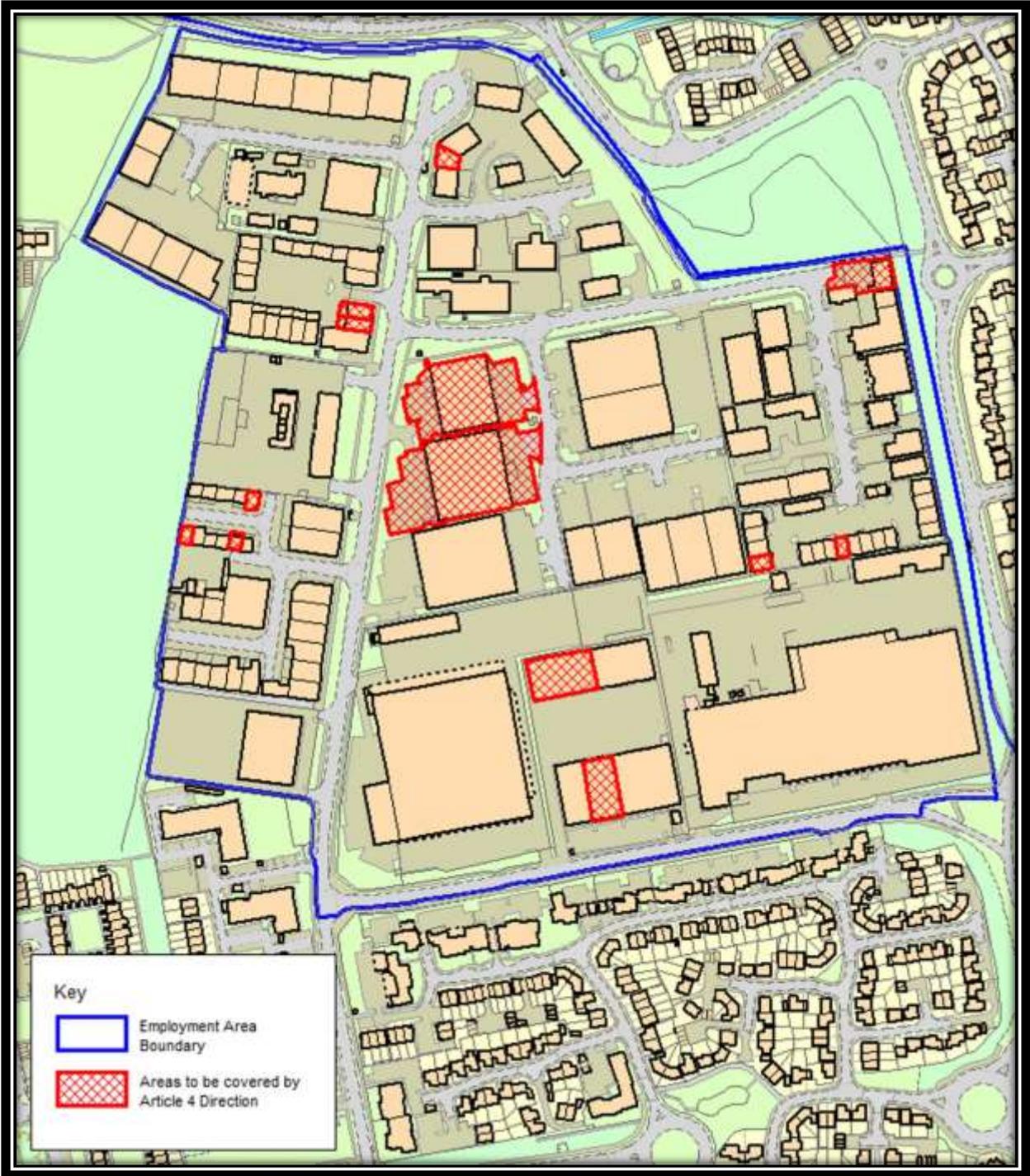


Confirmed under the Common seal of Stevenage Borough Council on the Day of
..... 20.... . The Common Seal of the Council was affixed to this Direction in the
presence of:

.....

Article 4 Direction of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015: Change of use from E(g)(iii) (light industrial) to C3 (dwellinghouses)





Stevenage Borough Council

Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015

Direction made under Article 4(1) to which Schedule 3 applies

WHEREAS Stevenage Borough Council (“the Council”) being the appropriate local planning authority within the meaning of article 4(5) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (“the Order”) is satisfied that it is expedient that development of the description set out in the First Schedule of this Direction should not be carried out on land described in the Second Schedule of this Direction unless planning permission is granted by the local planning authority on an application made under Part III of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

NOW THEREFORE the Council in pursuance of the power conferred on it by Article 4(1) of the Order hereby directs that permitted development granted by Article 3 of the Order shall not apply to development specified in the First Schedule of this Direction on the land described in the Second Schedule of this Direction and shown outlined in red on the attached plan.

FIRST SCHEDULE

Development comprising the change of use of a building and any land within its curtilage from a use falling within Class E(g)(i) (offices) of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended), to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of that Schedule, being development comprised within Class PA of Part 3 (Changes of Use) of Schedule 2 of the Order and not being development comprised within any other Class.

SECOND SCHEDULE

This Direction shall apply only to the land outlined in red, as defined by the attached map.

The Article 4 Direction will come into effect on 1 October 2022.

Made under the Common seal of Stevenage Borough Council on th 14th Day of ... JULY
2022. The Common Seal of the Council was affixed to this Direction in the presence of:

Thomas Pire

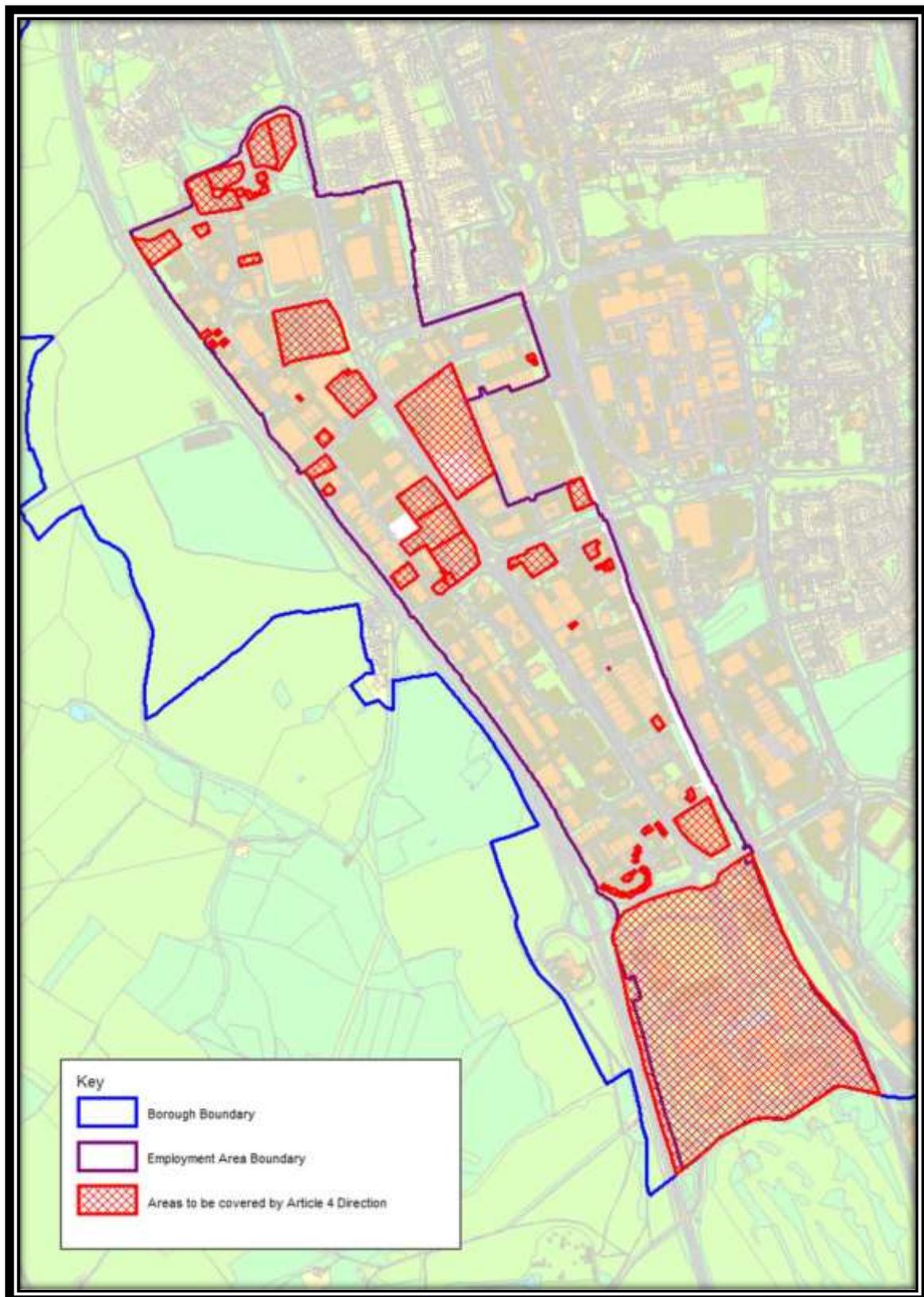
Thomas Pire

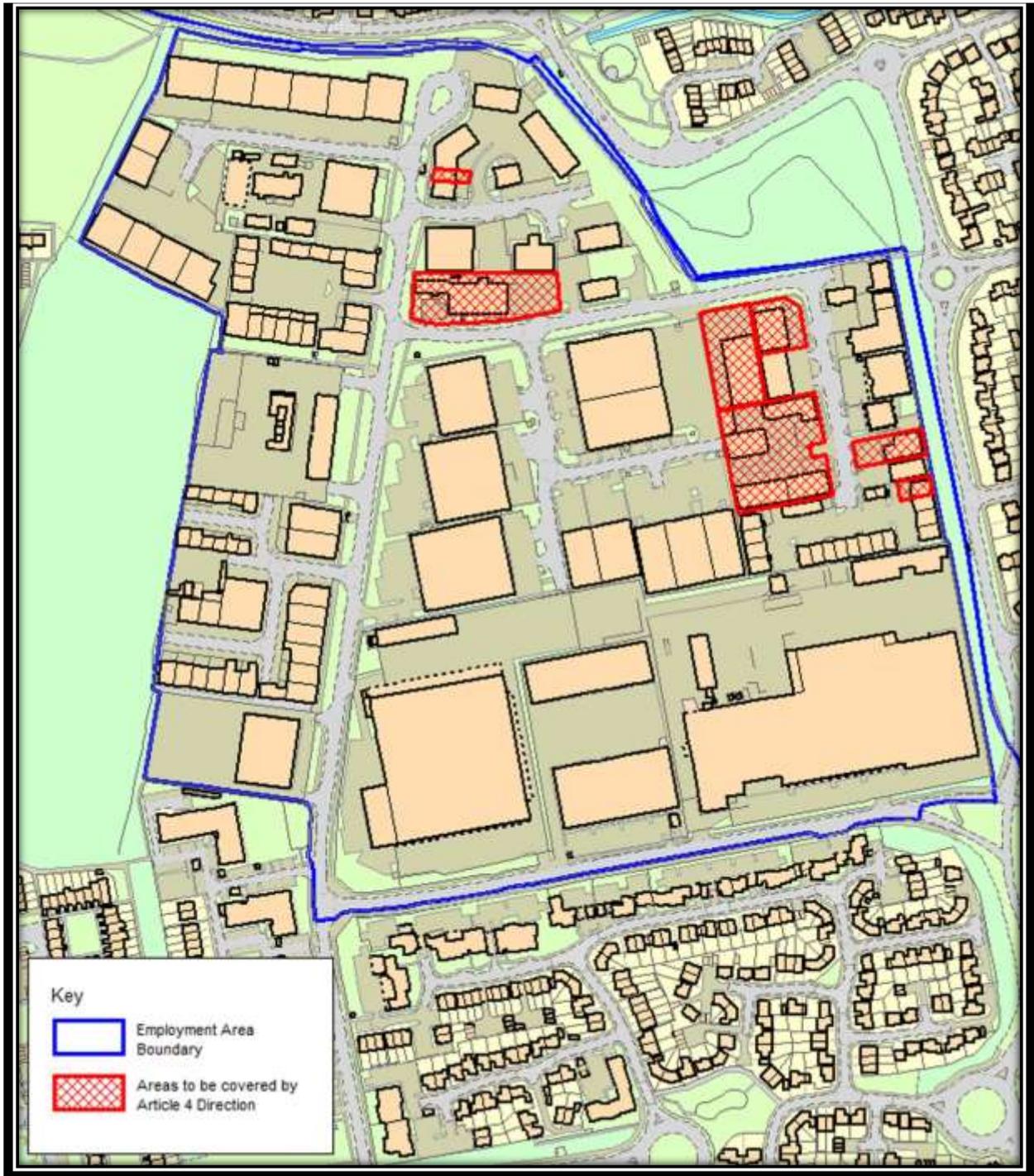


Confirmed under the Common seal of Stevenage Borough Council on the Day of
..... 20.... . The Common Seal of the Council was affixed to this Direction in the
presence of:

.....

Article 4 Direction of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015: Change of use from E(g)(i) (offices) to C3 (dwellinghouses)





Stevenage Revised Article 4 Directions: Consultation 20 July – 17 August 2022
Summary of Consultation Comments and Council Responses **APPENDIX C**

ID	Name	Responses
1	Anonymous	<p>Comment:</p> <p>Support for the revised Article 4 Directions.</p> <p>Stevenage Borough Council Response:</p> <p><i>Support noted.</i></p>
2	Anonymous	<p>Comment:</p> <p>We object to this on the grounds that it is totally unnecessary. At a time when demand for housing is greater than it has ever been and businesses are closing at a rapid rate due to the financial pressures they are facing, this removes the ability to make a sensible decision that would support people's livelihoods.</p> <p>The decision was made previously to permit this, so we do not understand what has changed recently to require the need to reverse such a decision, at a time when surely greater flexibility is needed.</p> <p>We do not agree that allowing residential use in the Pin Green area would create conflict with the presence of international businesses or corporate headquarters, in fact many of the local businesses could benefit from a greater residential presence/community, especially when you consider the current rising levels of transport costs which are unlikely to improve in the years ahead (not just a short-term issue).</p> <p>Stevenage Borough Council Response:</p> <p><i>The Article 4 Direction is not a ban on changes of use to residential; it is a requirement that such changes of use must have planning permission from the Council.</i></p> <p><i>The Council fully appreciates the demand for housing and has allowed for significant levels of housing growth to meet objectively assessed housing need, in the Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011–2031 as well as the Housing Land Supply Position Statement and Housing Delivery Test Action Plan, all available on the Council website.</i></p>

Stevenage Revised Article 4 Directions: Consultation 20 July – 17 August 2022
Summary of Consultation Comments and Council Responses **APPENDIX C**

ID	Name	Responses
		<p><i>The Stevenage Borough Local Plan already identifies sufficient sites to meet the Borough’s housing needs within the plan period, in sites it considers are suitable and sustainable for residential. As such, allowing these unrestricted changes of use to take place could upset the balance between homes and jobs.</i></p> <p><i>The Local Plan also identifies the Gunnels Wood and Pin Green Employment Areas as significant employment areas in the town and where offices and light industrial uses, for example, as well as important industries to the town and wider region, are clustered. Residential uses are still permitted in this area, outside of the designated protected sites, as long as they conform with policies of the Local Plan.</i></p> <p><i>We will also take your views into consideration when the Council conducts a Review of the Local Plan, for which work is scheduled to commence in Autumn 2022.</i></p> <p><i>If we were to leave our existing Article 4 Directions to expire and therefore cease to exist, the consequences for Stevenage would potentially include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• A risk of creating towns that lack in local shops, facilities and services;</i> <i>• An increased need for longer journeys, contrary to the objectives of sustainable development and the aspirations of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan; and</i> <i>• Large scale units such as supermarkets or office blocks could be converted to residential use, without securing Section 106 contributions and therefore more affordable homes. This would mean the Local Plan targets for affordable housing not being met as well as loss of important revenue to reinvest in Stevenage.</i>
3	Anonymous	<p>Comment:</p> <p>The area is no longer suitable for use as an industrial area. The parking facilities are woefully inadequate. The road infrastructure cannot cope with deliveries by articulated lorries.</p>

Stevenage Revised Article 4 Directions: Consultation 20 July – 17 August 2022
Summary of Consultation Comments and Council Responses **APPENDIX C**

ID	Name	Responses
		<p>The units are falling apart, they are nearly 50 years old where we are and despite asking for a new roof we have been ignored. We feel the best thing for these units in Wedgwood Gate is for them to be knocked down and made into residential areas. You can't stop progress.</p> <p>Stevenage Borough Council Response:</p> <p><i>The Article 4 Direction is not a ban on changes of use to residential; it is a requirement that such changes of use must have planning permission from the Council.</i></p> <p><i>The Council fully appreciates the demand for housing and has allowed for significant levels of housing growth to meet objectively assessed housing need, in the Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011–2031.</i></p> <p><i>By protecting key office and light industrial sites, there will be scope and opportunity to consider maintenance and improvement of those sites being protected. The Council will take these comments into consideration when the Council conducts a Review of the Local Plan, for which work is scheduled to commence in Autumn 2022.</i></p> <p><i>The Council is considering a review of its Parking Strategy, with further details to emerge in due course.</i></p>
4	Anonymous	<p>Comment:</p> <p>Affecting local businesses looking to relocate into the area. Which in turn creates employment shortages.</p> <p>Stevenage Borough Council Response:</p> <p><i>Comments noted. By protecting key office and light industrial sites in the town, this will aim to attract new businesses seeking to locate in the area of wider region and therefore further employment opportunities ahead.</i></p> <p><i>The Local Plan identifies the Gunnels Wood and Pin Green Employment Areas as significant employment areas in the town and where offices and light industrial uses, for example, as well as important industries to the town and wider region, are clustered and the benefits of clustering and agglomeration can be enjoyed, in line with the wider regeneration plan for the Town Centre and Station Gateway ahead.</i></p>

Stevenage Revised Article 4 Directions: Consultation 20 July – 17 August 2022
Summary of Consultation Comments and Council Responses **APPENDIX C**

ID	Name	Responses
		<p><i>The amenity of residents of these new homes would likely be affected by the issues that arise from employment uses such as noise, lighting, HGV access and adverse visual impacts. Complaints could lead to businesses being subject to tighter environmental or operational, thus making the Employment Areas a less attractive option for existing and new occupiers, potentially resulting in a domino effect of businesses vacating the area.</i></p> <p><i>If we were to leave our existing Article 4 Directions to expire and therefore cease to exist, the consequences for Stevenage would potentially include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A risk of creating towns that lack in local shops, facilities and services;</i> • <i>An increased need for longer journeys, contrary to the objectives of sustainable development and the aspirations of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan; and</i> • <i>Large scale units such as supermarkets or office blocks could be converted to residential use, without securing Section 106 contributions and therefore more affordable homes. This would mean the Local Plan targets for affordable housing not being met as well as loss of important revenue to reinvest in Stevenage.</i>

Stevenage Revised Article 4 Directions: Consultation 20 July – 17 August 2022

Summary of Consultation Comments and Council Responses APPENDIX C

Consultation on two Article 4 Directions

Posted on 21 Jul 2022

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We are consulting on two Article 4 Directions that are being reviewed.

We are proposing to implement two revised Article 4 Directions which will remove permitted development rights regarding change of use from office to residential use, and from light industrial to residential use.

We are identifying specific properties that are currently operating as a Use Class E(g)(i) (offices) or E(g)(iii) (light industrial) under the Use Classes Order September 2020, in order to apply the Article 4 Directions to the smallest possible area.

[Information about Article 4 Directions](#)

Implementing an Article 4 Direction is a three-stage process:

- The Direction is made;
- Consultation is undertaken for 28 days;
- The Direction is confirmed.



You can view the Notices of Direction and the revised Article 4 Directions by downloading the documents below.

- [Appendix E - Notice of Direction Light Industrial to Residential - PDF \(935.4 KB\)](#) 
- [Appendix F - Notice of Direction Offices to Residential - PDF \(278.9 KB\)](#) 
- [Appendix C - Article 4 Direction Light Industrial E\(g\)\(iii\) to Residential \(C3\) - PDF \(279.4 KB\)](#) 
- [Appendix D - Article 4 Direction Office E\(g\)\(i\) to Residential \(C3\) - PDF \(285.9 KB\)](#) 
- [Article 4 Directions – List of Consultation Sites - PDF \(494.2 KB\)](#) 

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The revised Article 4 Direction relating to change of use from light industrial to residential would replace the existing Article 4 Direction. The revised Article 4 Direction relating to change of use from office to residential would replace the existing Article 4 Direction. If confirmed, the revised Article 4 Directions would cover individual buildings in the Employment Areas of Gunnels Wood and Pin Green.

Public consultation will begin on 20 July 2022 and will run for 28 days until 17 August 2022.

[Give us your feedback on the Article 4 Directions review](#) 

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Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 1995

Town and County Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) Order 2015

Notice of Direction without immediate effect made under Article 4 (1) to which paragraph 1 of Schedule 3 applies

Stevenage Borough Council (“the Borough Council”) has made a Direction under Article 4(1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, as amended (“the General Permitted Development Order”).

The Direction relates to development comprising the change of use of a building from a use falling within Class E(g)(iii) (light industrial) of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended, to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of that Order and removes permitted development rights under Class PA Part 3 to Schedule 2 of the General Permitted Development Order for this type of development from the date when the Direction comes into force.

The Article 4 Direction applies to the 12 sites within Pin Green Employment Area, and 42 individual sites in Gunnels Wood Employment Area as shown edged and hatched red on the plans attached to the Direction. A copy of the Direction, including a map defining the areas covered, can be viewed at the Stevenage Borough Council Offices in Danestrete, Stevenage Central Library at Southgate and the Old Town Library at 38 High Street or on the Council’s website at www.stevenage.gov.uk/.

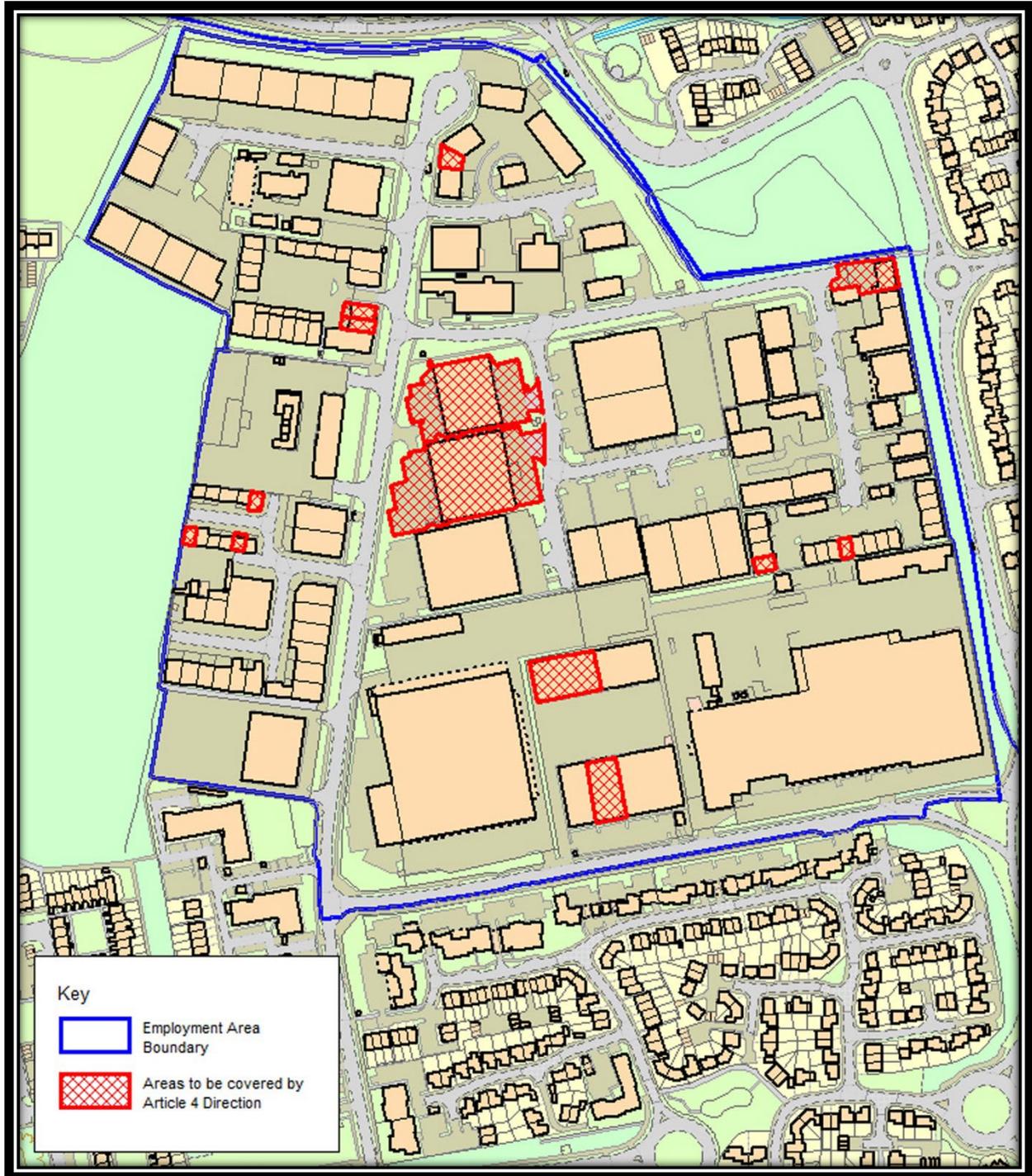
Representations concerning the Article 4 Direction may be made from 20 July 2022 to 17 August 2022, via <https://forms.office.com/r/f43GmYRR6X>, by email to planningpolicy@stevenage.gov.uk or by post to Planning Policy Team, Stevenage Borough Council, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 1HN.

The Article 4 Direction will come into force, subject to confirmation by the Borough Council, on the 1 October 2022, once the Direction is confirmed.

Matt Partridge
Chief Executive

Dated 12 July 2022

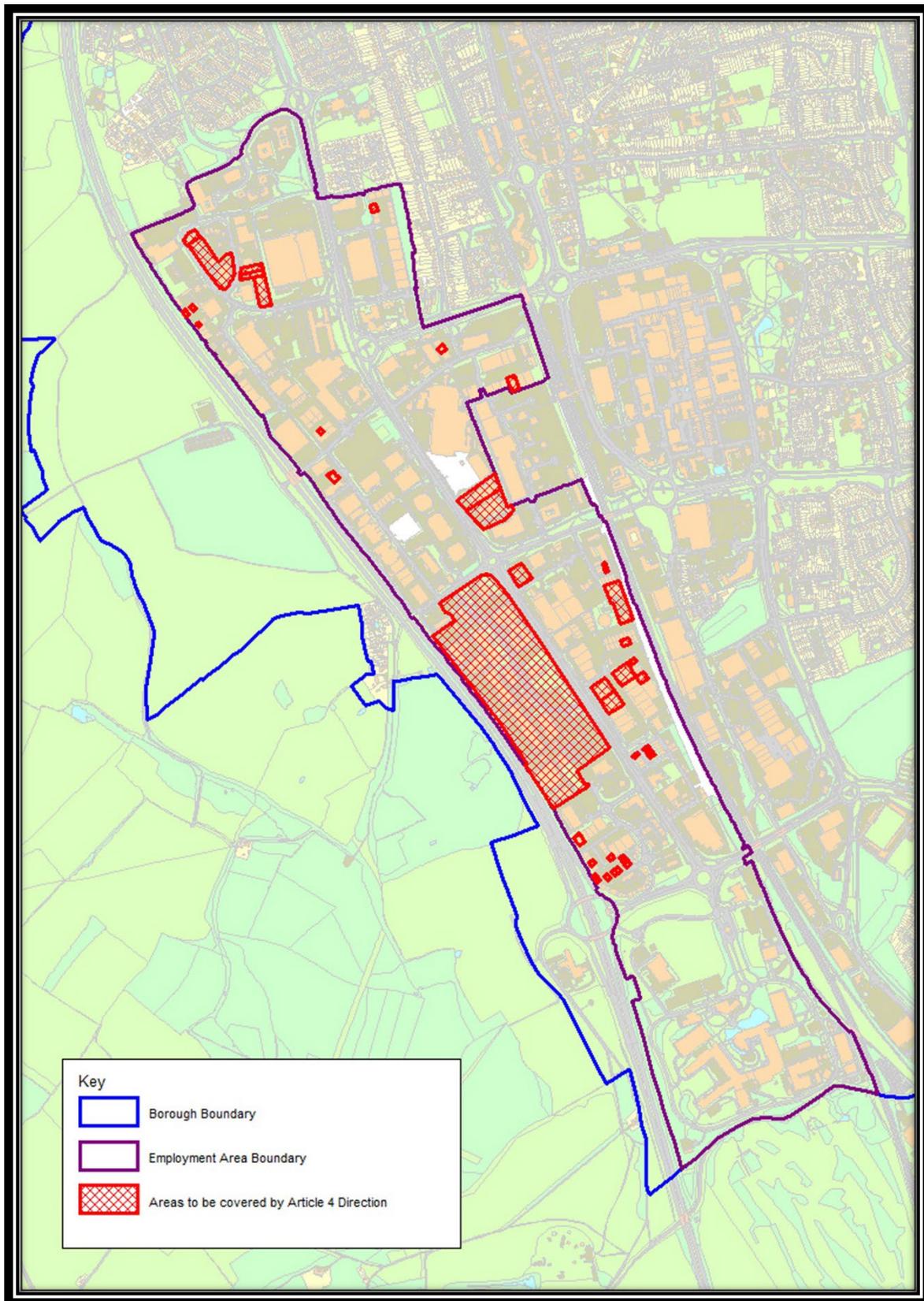
Pin Green Employment Area



Address	Use Class
Unit 28, Wedgewood Way, Stevenage, SG1 4QT	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit 29, Wedgewood Way, Stevenage, SG1 4QT	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit 17, Wedgewood Gate Industrial Estate, Wedgewood Way, Stevenage SG1 4SU	E(g)(iii) industrial processes

Address	Use Class
Unit 21, Wedgewood Gate Industrial Estate, Wedgewood Way, Stevenage SG1 4SU	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit 25, Wedgewood Gate Industrial Estate, Wedgewood Way, Stevenage SG1 4SU	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit 3, Wedgewood Court, Wedgewood Way, Stevenage SG1 4QR	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit 11, Parsons Green Estate, Boulton Road, Stevenage SG1 4QG	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit 15, Parsons Green Estate, Boulton Road, Stevenage SG1 4QG	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit 22, Boulton Road, Stevenage SG1 4QG	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit 9-10 Eastman Way, Stevenage SG1 4QT	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit 2 Cartwright Road, Stevenage SG1 4QJ	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit 5-6 Cartwright Road, Stevenage SG1 4QJ	E(g)(iii) industrial processes

Gunnels Wood Employment Area



Address	Use Class
Unit 5 Leyden Road, Stevenage SG1 2BW	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit 6 Leyden Road, Stevenage SG1 2BW	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit 8 Leyden Road, Stevenage SG1 2BW	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit 5 Leyden Road, Stevenage SG1 2BW	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit 9 Leyden Road, Stevenage SG1 2BW	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
MBDA, Gunnels Wood Road, Stevenage SG1 2DA	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Astrium, Gunnels Wood Road, Stevenage SG1 2BH	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Sanders Building, Gunnels Wood Road, Stevenage SG1 2BH	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Gunnels Wood Road Building, Gunnels Wood Road, Stevenage SG1 2BH	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit N-O Gunnels Wood Park, Gunnels Wood Road, Stevenage SG1 2BH	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit 1-2 Gunnels Wood Park, Gunnels Wood Road, Stevenage SG1 2BH	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit 3-4 Gunnels Wood Park, Gunnels Wood Road, Stevenage SG1 2BH	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit 8-9 Gunnels Wood Park, Gunnels Wood Road, Stevenage SG1 2BH	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit 16-17 Gunnels Wood Park, Gunnels Wood Road, Stevenage SG1 2BH	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit 21 Gunnels Wood Park, Gunnels Wood Road, Stevenage SG1 2BH	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Glaxo Smith Kline, Gunnels Wood Road, Stevenage SG1 2BH	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit B, Gateway 1000, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FP	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit C, Gateway 1000, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FP	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit D, Gateway 1000, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FP	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit F, Gateway 1000, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FP	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit G, Gateway 1000, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FP	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit H, Gateway 1000, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FP	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit J, Gateway 1000, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FP	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit K, Gateway 1000, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FP	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit 7, The IO Centre, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2BD	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit 9, The IO Centre, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2BD	E(g)(iii) industrial processes

Address	Use Class
Unit 12, The IO Centre, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2BD	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Balbir House, Vishkarma Park, Norton Green Road, Stevenage, SG1 2LP	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit 3, Modular Business Park, Norton Green Road, Stevenage, SG1 2FZ	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Phosphor Technology Ltd Site, Norton Green Road, Stevenage, SG1 2FZ	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit 2, Caxton Place, Caxton Way, Stevenage SG1 2UG	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit 4, Bowmans Trading Estate, Bessemer Drive, Stevenage SG1 2DL	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit B, Argyle Gate, Argyle Way, Stevenage SG1 2AD	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit 8, Fulton Close, Stevenage SG1 2AF	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit 6 Hyatt Trading Estate, Babbage Road, Stevenage SG1 2EQ	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit 9 Hyatt Trading Estate, Babbage Road, Stevenage SG1 2EQ	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit 11 Hyatt Trading Estate, Babbage Road, Stevenage SG1 2EQ	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Alchemy Metals Ltd Site, Cavendish Road, Stevenage SG1 2EU	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Kalstan Engineering Ltd Site, Cavendish Road, Stevenage SG1 2ET	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Stevenage Glass Company Site, Cavendish Road, Stevenage SG1 2EU	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
National Pile Croppers Site, Crompton Road, Stevenage SG1 2EE	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Stanley J Murphy Site, Crompton Road, Stevenage SG1 2EE	E(g)(iii) industrial processes
Unit 3, The Orbital Centre, Cockerell Close, Stevenage SG1 2NB	E(g)(iii) industrial processes



Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 1995

Town and County Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) Order 2015

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The Article 4 Direction applies to the 7 individual sites within Pin Green Employment Area, and 66 individual sites in Gunnels Wood Employment Area as show edged and hatched red on the plans attached to the Direction. A copy of the Direction, including a map defining the areas covered, can be viewed at the Stevenage Borough Council Offices in Danestrete, Stevenage Central Library at Southgate and the Old Town Library at 38 High Street or on the Council’s website at www.stevenage.gov.uk/.

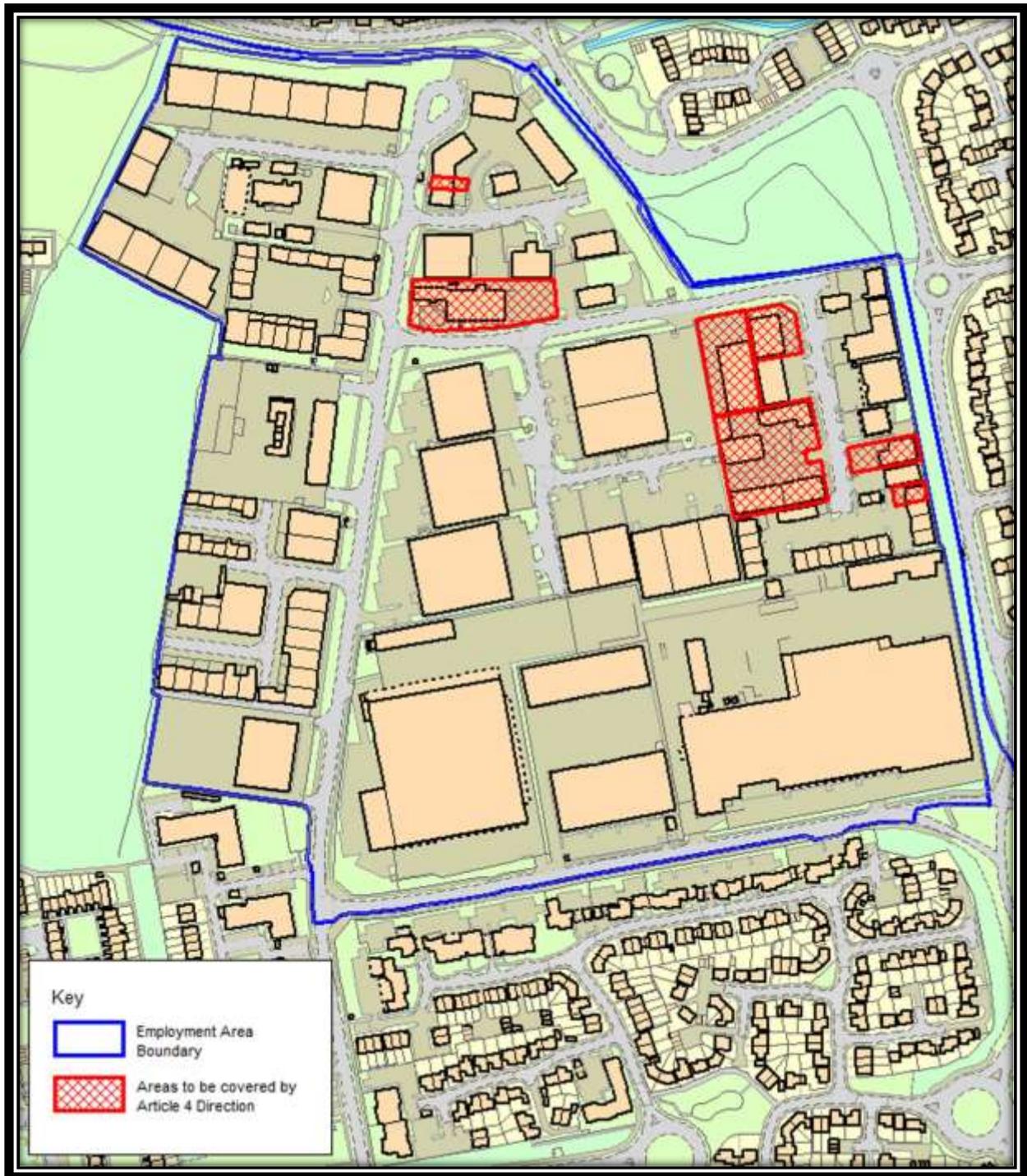
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Chief Executive

Dated 12 July 2022

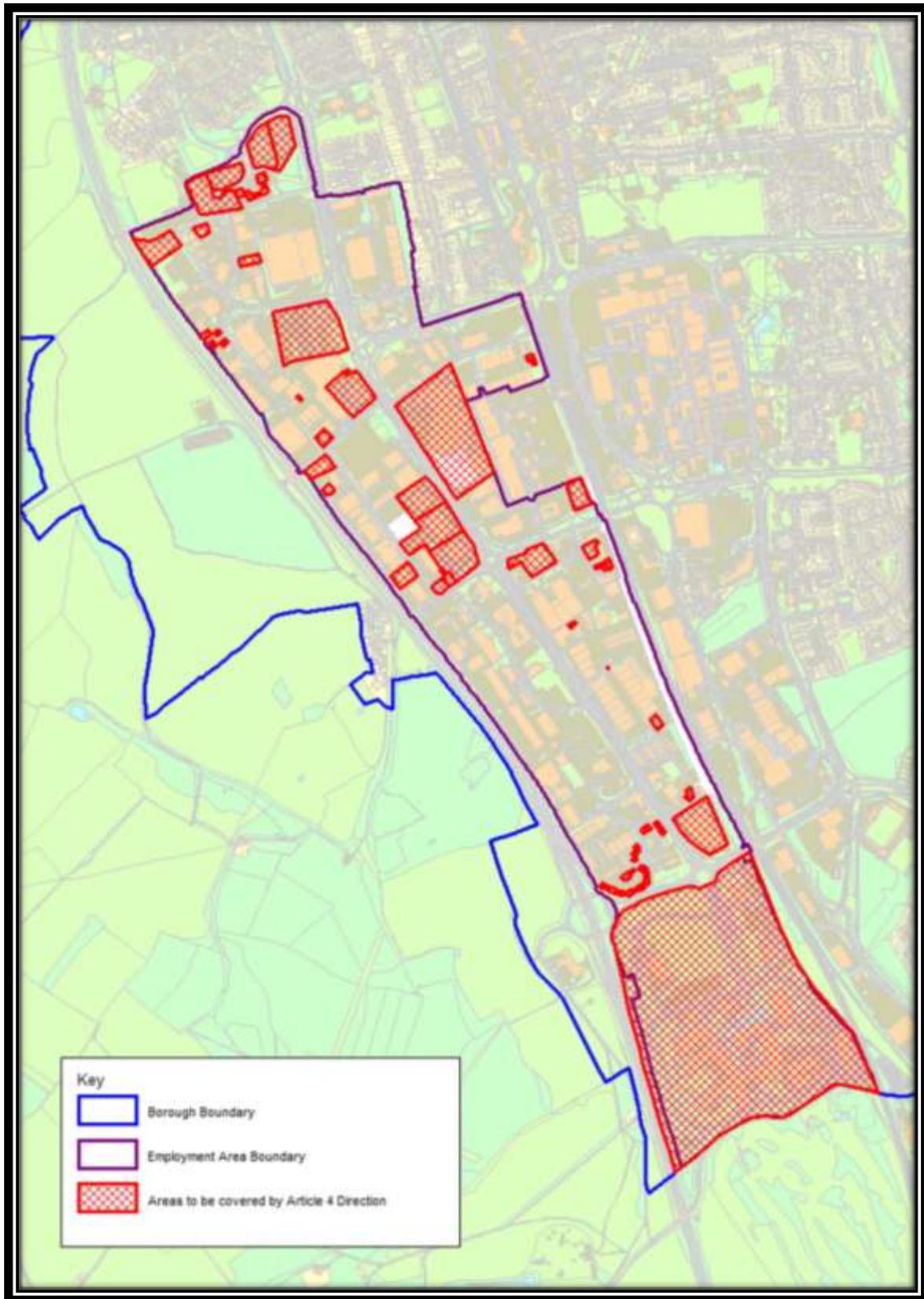
Pin Green Employment Area



Address	Use Class
Unit 2, Wedgewood Court, Wedgewood Way, Stevenage SG1 4QR	E(g)(i) Offices
3 Parsons Green Estate, Boulton Road, Stevenage SG1 4QG	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 1, Boulton Road, Stevenage SG1 4QX	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 21 Boulton Road, Stevenage SG1 4QL	E(g)(i) Offices
Aston House, Boulton Road, Stevenage SG1 4QX	E(g)(i) Offices

Address	Use Class
Britannia House, Boulton Road, Stevenage SG1 4QX	E(g)(i) Offices
Niall House, Boulton Road, Stevenage SG1 4QX	E(g)(i) Offices

Gunnels Wood Employment Area



Address	Use Class
Cagex House, Leyden Road, Stevenage SG1 2BP	E(g)(i) Offices
MDBA Site, Gunnels Wood Road, Stevenage, SG1 2DA	E(g)(i) Offices
Robertson House, Gunnels Wood Road, Stevenage SG1 2FQ	E(g)(i) Offices
Farnham House, Gunnels Wood Road, Stevenage SG1 2FQ	E(g)(i) Offices
Abel Smith House, Gunnels Wood Road, Stevenage SG1 2FQ	E(g)(i) Offices
Airbus Site, Gunnels Wood Road, Stevenage, SG1 2AS	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 4, Access Business Park, Gunnels Wood Road, Stevenage SG1 2GR	E(g)(i) Offices
Park Managers Office, Gunnels Wood Park, Gunnels Wood Road, Stevenage SG1 2BH	E(g)(i) Offices
Redemption House Gunnels Wood Park, Gunnels Wood Road, Stevenage SG1 2TA	E(g)(i) Offices
Glaxo SmithKline Site, Gunnels Wood Road, Stevenage SG1 2BH	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 1, Gateway 1000, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FP	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 2, Gateway 1000, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FP	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 3, Gateway 1000, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FP	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 4, Gateway 1000, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FP	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 5, Gateway 1000, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FP	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 6, Gateway 1000, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FP	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 7, Gateway 1000, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FP	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 8, Gateway 1000, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FP	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 9, Gateway 1000, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FP	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 10, Gateway 1000, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FP	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 11, Gateway 1000, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FP	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 12, Gateway 1000, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FP	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 13, Gateway 1000, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FP	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 14, Gateway 1000, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FP	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 15, Gateway 1000, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FP	E(g)(i) Offices

Address	Use Class
Unit 16, Gateway 1000, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FP	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 17, Gateway 1000, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FP	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 18, Gateway 1000, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FP	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 2, Arlington Court, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FS	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 3, Arlington Court, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FS	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 4, Arlington Court, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FS	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 7, Arlington Court, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FS	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 8, Arlington Court, Arlington Business Park, Whittle Way, Stevenage SG1 2FS	E(g)(i) Offices
Sterling Court, Norton Green Road, Stevenage SG1 2FZ	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 2, Modular Business Park, Norton Green Road, Stevenage SG1 2FZ	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 4, Modular Business Park, Norton Green Road, Stevenage SG1 2FZ	E(g)(i) Offices
Six Hills Court, Norton Green Road, Stevenage SG1 2FZ	E(g)(i) Offices
Solar House, Kings Way, Stevenage SG1 2UA	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 2, Caxton Way, Stevenage SG1 2DF	E(g)(i) Offices
Cambridge House, Campus 6, Caxton Way, Stevenage, SG1 2XD	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 4, Caxton Place, Caxton Way, Stevenage, SG1 2UG	E(g)(i) Offices
Caxton Point Business Centre, Caxton Point, Caxton Way, Stevenage SG1 2XU	E(g)(i) Offices
EMS House, Unit 1 Bowmans Trading Estate, Bessemer Drive, Stevenage SG1 2DL	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 17, Bowmans Trading Estate, Bessemer Drive, Stevenage SG1 2DL	E(g)(i) Offices
Business and Technology Centre, Bessemer Drive, Stevenage SG1 2DX	E(g)(i) Offices
Haden House, Argle Way, Stevenage SG1 2AD	E(g)(i) Offices
1 Viewpoint, Babbage Road, Stevenage SG1 2EQ	E(g)(i) Offices
2 Viewpoint, Babbage Road, Stevenage SG1 2EQ	E(g)(i) Offices
3 Viewpoint, Babbage Road, Stevenage SG1 2EQ	E(g)(i) Offices
4 Viewpoint, Babbage Road, Stevenage SG1 2EQ	E(g)(i) Offices
5 Viewpoint, Babbage Road, Stevenage SG1 2EQ	E(g)(i) Offices
6 Viewpoint, Babbage Road, Stevenage SG1 2EQ	E(g)(i) Offices
7 Viewpoint, Babbage Road, Stevenage SG1 2EQ	E(g)(i) Offices

Address	Use Class
8 Viewpoint, Babbage Road, Stevenage SG1 2EQ	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 1, Hyatt Trading Estate, Babbage Road, Stevenage SG1 2EQ	E(g)(i) Offices
Fujitsu Site, Cavendish Road, Stevenage SG1 2DY	E(g)(i) Offices
Stevenage Borough Council Depot Site, Cavendish Road, Stevenage SG1 2ET	E(g)(i) Offices
Solutions House, Crompton Road, Stevenage SG1 2EE	E(g)(i) Offices
Unit 39, Crompton Road, Stevenage SG1 2EE	E(g)(i) Offices
Avnet House, Rutherford Close, Stevenage SG1 2EF	E(g)(i) Offices
Bedford House, Rutherford Close, Stevenage SG1 2EF	E(g)(i) Offices
Essex House, Rutherford Close, Stevenage SG1 2EF	E(g)(i) Offices
Middlesex House, Rutherford Close, Stevenage SG1 2EF	E(g)(i) Offices
Elopak House, Rutherford Close, Stevenage SG1 2EF	E(g)(i) Offices
Medway Court, Rutherford Close, Stevenage SG1 2EF	E(g)(i) Offices
Wiltron House, Rutherford Close, Stevenage SG1 2EF	E(g)(i) Offices

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PUBLIC NOTICES

GOODS VEHICLE OPERATOR'S LICENCE

Ben Smith of 173 Station Road Lower Stondon Henlow Beds SG16 6JQ, is applying for a licence to use Woodview Lodge Hitchin Road Avelasey Herts SG15 8SE as an operating centre for 1 goods vehicle and 0 trailers. Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at **Hillcrest House 386 Harehills Lane Leeds LS9 6NF** stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's Office.



Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 1995 Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) Order 2015

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Matt Partridge
Chief Executive

Dated 20th July 2022

Legal and Public Notices



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Chief Executive

Dated 20th July 2022



ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 - SECTION 4(1) AND 14(1)(a) AND (c), (4) AND (7) THE A1 TRUNK ROAD (STOTFOLD, HERTFORDSHIRE TO WOTHORPE, CITY OF PETERBOROUGH) (TEMPORARY RESTRICTION AND PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) ORDER 2022

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that National Highways Limited(a) has made an Order on the A1 Trunk Road in the Counties of Hertfordshire, Central Bedfordshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and the City of Peterborough, to allow maintenance works to be carried out in safety.

The works are expected to take place commencing on or after 1 August 2022 and be completed by 23 December 2022.

The effect of the Order will be to:

- authorise the overnight closure (19.00 – 07.00) of the A1 between Stotfold and Wothorpe;
- authorise the closure of:

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**Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)
(England) Order 1995**

**Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)
(Amendment) (England) Order 2015**

**Notice of Direction without immediate effect made under Article 4
(1) to which paragraph 1 of Schedule 3 applies**

Stevenage Borough Council ("the Borough Council") has made a Direction under Article 4(1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, as amended ("the General Permitted Development Order").

The Direction relates to development comprising the change of use of a building from a use falling within Class E(g)(iii) (light industrial) of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended, to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of that Order and removes permitted development rights under Class PA Part 3 to Schedule 2 of the General Permitted Development Order for this type of development from the date when the Direction comes into force.

The Article 4 Direction applies to the 12 sites within Pin Green Employment Area, and 42 individual sites in Gunneis Wood Employment Area as shown edged and hatched red on the plans attached to the Direction. A copy of the Direction, including a map defining the areas covered, can be viewed at the Stevenage Borough Council Offices in Danestrete, Stevenage Central Library at Southgate and the Old Town Library at 38 High Street or on the Council's website at www.stevenage.gov.uk/.

Representations concerning the Article 4 Direction may be made from 20 July 2022 to 17 August 2022, via <https://forms.office.com/r/f43GmYRR6X>, by email to planningpolicy@stevenage.gov.uk or by post to Planning Policy Team, Stevenage Borough Council, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 1HN.

The Article 4 Direction will come into force, subject to confirmation by the Borough Council, on the 1 October 2022, once the Direction is confirmed.

Matt Partridge
Chief Executive

Dated 19 July 2022

**Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)
(England) Order 1995**

**Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)
(Amendment) (England) Order 2015**

**Notice of Direction without immediate effect made under Article 4
(1) to which paragraph 1 of Schedule 3 applies**

Stevenage Borough Council ("the Borough Council") has made a Direction under Article 4(1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, as amended ("the General Permitted Development Order").

The Direction relates to development comprising the change of use of a building from a use falling within Class E(g)(i) (offices) of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as amended, to a use falling within Class C3 (dwellinghouses) of that Order and removes permitted development rights under Class O Part 3 to Schedule 2 of the General Permitted Development Order for this type of development from the date when the Direction comes into force.

The Article 4 Direction applies to the 7 individual sites within Pin Green Employment Area, and 66 individual sites in Gunneis Wood Employment Area as show edged and hatched red on the plans attached to the Direction. A copy of the Direction, including a map defining the areas covered, can be viewed at the Stevenage Borough Council Offices in Danestrete, Stevenage Central Library at Southgate and the Old Town Library at 38 High Street or on the Council's website at www.stevenage.gov.uk/.

Representations concerning the Article 4 Direction may be made from 20 July 2022 to 17 August 2022, via <https://forms.office.com/r/f43GmYRR6X>, by email to planningpolicy@stevenage.gov.uk or by post to Planning Policy Team, Stevenage Borough Council, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 1HN.

The Article 4 Direction will come into force, subject to confirmation by the Borough Council, on the 1 October 2022, once the Direction is confirmed.

Matt Partridge
Chief Executive

Dated 19 July 2022

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Planning and Regulation

Head of Planning and Regulation: Zayd Al-Jawad

APPENDIX H

Your Ref: Article 4
Contact: Deborah Coates
Direct Line: 01438 242280
E-mail:
planningpolicy@stevenage.gov.uk

Date: 20 July 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

Public consultation: Article 4 Direction relating to conversion of Class E(g)(i) (office) and Class E(g)(iii) (light industrial) to Class C3 (dwelling house)

We would like you to have your say on a public consultation that begins today, 20 July 2022, about whether we should ask office and light industrial developers to apply for planning permission if they want to turn their employment premises into residential housing.

The consultation relates to the employment sites within Gunnels Wood and Pin Green Employment Areas that were previously subject to an Article 4 Direction which removed permitted development rights to convert offices and light industrial units to residential housing in Gunnels Wood and Pin Green. Because the Government have updated the Use Class Order, the old Article 4 Direction has become void and the Council has reviewed its approach and whilst we still believe that it is important to protect the employment areas from residential development, we think we can take a more targeted approach.

What will the Article 4 Direction do?

Currently offices and light industrial units can be converted into residential housing without the need for planning permission; this is known as permitted development. This means the council has no power to ensure sufficient facilities are provided for the increased number of residents, or that residents don't impact on employment and vice versa.

An Article 4 Direction would take away these permitted development rights from the office and light industrial units and require a planning application to be submitted for all conversions of such buildings to residential housing.

Will this stop office and light industrial conversions to residential housing taking place?

No. An Article 4 Direction would only require planning permission to be sought; it would not automatically allow the Council to refuse office and/or light industrial units

conversion applications without the appropriate consideration that we give every planning application

How can I have my say?

Formal notification of the Direction, including a map defining the area covered, is enclosed. A copy of the Direction can also be viewed at:

- Stevenage Borough Council Offices in Danestrete;
- Stevenage Central Library at Southgate;
- Old Town Library at 38 High Street; and
- Council's website at www.stevenage.gov.uk/.

Any view on the Article 4 Direction may be made from 20 July 2022 until 17 August 2022, via:

- our consultation portal at <https://forms.office.com/r/f43GmYRR6X>;
- by email to planningpolicy@stevenage.gov.uk; or
- by post to Planning Policy Team, Stevenage Borough Council, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 1HN.

What happens next?

Any views will be used to inform Council's decision as to whether to confirm the Direction. If confirmed, the Article 4 Direction would come into force on 01 October 2022.

If you have any questions regarding this consultation please contact the Planning Policy team using the details above.

Yours faithfully



Deborah Coates
Principal Planning Officer
Stevenage Borough Council

Planning and Engineering

Head of Planning and Engineering: Zayd Al-Jawad

APPENDIX I

The Rt. Hon. Greg Clark MP
Secretary of State
DLUHC

Your Ref: Article 4 Directions
Contact: Planning Policy
Direct Line: 01438 242158
E-mail: planningpolicy@stevenage.gov.uk

Date: 20 July 2022

Dear Greg Clark MP

Notice of Article 4 Directions: Gunnels Wood and Pin Green

Stevenage Borough Council has made a number of Article 4 Directions under Article 4(1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, as amended.

The Directions seek to protect existing employment uses within the Gunnels Wood and Pin Green Employment Areas. They would remove permitted development rights currently in place, or due to come into force, relating to the following changes of uses:

- E(g)(i) (offices) to C3 (dwellinghouses)
- E(g)(iii) (light industrial) to C3 (dwellinghouses)

Formal notifications of the Directions, including maps detailing the areas covered by each, and copies of the Article 4 Directions are enclosed.

Representations concerning the Article 4 Directions may be made from 20 July until 17 August 2022, via our <https://forms.office.com/r/f43GmYRR6X>. Responses can also be sent to the Planning Policy Team via email or post using the contact details at the top of this letter.

Please contact the Planning Policy team using the details above if you have any questions regarding these Directions.

Yours faithfully

Deborah Coates
Principal Planning Officer

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Planning and Engineering

Head of Planning and Engineering: Zayd Al-Jawad

APPENDIX J

Chief Executive
Hertfordshire County Council

Your Ref: Article 4 Directions
Contact: Planning Policy
Direct Line: 01438 242158
E-mail: planningpolicy@stevenage.gov.uk

Date: 20 July 2022

Dear

Notice of Article 4 Directions: Gunnels Wood and Pin Green

Stevenage Borough Council has made a number of Article 4 Directions under Article 4(1) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015, as amended.

The Directions seek to protect existing employment uses within the Gunnels Wood and Pin Green Employment Areas. They would remove permitted development rights due to come into force relating to the following changes of uses:

- E(g)(i) (offices) to C3 (dwellinghouses)
- E(g)(iii) (light industrial) to C3 (dwellinghouses)

Formal notifications of the Directions, including maps detailing the areas covered by each, and copies of the Article 4 Directions are enclosed.

Representations concerning the Article 4 Directions may be made from 20 July until 17 August 2022, via our <https://forms.office.com/r/f43GmYRR6X>. Responses can also be sent to the Planning Policy Team via email or post using the contact details at the top of this letter.

Please contact the Planning Policy team using the details above if you have any questions regarding these Directions.

Yours faithfully

Deborah Coates
Principal Planning Officer

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Meeting Executive
Portfolio Area All
Date 14 September 2022



CORPORATE PERFORMANCE QUARTER ONE 2022/23

KEY DECISION

Authors Ben Threadgold
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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To highlight the Council's performance across key priorities and themes for quarter one 2022/23, and provide an update on the current strategic risks.
- 1.2 For Members information, a presentation will be provided at the Executive meeting which will cover updates in relation to delivery against FTFC Cooperative Corporate Plan Priorities and the key themes emerging from the quarter 1 performance data.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the delivery of priorities which form the Future Town, Future Council Programme (Appendix A) and service performance across the key themes for quarter one 2022/23 (Appendix C), be noted.
- 2.2 That the strategic risk updates, and new emerging risks, be noted.
- 2.3 That the performance challenges in relation to housing voids, repairs and customer service are noted, and the planned measures to improve performance are endorsed.
- 2.4 That the Executive Action Tracker at Appendix D be noted.

3 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 This is the first quarter of reporting in 2022/23, and therefore the first against the new Corporate Performance Suite as agreed by Executive in July 2022.
- 3.2 Many of the programmes and key performance measures are a continuation from previous years. As such, we continue to build on a strong programme of activity under Future Town Future Council (FTFC), and a predominantly positive performance base. For more information please refer to the Quarter 4 Performance Report and the Annual Report (21/22) presented to Executive in July 2022.
- 3.3 In response to the introduction of the Social Housing Whitepaper and in preparation for the Social Housing Regulation Bill, the new Corporate Performance Suite for 22/23 includes several compliance measures in relation to council-owned housing stock. This reflects the changing policy framework for social housing as set by the Regulator of Social Housing, including new consumer standards and expectations of quality of service. It is therefore important that the Council reports regularly on progress with compliance, and takes any remedial action identified.
- 3.4 There are some areas where performance is not yet at the desired levels, specifically housing voids, repairs and customer service. Clear Improvement Plans are in place, which set out how the performance concerns are being addressed and activity monitored. The Improvement Plans are owned by the service and overseen by the relevant Portfolio Holder. The planned Performance Clinic sessions in September will consider progress in implementing these plans and their impact.
- 3.5 The Council continues to deliver a wide range of services in an increasingly challenging environment. The ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the significant reductions in funding from central Government, and the cost of living crisis have all put pressure on Council (and individual household) budgets.
- 3.6 The increases in inflation, utility, material and fuel costs have had an impact on service delivery, and industry and media reports indicate that this situation is likely to continue for some time. In response, work is being undertaken by the Council through the Stevenage Together Partnership and the Cost of Living Executive Member Working Group to formulate a clear plan for the

Town and for the Council that mitigates the impact on residents, businesses, council services and council employees.

- 3.7 The Council is committed to delivery of its priorities and its local services, to the benefit of local residents and businesses. This is challenging in a very competitive, employee-driven market and there is a risk that not being able to retain, attract and recruit the right people and right skills at all levels could impact on the Council's capacity to deliver all of its priorities as well as provide core services and implement new government legislation. The Council is, therefore, reviewing its recruitment and retention approaches to ensure it maintains the right capacity, skills, values and experience amongst staff at all levels.
- 3.8 For the first time this report includes a summary of the Strategic Risks identified and managed by the Council. The inclusion of risk is important in providing Executive oversight of impacts that might affect the Council's ability to achieve its priorities, and provides assurance by setting out the actions being taken to help mitigate potential impacts.
- 3.9 Risk will continue to be reported to the Audit Committee, which has responsibility for determining risk management policy and arrangements. Where dates allow, comments from the Audit Committee including any areas the committee wishes to highlight will be reported to the Executive for consideration.

4 QUARTER 1 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE

- 4.1 A summary of progress against the FTFC Programme is attached at Appendix A. For further information on the aims and objectives of the FTFC programme in 2022/23 please refer to the FTFC Plan on a Page (Appendix B).
- 4.2 In addition to tracking progress against the delivery of the FTFC Programme, performance across all Council services is monitored throughout the year to highlight achievements and identify areas for improvement.
- 4.3 The Council's services are organised into Business Units across three themes: Customer, Place and Transformation and Support. The structure is focused on delivering the right services, to the right standards, at the right time for the town's residents and businesses, using the most cost/resource effective delivery models.
- 4.4 The total number of measures by Red, Amber & Green (RAG) rating is shown in Figure 1 below. For the purposes of this report only commentary for Red Status measures is provided. The commentary for each measure can be seen under the respective theme section. The full set of current corporate performance measures results are attached at Appendix C.

Total number of measures reported	Meeting or exceeding target	Amber Status (within a manageable tolerance)	Red Status (urgent improvement action required)	Missing Data
63	38	4	9	12

Fig 1.

- 4.5 Of the indicators where data is missing, 5 relate to voids and 4 to repairs. An explanation of the reasons why this data cannot be provided this quarter is in paragraph 7.6.3 below.
- 4.6 Two of the indicators missing data relate to household waste collections which has a lag in reporting so will not be available until late September 2022 (please see paragraph 6.4).
- 4.7 The other indicator that cannot provide data this quarter relates to tenant satisfaction with Decent Homes works. Surveys are issued once works are completed, which began happening from August onwards. It is therefore anticipated that the indicator will be reported on from quarter 2 (see paragraph 7.4).

5 TRANSFORMATION AND SUPPORT THEME

Number of Measures Reported	Meeting or exceeding target	Amber Status (within a manageable tolerance)	Red Status (urgent improvement action required)	Missing Data
23	17	2	4	0

Fig 2.

- 5.1 The Transformation and Support Theme incorporates the following Business Units and Future Town Future Council Programmes:
- Corporate Services
 - Digital and Transformation
 - Finance and Estates
 - Making Your Money Count FTFC Programme

5.2 Further information on measures included in this theme can be found in Appendix C. Further detail on projects for Making Your Money Count can be found in Appendix A.

5.3 Highlights

5.3.1 Key FTFC highlights for Quarter 1 include:

- The Council's events brochure and filming offer have both launched. Between April and May 2022 seven filming enquiries were made, including

one for a BBC drama, and headline sponsors have been procured for events including Stevenage Day and the Pride of Stevenage Awards.

- The Council's financial outturn position has been confirmed and work is now focusing on the 2022/23 monitoring as well as early work on the 2023/24 budgets. Preparation of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) refresh is starting and will be presented to Executive in September 2022.
- In line with plans agreed as part of the 2022/23 budget setting process the transformation programme Phase 1 (Customer Services) is being progressed. Key changes will be introduced this financial year with the goal of improving the customer experience and delivering a budget saving. Highlights include:
 - An online bulky waste service was launched in May 2022, making it easier for people to arrange collections.
 - The customer services opening hours and advisor shift patterns have been amended to better align to the times that most people want and need to speak to an advisor.
 - Further process improvements include online garage lettings and key collection self-service, self-service scanning, and online repairs bookings.
 - Messaging and the Communication Plan has been drafted for the new Digital First phone options and this is due to go live in early quarter 2
- Detailed analysis work is underway to support the design of a Phase 2 programme (Service Delivery) for implementation in 2023/24. The programme will create a "Customer Hub" and four specialist teams (Localities, Advice and Support, Income & Debt, and Lettings & Bookings). A business case will be prepared for Executive in September 2022.

5.3.2 Key service performance highlights for Quarter 1 include:

- The number of calls to the Customer Service Centre that were resolved first time rose from 67% in Q4 to 73% in Q1
- The percentage of apprentices in post showed an improvement on last quarter and the Learning and Development team continue to have conversations with service managers to identify new apprentice opportunities
- The financial outturn position has been confirmed and work is now focusing on the 2022/23 monitoring as well as early work on the 2023/24 budgets.

5.4 Areas for Improvement

TRANSFORMATION & SUPPORT		Actual - Quarter 2 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2022/23 YTD	Target - Quarter 1 2022/23	Target - Quarter 2 2022/23
CompHRA1: % of housing service customer complaints responded to within deadline	Customer Focus	Not collected			57.93%	70.00%	74.00%
CSC12: Percentage of calls abandoned in the customer service centre	Customer Service Centre	35.10	33.80	35.50	39.80	15.00	15.00
Pe2: % of Agency Work assignments exceeding 12 weeks	Human Resources	61.22	49.20	54.00	63.00	50.00	50.00
Pe4a: Sickness Absence Rate for the Current Workforce (FTE)	Human Resources	7.03	9.17	10.63	11.07	8.00	8.00

Fig. 3

CompHRA1: % of housing service customer complaints responded to within deadline

5.4.1 The backlog of complaints from 2021/22 has impacted upon the Council's response to Quarter 1 complaints. To help address this, three Housing and Investment Strategic Complaints Managers have been recruited. Their role is to co-ordinate, investigate and respond to complaints. Since their recruitment the back-log of complaints has reduced which will be demonstrated when officers report on Quarter 2. The forecast for Quarter 2 is that the number of customer complaints responded to within deadline will improve by 10%.

5.4.2 The Housing Repairs team are also experiencing both an increased volume of complaints and a backlog to complaints work. A Strategic Complaints Manager for Repairs was recruited in August 2022 to help coordinate and manage responses to complaints. A plan is being implemented to reduce the volume of complaints received by the service, including the mobilisation of new fencing and guttering programmes, and the embedding of new Repairs Supervisors who are responsible for ensuring repairs are undertaken in an efficient, timely and effective way.

CSC12: Percentage of calls abandoned in the customer service centre

- 5.4.3 Customer Services aim to provide accessible and easy to use services which are available at a time and place which suits our customers. Increasingly, and in line with transformation principles agreed at Executive in August 2021, this means providing a greater range of services via our website.
- 5.4.4 Furthermore, when residents were asked to rank five ways the Council could maximise their budget as part of the 'Making your Money Count' programme, the most commonly chosen option for 1st place (41%) was reducing time and money spent on paperwork by interacting with more residents online.
- 5.4.5 The Council is making steady progress in creating online services, with nearly a quarter of requests for service now made online.
- 5.4.6 It remains a priority for the Council to be able to help those who don't have access to online services or who can't self-serve. The percentage of abandoned calls was an ongoing challenge in Q1 and contributory factors include a high turnover of staff, high levels of staff sickness and customers having more complex enquiries, particularly following the pandemic and more recently the cost of living crisis. In Q1 a set of new phone options went live in order to help prioritise calls for emergency and urgent issues, as well as signposting callers online for relevant services.
- 5.4.7 The service continues to run a rolling recruitment campaign to fill vacancies, and advertising has been updated and extended to increase the number of applicants. A new HR recruitment system is working well and making it much quicker to shortlist and arrange interviews.
- 5.4.8 Following the Quarter 4 performance presentation it was agreed that officers would seek to appoint a further 5 temporary Customer Services Officers to supplement the team and aid customers in transitioning to the existing and further online service options.
- 5.4.9 The coaching of Customer Service Advisers has focused on improving call handling, to unlock capacity and improve availability of advisers. This area has been prioritised because of the high staff turnover this year and the increase in recruitment and induction needed as a result.
- 5.4.10 Revised opening hours for the CSC came into effect on 4th April which will allow for more consistency of resource available a times people are most likely to want and need to speak to an advisor due to more overlapping shifts.
- 5.4.11 Early signs are that performance has improved during Q2 with the proportion of online transactions rising to 24% and call abandonment falling to circa 20%; however further time is needed in order to understand if this performance will be sustained.

Pe2: % of Agency Work assignments exceeding 12 weeks

- 5.4.12 A full review of the use of agency workers was presented to Executive in July 2021. This indicator focusses on the percentage of agency workers who remain with the council over 12 weeks as a percentage of the total agency

worker head count. The HR Business Partner will work with Assistant Directors to review individuals in this scenario for appropriateness during Quarter 2.

5.4.13 Of the agency workers in post during quarter 1, 63% of these have been in post longer than 12 weeks. The reasons for this vary from service to service, however following a review of those with over 12 week service it is known that the workers concerned are primarily located in areas where services are experiencing difficulties in recruiting to the roles on a permanent basis or where agency resource has been brought in to undertake a specific element of project work such as independent living covid testing roles. HR Business Partners continue to work with Assistant Directors to reduce this figure and a number of the agency assignments will cease during quarter 2.

Pe4a: Sickness Absence Rate for the Current Workforce (FTE)

5.4.14 Sickness absence rates have increased during quarter 1 of 2022/23 to 11.07 days per FTE, of which 33% represents short term absence and 67% related to long term absences (absence lasting over 21 days).

5.4.15 Of the short term absence, 37% of this can be attributed to Covid-19 related absence which increased significantly between April and June 2022 following the increased spread of the omicron variants across the UK. It is worth highlighting if the COVID related sickness was removed the Quarter 1 target would be met. The increase in long term sickness absence relates to the number of employees with complex and serious medical conditions, such as cancer.

5.4.16 HR Business Partners continue to work with Assistant Directors to support staff including the use of the Council’s employee assistance programme and signpost to relevant agencies where appropriate.

6 PLACE THEME

Number of Measures Reported	Meeting or exceeding target	Amber Status (within a manageable tolerance)	Red Status (urgent improvement action required)	Missing Data
28	16	2	4	6

Fig.4

6.1 The Place Theme incorporates the following Business Units and Future Town Future Council Programmes:

- Planning and Regulation
- Stevenage Direct Services
- Transforming Our Town FTFC Programme (Regeneration)
- More Social and Affordable Homes FTFC Programme (Housing Development)

6.2 Further information on measures included in this theme can be found in Appendix C and more detail on the projects for Transforming Our Town and More Social and Affordable Homes Programmes can be found in Appendix A.

6.3 Due to the interdependencies between missing Repairs and Housing & Investment void data, the commentary for the four 'Place Theme' repair measures missing data is included in the Customer Theme section of this report (para 7.6.3).

6.4 Performance data for the volume of residual household waste collected (NI191), and for the percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting (NI192), is reported from an external source and will not be available until late September 2022. It will be reported to Executive as part of the quarter 2 performance report.

6.5 Highlights

6.5.1 Key FTFC highlights for quarter 1 include:

- The demolition of site Plot K (Former Police Station and Towers Garages) has completed, and the site has been handed back to the Council. Plot A (Swingate House) demolition clearance works is also complete. The project team are working closely with development partner Mace to progress both sites
- The new Bus Interchange became operational from 26 June 2022 and work is underway to transform the vacant bus station into a large, multi-purpose events space for the community
- Work started on site at the Dunn Close scheme (27 social and affordable homes) this quarter. Work has also been ongoing to make improvements to the local woods that borders the site, including introducing a formal woodland walk for the local community.
- The second round of consultation for the Shephall View & Brent Court sites took place in early June, with a large proportion of the feedback being positive in relation to the designs
- Completions on the private sale elements of the Kenilworth Close scheme along Stirling Close continue, with 7 completions having now taken place. The affordable homes on Stirling close are due for handover shortly.
- Contractors for the multi-storey car park (MSCP) and cycle hub are on site and works are progressing well.

6.5.2 Key service performance highlights for quarter 1 include:

- Due to improved processes around garage repairs and asbestos surveys more garage stock was available to let this quarter. 320 Garage offers were made, a notable increase from the 288 offers during quarter 4
- New garage applications remain steady with an average of 61 applications received per month in quarter 1. The number of terminations has also increased but the council's ability to turn garages around quickly will be bolstered by the digitisation of the lettings process. This work is progressing, with digital signature options now being tested
- Eleven new customers signed up for trade waste, generating £10.5k commercial annual income

6.6 Areas for Improvement

PLACE		Actual – Quarter 2 2021/22 YTD	Actual – Quarter 3 2021/22 YTD	Actual – Quarter 4 2021/22 YTD	Actual – Quarter 1 2022/23 YTD	Target – Quarter 1 2022/23 (YTD)	Target Quarter 2 2022/23
HDD1e: Number of affordable homes delivered by the Council (current quarter)	Housing Development	6.00	3.00	5.00	7.00	19.00	50.00
BTC1a: New jobs created through Business Technology Centre	Planning & Regulation	16.00	20.00	35.00	6.00	18.00	18.00
BTC1b: New business start up in Business Technology Centre	Planning & Regulation	15.00	19.00	30.00	4.00	7.00	7.00
VED1: Percentage of	Investment	40.84%	48.54%	62.95%	87.85%	100%	100%

domestic dwellings with a valid EICR certificate

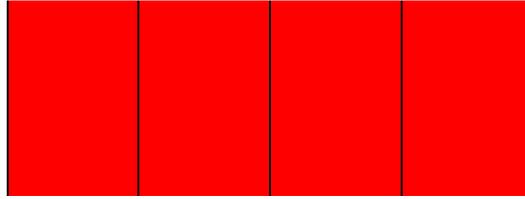


Fig. 5

HDD1e: Number of affordable homes delivered by the Council (current quarter)

6.6.1 Performance is below target due to delays in securing utility service connections. As a result of this the handover of the 6 units due to be delivered in July will now take place in September 2022.

BTC1a New jobs created through Business Technology Centre and BTC1b: New business start-up in Business Technology Centre

6.6.2 There has been a lot of activity at the Business & Technology Centre (BTC), with businesses moving-on due to the end of government contracts. Small business start-ups are also continuing to face a number of challenges including impacts such as rising energy costs and difficulties recruiting staff.

6.6.3 Wenta, which manages and promotes the BTC, understand the reasons why businesses are leaving and try to work with them to get them to stay where possible. Wenta have seen a reduction across all aspects of the start-up programmes they run in new jobs and business start-ups. However, the volume of enquiries for short-term, “survival” support has increased during August in a similar way to during the Covid-19 pandemic, demonstrating the impact of a difficult business environment.

6.6.4 In response, Wenta have increased their social media presence and updated their posts to reflect selling benefits to clients rather than just space, as well as providing regular promotion of the courses, webinars and advice sessions available through the BTC. Wenta are also targeting brokers to help fill empty units, diversifying space and length of tenancy, and reviewing pricing incentives to encourage take up. There has been an increase in the number of home-based businesses moving to the centre during quarter 2.

VED1: Percentage of dwellings with a valid EICR Electrical Certificate

6.6.5 A total of 976 EICR are now outstanding. The Council recently recruited an additional electrical contractor to assist with the outstanding work. The Council aims to have all of the remaining EICRs completed by end of October 2022.

7 CUSTOMER THEME

Number of Measures Reported	Meeting or exceeding target	Amber Status (within a manageable tolerance)	Red Status (urgent improvement action required)	Missing Data
12	5	0	1	6

Fig. 6

7.1 The Customer Theme incorporates the following Business Units and Future Town Future Council Programmes:

- Communities and Neighbourhoods
- Housing and Investment
- Co-operative Neighbourhoods FTFC Programme
- A Clean, Green, Safe and Thriving Town FTFC Programme

7.2 Further information on measures included in this theme can be found in Appendix C. Further detail on projects for Co-operative Neighbourhoods and Clean, Green, Safe and Thriving Town Programmes can be found in Appendix A.

7.3 Five of the indicators with missing data relate to voids, and an explanation for this is set out in paragraph 7.6.3 below.

7.4 Indicator DH1, Percentage of tenants satisfied with Decent Homes works, cannot be reported on this quarter. The Decent Homes programme is now fully on site with completed works coming through from August. Satisfaction surveys are being issued for all completed works and it is anticipated that a small number of returns will be reported at the end of quarter 2. It is anticipated that a greater number of returns will be reported during Q3 as the volume of completed works increases.

7.5 Highlights

7.5.1 Key FTFC highlights for Quarter 1 include:

- A successful funding application to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Proptech Engagement Fund has secured £125,000 towards the Co-operative Neighbourhoods programme. This will support digital engagement with communities and the roll out of digital Neighbourhood Newsletters across localities.
- The process to formally incorporate the Social Inclusion Partnership as a Multi-stakeholder Co-operative is underway. This would enable the partnership to become a funding vehicle to support the acquisition of funding to support the further development of the Community Wealth Building agenda in Stevenage.
- A successful funding bid from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) was awarded to support the Council's work to deter fly tipping. The funding enabled the ASB team to purchase 4 new

cameras as well as contribute towards promotional material for events and fly tipping posters and signs.

- The Survivors Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) service registered as a charity this quarter. “Friends of SADA” currently has three trustees and a patron who have been working hard to promote the work and services of SADA. Charity status enables SADA to accept donations for items and support, and to apply for funding and that it would struggle to access as a local authority. This includes funding for security devices for survivors’ properties, travel expenses and leisure activities for the families. The charity supports clients’ needs across the County and beyond.
- The Stevenage Equalities Commission (SEC) held its final themed meeting which was focused upon Business and Employment. The interim draft report has been reviewed and the final report will be presented to the Executive in the Autumn
- The Nightlight Crisis Café was launched in partnership with Herts Mind Network, Healthy Hub Stevenage (Adult), Govia ThamesLink and wider key stakeholders. The café, situated in the Stevenage Arts & Leisure Centre on Lytton Way, has been set up to offer people who are feeling distressed a person to talk to in a relaxed, non-clinical setting. The service provides emotional and practical support and signposting or referrals to other local support and advice.
- The joint Arts Council England / Lottery funded arts and cultural programme for Stevenage Day took place this quarter. Activities included flag making and dance workshops, a Stevenage Day parade, storytelling tent, arts and crafts stalls and a world music stage. An evaluation of the event will be provided to Arts Council England in due course.

7.5.2 Key service performance highlights for Quarter 1 include:

- The number of households in temporary/emergency accommodation reduced from 203 to 174. The team has been working hard to ensure that the supply of accommodation can meet demand including taking swift action for serious breaches and non-occupation which led to a number of license terminations. To ensure that residents owed a housing duty are accessing the housing register in a timely manner, the team have been monitoring and placing bids to help them secure suitable accommodation as quickly as possible
- Work is currently underway to promote the online repairs bookings process. The system allows the customer to pick their own appointment at a time most suitable for them. It is anticipated that this system will improve the experience for the customer and also streamline the current internal repair booking process.
- A further KPI will be added to the Corporate Performance suite to track the progress of the commercial lettings in place at the Queensway regeneration project

7.6 Areas for improvement

CUSTOMERS		Actual - Quarter 2 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2022/23 YTD	Target - Quarter 1 2022/23 (YTD)	Target Quarter 2 2022/23
BV66a: Rent collection rate	Managing Homes	95.64	97.10	97.23	87.99	90.22	93.44
Voids (Various – See Appendix B)	Repairs and Housing & Investment	Quarter 1 data not yet available (see para. 7.6.3)					

Fig. 10

BV66a: Rent collection rate

7.6.1 Performance against this measure has declined this quarter. The Council is receiving increasing levels of highly complex cases owing to the ongoing challenges presented by the pandemic and the recent impact of increased energy, food, and fuel bills. The reduced Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) budget has resulted in more people being refused payments and those who receive them are getting lower amounts.

7.6.2 The Income Services team is proactively working to maximise income collected and sustain the level of arrears as outlined below;

- Ensuring that Tenants access financial support available from Government, and other local agencies including Stevenage Community Trust and Citizen’s Advice Stevenage
- Serving notices of possession evictions and making court applications although it is worth noting that delays in the court processes are causing further arrears
- Arranging additional direct debit payments, Alternative Payment Arrangements (APAs) and Third Party Deductions (TPDs) for rent arrears and water rates
- Working to deliver the Income Recovery Action Plan actions scheduled for Year 3, following successful delivery of Year 1 and 2 actions
- Encouraging households who are under occupying to consider downsizing linked to the review of the Under Occupation Policy

Voids (Repairs and Housing & Investment)

7.6.3 One of the actions resulting from the Stevenage Direct Services repairs service review was to introduce an automated voids report to replace the

current manual and time intensive process. The build of this report has not yet been completed but is being treated as a high priority. As a result void performance data will be provided in quarter 2. This will include the following measures:

Customers Theme

- Void Loss 1: Void Loss in year (£)
- Voids Sheltered Major Works: The time taken to re-let major works sheltered voids
- Voids Sheltered: The time taken to re-let standard general needs voids
- Voids Sheltered General Needs: The time taken to re-let standard general needs voids
- Voids General Needs Major Works: The time taken to re-let major works general needs voids

Place Theme

- ECH Rep 3: Percentage Repairs Appointments made & kept
- Rep Time 1: Average end to end repairs time - Emergency (days)
- Rep Time 2: Average end to end repairs time - Urgent (days)
- Rep Time 3: Average end to end repairs time – Routine (days)

7.6.4 A wider review of the overall voids process has been commissioned which will be completed during quarter 3. This review will look at the end to end void management process from when a tenancy ends to when a new tenancy starts with a view to streamlining performance and improving the service our customers receive. In particular it will focus on:

- developing a best practice voids and lettings policy and process to enable efficient letting of void properties
- specifically improving the current performance levels and reducing void loss and turnaround times
- making best use of IT to manage and track progress during the void period

7.6.5 As an immediate measure an Empty Homes Co-ordinator role is being recruited too in order to drive current performance and co-ordinate the activities of the different teams involved in the voids process to improve efficiency, service to customers and increase rental income for the Housing Revenue Account.

7.6.6 In addition, the Community Select Committee have selected a focus on the voids process for the municipal year 2022/23 to further scrutinise performance and recommend improvements.

7 STRATEGIC RISK

- 8.1 The risks as outlined in Table 1 below reflect the current strategic risks facing the Council. The risks were considered by Corporate Risk Group on 27 July 2022, agreed by the Senior Leadership Team on 9th August and noted by Audit Committee at its meeting on 7th September 2022.
- 8.2 A risk is a future event which has the potential to impact on the Council's ability to deliver services, projects and achieve its ambitions. Conversely an opportunity will enhance the Council's ability to achieve and effectively deliver, however, there are often risks inherent in pursuing opportunities. By being alert to and putting in place mechanisms to manage both the risks and opportunities effectively, the Council is in a better position to continue to deliver services, remain viable, continue to innovate and use resources more efficiently. Some risks will always exist and will never be eliminated.
- 8.3 Each risk is measured in terms of a combination of the likelihood of a perceived threat or the opportunity occurring and the magnitude of its impact on the Council's objectives.
- 8.4 The table below outlines both the inherent and residual risk scores. Inherent risk is the risk present in any scenario where no attempts at mitigation have been made and no controls or other measures have been applied to reduce the risk from initial levels to levels more acceptable to the Council. Residual risk is the risk remaining after efforts have been made to reduce the inherent risk. The risks below all have mitigating actions which are being worked through and risks scores are reviewed quarterly to assess whether completion of actions has reduced the level of risk.

Table 1: Strategic Risks, Scores and Direction of travel

Risk	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Risk Score	Direction of Travel since last quarter
General Fund Asset Management: If sufficient capital funding from land/asset sales is not received, there is a risk that there will be insufficient funding available to invest in the Council's non-housing property portfolio to ensure Council properties remain sustainable and fit for the future	20 Very High	12 High	
Building Management: In the event of failure to proactively maintain the Council's non-housing property portfolio there is a risk that required remedial work is not carried out in a timely way. This could lead to an increased health and safety risk for service users, buildings having to be taken out of use and increased repair costs	20 Very High	12 High	
Capacity: The Council is committed to delivery of its priorities and its local services. If the Council fails to retain, attract and recruit the right people and right skills at all levels, there could be an impact on its capacity to deliver all of its priorities as well as provide core services and implement new government legislation	12 High	9 Medium	

Commercialisation: If the Council fails to achieve its commercial ambitions within desired timescales or at the scale hoped for, it will be unable to support the Council's financial security objectives	16 Very High	12 High	
Contract Management: A failure to ensure resilience, quality and best value are being provided by suppliers and contractors could have a negative impact on the performance of Council's services and achievement of priorities	16 Very High	9 Medium	
Council Housebuilding and Acquisitions Programme: The Council's housing programmes are now well established, providing benefits such as homes for social and affordable rent as well as private sale homes. The delivery of each scheme, and the delivery of homes through the Wholly Owned Company, creates a financial risk surrounding estimated build costs and projected sales income materialising as forecast, as well as risks in relation to the servicing of debt. This may create revenue pressures on the General Fund to meet the loan repayments to the Public Works Loan Board	20 Very High	12 High	
Covid-19: As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing possibility of future variants and local outbreaks, there is a decrease in the Council's income streams (e.g. parking) and also increased staff sickness/availability which could impact service provision	20 Very High	12 High	
Fraud: As a result of the scale and scope of services delivered by and through the Council, there is a risk of fraud which could lead to service disruption, financial and reputational loss.	16 Very High	6 Medium	
IT Resilience and Cyber Security: Failure of ICT services as a result of a cyber-attack or IT resilience issues could cause significant service disruption, possible data loss and financial implications for the Council	25 Very High	12 High	
Health and Safety: In the event of failure to maintain adequate and effective safety management arrangements there is a risk of injury, illness and death to both service users and employees.	20 Very High	15 High	
Housing Revenue Account Business Plan: There is a risk that changes to legislation and new local authority responsibilities could negatively affect the medium to long term viability of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan	20 Very High	12 High	
Information Governance: There is a risk that the loss, inappropriate acquisition or disclosure of sensitive personal or commercial data and/or breach of data subject rights (contrary to the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation) could negatively impact on the individual(s) affected and lead to significant financial implications for the Council	16 Very High	9 Medium	

Leisure Provision: There is a risk that external factors (including cost of living, Covid-19 pandemic, war in Ukraine etc) could impact the viability of leisure provision in Stevenage	16 Very High	12 High	
Making your Money Count: Due to the ongoing financial impact of Covid-19 and following years of funding reductions from central government, there is a risk that the Council does not have sufficient resources to fund its medium and long term service plans	20 Very High	16 Very High	
Regeneration Risk – Capital Funding Risk: In the event of insufficient capital funding, the Council would not be able to fulfil its obligations for the SG1 Regeneration Scheme and will also not be able to match fund the money received from the Towns Bid meaning priority improvements could not be delivered	12 High	8 Medium	
Regeneration Risk – Delay: As a result of delays due to possible shortages of construction materials, labour and other factors beyond the Council's control, there is a risk of construction projects associated with the regeneration programme taking longer to complete than anticipated which would affect the delivery of the overall Regeneration Programme	12 High	8 Medium	
Repairs and Maintenance: Due to current recruitment pressures, the backlog of repairs due to Covid-19, storms and the availability of materials as a result of the war in Ukraine, there is a risk that the repairs service will not be able to carry out repairs in a timely manner	16 Very High	12 High	
Socio-Economic Impacts: As a result of the combined socio-economic impacts of welfare reform, the Covid-19 pandemic, an economic downturn and a cost of living crisis, it is likely there will be a significant adverse effect within the community. This will cause increased complexity of needs which will increase demand on Council services which could lead to capacity issues in some areas, as well as reduced income for the Council and increased arrears.	20 Very High	12 High	
Transformation Programme: The Council is operating in a rapidly changing environment with increasing financial challenges which are expected to become more demanding in future years. There is a risk that due to capacity and other priorities, the Transformation Programme the Council is implementing may not meet its aims and ambitions to improve customer experience, increase workforce productivity and organisational resilience, whilst also meeting financial security targets	16 Very High	8 Medium	

- 8.5 It is proposed that a new risk should be added to the Strategic Risk Register to ensure that the Council takes relevant action and commits resources to meet the new requirements contained in both the Building Safety Act and the Social Housing Regulation Bill. Both will create significant new responsibilities and financial burdens for local authorities. It is anticipated that when this risk is

scoped for inclusion in the Strategic Risk Register that it will come out as High risk. For context, a summary of both is outlined below.

8.5.1 **Building Safety Act:** The new Building Safety Act was granted Royal Assent on 28th April. The Act gives residents and homeowners more rights, powers and protection. It delivers protections for qualifying leaseholders from the costs associated with remediating historical building safety defects and a toolkit of measures that will allow those responsible for building safety defects to be held to account.

- The Act creates three new bodies to provide effective oversight of the new regime: the Building Safety Regulator, the National Regulator of Construction Products and the New Homes Ombudsman.
- Many of the detailed provisions in the Act will be implemented over the next two years through a programme of secondary legislation.

8.5.2 **Social Housing Regulation Bill:** On 8 June 2022, the Social Housing Regulation Bill was introduced to Parliament. The Bill aims to deliver the proposals set out in the Social Housing White Paper by introducing a number of measures to give tenants greater powers, improve access to swift and fair redress, and enhance the powers of the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). The measures announced under the Bill will:

- **Enable the RSH to intervene** with landlords who are performing poorly on consumer issues, such as complaints handling and decency of homes, and to act in the interest of tenants to make sure issues are rectified.
- **Enable the RSH to inspect landlords** to make sure they are providing tenants with the quality of accommodation and services that they deserve.
- **Guarantee timely action** where the RSH has concerns about the decency of a home by only requiring 48 hours' notice to a landlord before a survey is carried out.
- **Provide powers for the RSH to arrange emergency repairs** of tenants' homes (following a survey and where there is evidence of systemic failure by the landlord), ensuring that serious issues are resolved rapidly where a landlord is unable or unwilling to act.
- **Remove the cap on the fines** that the RSH can issue to a landlord who fails to meet required standards.
- **Create new Tenant Satisfaction Measures** which will allow tenants to see how their landlord is performing compared to other landlords and help the RSH decide where to focus its attention.
- **Ensure tenants of housing associations will be able to request information from their landlord** in a similar way to how the Freedom of Information Act works for tenants of Local Authority landlords

Emerging New Risk

8.6 There is an emerging new risk in relation to Asylum Seeker dispersals, and the forthcoming government request for housing to be sourced within local authority areas for refugees who are currently in hotel accommodation. This

will be added to the risk register when the dispersal arrangements have been confirmed with the Government.

Risk Rating Changes

8.7 There are currently no proposals to increase or decrease any existing risk levels this quarter.

Strategic Risk Register

8.8 For further information regarding action being taken in relation to the Council's current risks please see the Quarter 1 Strategic Risk Register which as a Part II item can be provided as a Background Document upon request.

9 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

9.1 The information presented in this report is collated from the information provided to monitor delivery of the Future Town, Future Council Programme and corporate performance for the quarter. It aims to give Executive an overview of the achievements the Council has made for the year to date, with a focus on the previous quarter and identifies plans for continued improvements in some areas to ensure the Council is fit for the future.

9.2 The Senior Leadership Team and Service Managers have been consulted to determine the appropriate content and to identify the key achievements.

10 IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Financial Implications

10.1.1 There are no direct financial implications from the recommendations contained in this report. However, officers responsible for delivering the priorities over the coming year and implementing any improvement activity set out within this report will need to identify and consider any resulting financial implications.

10.2 Legal Implications

10.2.1 There are no direct legal implications from the recommendations contained in this report. However, officers responsible for delivering the priorities over the coming year and implementing any improvement activity set out within this report will need to identify and consider any resulting legal implications.

10.3 Equalities and Diversity Implications

10.3.1 There are no direct equality, diversity and inclusion implications arising from this report, although examples are given in the Annual Report 2021/22 where positive action has been taken to advance equality, diversity and inclusion

across our workforce and the community. Where necessary, Equality Impact Assessments will be completed for programmes, projects, service changes and improvement activity identified.

10.4 Risk Implications

10.4.1 There are no direct significant risks to the Council in agreeing the recommendation(s). However, officers responsible for delivering the priorities over the coming year and implementing any improvement activity set out within this report will need to consider any risk implications that arise.

10.4.2 The Council has an embedded approach to risk management that mitigates any adverse effect on delivery of the Council's objectives and internal control processes and also provides good governance assurance.

10.5 Other Corporate implications

10.5.1 Implementing the priorities and improvement activity outlined in this report may impact on the development of future policy or procedure.

11 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- Strategic Risk Register (Part II)

12 APPENDICES

- Appendix A: FTFC Programme Performance for Quarter 1 22/23
- Appendix B: FTFC Plan on a Page
- Appendix C: Compendium of Performance Results Quarter 1 22/23
- Appendix D: Executive Action Tracker

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Meeting Executive

Date 14 September 2022

APPENDIX A: FTFC PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE FOR QUARTER ONE 2022/23

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This is a written update on progress on live projects in quarter one 2022/23 and forecasted plans for quarter two 2022/23.
- 1.2 To note the progress achieved by all programmes in quarter four 2021/22 and forecasted progress for quarter one 2022/23

2. PROGRAMME DELIVERY UPDATES

Transforming Our Town Programme

2.1 The demolition of site Plot K (Former Police Station and Towers Garages) has completed, and the site has been handed back to the Council. Plot A (Swingate House) demolition clearance works is also complete. The project team are working closely with development partner Mace to progress both sites.

2.2 The bus interchange was operational from 26 June 2022. The team continue to provide support to Estates and Facilities on the day-to-day operation and exploring potential occupants for the two available units.

2.3 Enabling works began on the vacant bus station on 27th June, immediately after its closure, following approval at the Planning and Development committee meeting. The first week on site saw the removal of the barriers and bus shelters.

2.4 Alongside the physical changes, a school competition was launched for young people to come up with a name and to design a matching logo for the bus station space. The winning entry will be turned into a plaque to be displayed at the space. This competition has been judged and the winners will be announced in September when children return to school.

2.5 Contractors Huber for the multi-storey car park (MSCP) and cycle hub are on site and works are progressing well. Hoarding for the site has been commissioned and is being progressed with designers. The cycle hub has progressed on its design, and procurement and costing processes are underway.

More Social and Affordable Housing Programme

2.6 Final reservations are progressing at the North Road (21 Homes) scheme with sales expected to complete imminently. The scheme will enter the defects period which will still require pro-active management from the team. All General Fund capital forecasts have been received in line with the capital strategy.

2.7 Work has progressed at the Symonds Green (29 Homes) site with roof work being installed on the rear section of the build and internal works have continued. A tour of the site with local ward Members and a local school have also been planned.

2.8 Completions on the private sale elements of the Kenilworth Close scheme along Stirling Close continue, with 7 completions having now taken place. The affordable homes on Stirling close are due for handover shortly and Members of the Housing Management team viewed the site ahead of preparing the letting materials.

2.9 On the main site, work continues at pace with extensive brick and block work being carried out across the site. Some glazing is also being installed. Work is also underway to pull together materials for marketing the retail units.

2.10 The second round of consultation for the Shephall View & Brent Court sites took place in early June, with a further 40 residents expressing feedback in regards to the proposals. A large proportion of the feedback was positive in relation to the designs. A further workshop has taken place with Housing and Investment teams, with the ambition of a planning application being submitted in quarter two.

2.11 Work started on site at the Dunn Close (27 Homes) scheme this quarter. Work to the foundations of the site continues, as well as confirming drainage designs. Work has also been ongoing to make improvements to the local woods that borders the site, including introducing a formal woodland walk for the local community.

2.12 The units at Oaks Cross have now been delivered at the site, and work to the externals is underway. A tour of the scheme for members of the Housing Development Working Group has been arranged prior to the official handover which is anticipated in quarter two.

2.13 The Courtlands scheme within the Wholly Owned Company (WOC) land purchase has been completed and demolition has begun on site.

Co-operative and Neighbourhoods Programme

2.14 Priorities for the Co-operative Neighbourhood programme were shared at an informal executive meeting to outline the proposed scope of the programme for 2022/23. Discussions with the new Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods & Co-operative Working are underway regarding the next steps for the programme.

2.15 Work to deliver the Digital Neighbourhood Newsletters continues alongside the contractor Granicus, and internal colleagues from Communications & Digital & Transformation. Initial drafts of the newsletters have been created highlighting key projects in each neighbourhood area.

2.16. Following a successful funding application to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Proptech Engagement Fund, a preferred supplier (Novoville) has now been selected and project initiation discussions have commenced. The secured £125,000 funding will support a digital engagement offer as part of the Co-operative Neighbourhoods programme.

2.17 The Stevenage Equalities Commission (SEC) held the final themed meeting of Business and Employment. The interim draft report has been reviewed and the final report will be available in quarter two.

2.18 Phase three and four of the flatblock refurbishment programme has continued to progress. Delivery will continue into quarter two, alongside customer satisfaction activities and events. The pandemic continues to affect material and labour supply to the programme, but this is being monitored closely by the contractors.

Making Your Money Count Programme

2.19 The Council's financial outturn position has been confirmed and work is now focusing on the 2022/23 monitoring as well as early work on the 2023/24 budgets. Preparation of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) refresh is starting and will be presented to Executive in September 2022. Early preparation for the draft 2023/24 budgets (revenue and capital) have commenced, but there continues to be challenges due to resilience in the Finance team. The Technical Accountant and the Assistant Director (Finance) have now been recruited to and work is now ongoing to fill the other vacancies within the finance team.

2.20 Fees and Charges workshops commenced in June 2022 and there were further workshops during July with the assumption of a report being produced by September Commercial Insourcing Executive Committee on the likelihood of areas where fees and charges could be further increased or new charges created.

2.21 Progress on the closing of accounts continues to be on track. The 2021/22 accounts are being prepared and are aiming to have them ready by the 31 July 2022. The 2019/20 accounts are with the auditors and the only outstanding issue being the work undertaken by CIPFA around Infrastructure Assets. The 2020/21 audit is progressing with the testing stage to be completed by quarter two.

2.22 A further eleven new customers have signed up to the Council's trade waste collection, providing an additional £10,500 of annual revenue. The current focus is to support the collection of Aged Debt of which an additional £8000 aged trade waste debt has been recovered since the figure reported last quarter.

2.23 The Council's events brochure and filming offer have both launched. Between April and May 2022 seven filming enquiries were made including one for a BBC drama. Through the events sponsorship brochure, headline sponsors have been procured for events including Stevenage Day and the Pride of Stevenage Awards.

2.24 The transformation programme Phase 1 (Customer Services) is in progress. In line with plans agreed as part of the 2022/23 budget setting process, key changes will be introduced this financial year with the goal of improving the customer experience and delivering a budget saving in Customer Services. In Q1:

- Bulky waste digital service has gone live
- The customer services opening hours have been amended
- Messaging has been drafted for new Digital First phone options and is due to go live early in Q2. Digital First communications plan is drafted
- Technical work has progressed on digital complaints and garage lettings.

2.25 Detailed analysis work is underway to support the design of a Phase 2 programme (Service Delivery) for implementation in 2023/24. The programme will create a "Customer Hub" and four specialist teams (Localities, Advice and Support, Income & Debt, and Lettings & Bookings). A business case will be prepared for Executive in September 2022.

A Clean, Green, Safe and Thriving Town Programme

Clean and Green

2.26 Officers from the Stevenage Direct Services (SDS) team had a stand at Stevenage Day in June to help highlight the litter campaign and raise awareness. It was well attended, and visitors had the opportunity to have their photo taken with Wombles Great Uncle Bulgaria and Orinoco.

Healthy Stevenage

2.27 The Nightlight Crisis Café launched in partnership with HertsMind Network, Healthy Hub Stevenage (Adult), Govia ThamesLink and wider key stakeholders. The café, situated in the Stevenage Arts & Leisure Centre on Lytton Way, has been set up to offer people who are feeling distressed a person to talk to in a relaxed, non-clinical setting, which aims to help those in need of immediate support. Staff will offer a non-judgemental listening ear for emotional and practical support and to signpost or refer to other local sources of therapy or advice.

2.28 Community engagement took place with residents in Shephall as part of a pilot for Hertfordshire Whole Systems Obesity (WSO) Programme. This pilot which looks at a place based approach enables residents to understand social determinants of health outcomes related to healthy weight and inequalities. 101 Shephall residents completed community engagement survey with residents also attending community event. Key health and

wellbeing themes have been identified supporting strong position to start phase 2 in co-producing and continue engagement with residents.

2.29 The 8th annual walking festival was held during National Walking Month in May. 65 people participated in the family trail at Fairlands Valley Park. 370 walkers participated throughout the week including 71 new walkers.

Community Safety

2.30 The Survivors Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) service registered as a charity this quarter. "Friends of SADA" currently has three trustees and a patron who have been working hard to promote the work and services of SADA, collecting and applying for funding to support more survivors and their families. The charity held its first event in June and further events are currently in discussion.

2.31 A successful funding bid from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) was awarded to support the Council's work to deter fly tipping. The funding enabled the ASB team to purchase 4 new cameras as well as contribute towards promotional material for events and fly tipping posters and signs. Since April 2022 fines for fly tipping, including household waste increased to £400.

Stevenage Re-Imagined

2.32 The joint funded Arts Council England\Lottery funded arts 7 cultural programme for Stevenage Day took place this quarter. Activities included flag making and dance workshops, a Stevenage Day parade, storytelling tent, arts and crafts stalls and a world music stage. An evaluation of the event will be provided to Arts Council England in due course.

Community Wealth Building

2.33 The process to formally incorporate the Social Inclusion Partnership as a Multi-stakeholder Co-operative is underway. This would enable the partnership to become a funding vehicle to support the acquisition of funding to support the further development of the Community Wealth Building agenda in Stevenage.

2.34 The first meeting of the Council's Community Wealth Building steering group was convened on the 31st May, chaired by the Leader of the Council. An update was provided on the status of the Community Renewal Fund, Social Value Portal and Stevenage Works. Meetings will be held bi-monthly, with the next meeting focusing on the outline proposals around the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) as well as providing an update on service areas.

Climate Change

2.35 A Climate Change annual update paper was presented to Executive in June 2022. The Executive considered a report providing an update on the Council's Climate Change Strategy and initiatives.

2.36 The recruitment of a Climate Change Programme Lead Officer for the Council is underway. This role will take the lead in delivering the essential targets which have been set in the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan and to reflect the ambitions of the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Climate Change.

Sustainable Transport

2.37 The Preferred Options report for the Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan is currently being drafted and will be going to Executive in September to be approved to go out to public consultation.

2.38 Officers remain in regular contact with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) officers, to progress the Stevenage Sustainable Travel Town Implementation Plan. This will ultimately be presented to HCC's Highways & Transport Panel in January 2023. A work programme, governance structure, protocols, stakeholder engagement and communications plan are all being progressed well with a "Learn and Share" event being planned for October 2022.

2.39 Regular dialogue has been established with Cycling UK Stevenage to keep momentum and progress on a wide range of cycling related projects in the town. The last progress meeting was held in June 2022 and set a series of action points.

Biodiversity

2.40 Following satisfactory inspection by the Forestry Commission, of three Community Orchards delivered in 2021/22, funding has been received from the Urban Tree Challenge Fund as part of the Council's Biodiversity activities.



Future Town

Future Council



Summary Action Plan

2022/23

Our ambitions for Stevenage and what we're doing to achieve them

Transforming Our Town

We will:

- Begin to deliver the first phase of the Town Centre regeneration (SG1)
- Work with partners to develop and deliver the nine projects that form the Town's Fund
- Open the new multi-storey car park and cycle hub near the train station
- Transform the former bus station into a large multi-purpose events space for our community

... contributing to our ambition to **create a vibrant town centre where people want to live, work and play**

More Social and Affordable Homes

We will:

- Complete and let 73 new council homes and 14 private sale homes
- Start work on a further 44 new homes across a range of planned schemes
- Seek planning permission on a further 160 homes across two schemes
- Provide ongoing support and housing supply for the Housing First Model
- Continue to work with partners to enable the delivery of affordable homes
- Look at other potential areas of affordable housing development across the town

... contributing to our ambition to **increase the number of social and affordable homes in Stevenage**

Co-operative Neighbourhoods

We will:

- Continue to build on our Co-operative Neighbourhood approach across the town
- Further strengthen our ability to engage, listen to and support residents
- Continue to highlight and deliver local improvements based on resident feedback
- Continue to improve our garage blocks
- Further improve our garage blocks

... contributing to our ambition to **work with our communities to improve our neighbourhoods**

A Clean, Green, Safe and Thriving Town

We will:

- Enhance the town's landscape provision through a programme of targeted projects and cyclical works
- Enrich Stevenage's biodiversity by conserving, restoring, recreating and reconnecting wildlife habitats
- Continue to look at ways to reduce our carbon footprint and encourage residents to make changes to contribute to our goal of being net zero by 2030
- Invest in local voluntary organisations and businesses as part of the Community Renewal Fund
- Provide a whole housing approach to support victims of domestic abuse and their families
- Undertake targeted work that improves cultural engagement and representation, particularly amongst marginalised communities
- Continue to work with partners to develop Stevenage as a sustainable travel town
- Continue to focus on supporting the mental and physical health of the people of the town

... enabling us to **improve the quality of life of Stevenage residents and enhanced experience for visitors**

To deliver these promises we're also making internal changes

Making Your Money Count

We will:

- Continue to set and deliver a balanced budget
- Actively look at how we can make our services more efficient so we are less reliant on funding from Government
- Search for new ways of making money to reinvest in the community
- Improve and develop the way customers choose to interact with us digitally

... enabling us to **be a financially resilient council with enough resource to deliver our priorities**

Cross Cutting Corporate Priorities

We will:

- Determine a local response to the cost of living crisis to support local people and businesses, as well as considering the impact for the council and our staff
- Work to address the significant pressure faced by many local people and their housing needs
- Respond to government requirements in respect of provision of asylum seekers or refugees
- Implement our Workforce Strategy to improve our approach to recruitment and retention, and learning and development
- Improve our IT infrastructure to support effective and efficient working
- Procure a new leisure management contract

Corporate Performance Report 2022/23
Quarter 1 (April, May, June)

Key to Performance Status Symbols

Red - Focus of Improvement

Amber - Initial Improvement Activity Identified

Green - Achieving Target

Customers									
Measure Name		Actual - Quarter 1 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2022/23 YTD	Target - Quarter 1 2022/23	Target - Quarter 2 2022/23	Comments
SLL1: SLL overall footfall (ytd)	Culture, Wellbeing & Leisure Services	80,880	157,969	339,658	478,201	153,464	88,968	173,766	
DH1: % tenants satisfied with Decent Homes works	Investment	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00		70.00	70.00	Indicator DH1: Percentage of tenants satisfied with Decent Homes works, cannot be reported on this quarter. The Decent Homes programme is now fully on site with completed works coming through from August. Satisfaction surveys are being issued for all completed works and it is anticipated that a small number of returns will be reported at the end of quarter 2. It is anticipated that a greater number of returns will be reported during Q3 as the volume of completed works increases.
ECHFL1: Percentage of Homes maintained as decent	Investment	73.23	71.93	75.82	66.68	68.49	68.57	71.82	
ECHFL1nat: Percentage of homes maintained as decent against national minimum DH standard	Investment					78.81%	80.19%	83.44%	
BV66a: Rent collection rate	Managing Homes	90.36	95.64	97.10	97.23	87.99	90.22	93.44	30/06/2022 Performance against this measure has declined this quarter. The Council is receiving increasing levels of highly complex cases owing to the ongoing challenges presented by the pandemic and the recent impact of increased energy, food, and fuel bills. The reduced Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) budget has resulted in more people being refused payments and those who receive them are getting lower amounts.
BV213: Homelessness preventions	Providing Homes	37.00	99.00	163.00	225.00	67.00	50.00	100.00	-

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Measure Name		Actual - Quarter 1 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2022/23 YTD	Target - Quarter 1 2022/23	Target - Quarter 2 2022/23	Comments
NI156: Number of households in temporary/emergency accommodation at end qtr	Providing Homes	180.00	210.00	187.00	203.00	174.00	200.00	200.00	-
Void loss 1: Void loss in year (£)	Repairs & Voids	148,145.65	279,964.85	419,701.87	532,510.82		97,260.00	194,520.00	30/06/2022 Quarter 1 data not yet available. Due to be provided in quarter 2.
Voids Sheltered MW - The time taken to relet major works sheltered voids	Repairs & Voids	99.67	192.60	126.33	134.70		70.00	70.00	30/06/2022 Quarter 1 data not yet available. Due to be provided in quarter 2.
Voids sheltered:The time taken to relet standard sheltered voids	Repairs & Voids	161.50	188.93	177.63	181.67		70.00	70.00	30/06/2022 Quarter 1 data not yet available. Due to be provided in quarter 2.
VoidsGN: The time taken to relet standard general needs voids	Repairs & Voids	29.00	38.86	35.52	34.91		32.00	32.00	30/06/2022 Quarter 1 data not yet available. Due to be provided in quarter 2.
VoidsGNM - The time taken to relet major works general needs voids	Repairs & Voids	67.46	68.44	27.38	30.65		65.00	65.00	30/06/2022 Quarter 1 data not yet available. Due to be provided in quarter 2.

Place									
Measure Name		Actual - Quarter 1 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2022/23 YTD	Target - Quarter 1 2022/23	Target - Quarter 2 2022/23	Comments
ELL1a: Percentage of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) that are broadly compliant	Commercial and Licensing	99.08	99.56	97.72	97.24	96.84	90.00	90.00	
FT1: % of successful outcomes with flytipping	Community Safety	58.00	45.00	66.00	73.00	87.50	70.00	70.00	-
NI184: Food establishments in the area broadly compliant with food hygiene laws	Environmental Health	95.40	96.60	98.30	99.60	98.70	95.00	95.00	The inspection programme continues to be fully up-to-date.
NI191: Residual household waste per household (kgs)	Environmental Services	138.00	268.00	389.00	520.00		138.00	270.00	The Q1 figure for residual household waste is not available at this time. The actual figure is reported from an external source and will not be available until September 2022.
NI192: Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	Environmental Services	41.00	43.00	38.00	35.00		43.00	41.00	The Q1 figure for household waste sent for recycling & composting is not currently available. The actual figure is reported from an external source and will not be available until September 2022.

Measure Name		Actual - Quarter 1 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2022/23 YTD	Target - Quarter 1 2022/23	Target - Quarter 2 2022/23	Comments
CNM2g: Garage Voids (residential) as a percentage of stock	Garages	16.70	17.49	16.32	14.53	14.51	14.50	14.10	<p>The residential garage void rate is 14.51% for Quarter 1 and is on target.</p> <p>Asbestos Surveys - Asbestos surveys for void garages and for those that under termination notice are now being carried out by an in-house Building Surveyor. It has been noted that some tenants are returning their key earlier than their termination date. This in turn has impacted on surveys being carried out. Licence holders will be reminded to keep possession of their key until the terminated date has been reached.</p> <p>Offers - Due to improved processes around garage repairs and asbestos surveys, there is more garage stock available to let. During the Quarter, 320 Garage offers were made, compared to 288 offers during quarter 4. However, the acceptance rate for Quarter 1 was low, with an average of 40% compared with 48% for quarter 4. Digital lettings is crucial in transforming the application process and allowing garage tenants to bid for their preferred garage. Digital lettings continues to be progressed, with digital signature options being explored and testing taking place.</p> <p>New garage applications remain steady with an average of 61 applications received per month between April and June. This brings the total number of applicants on the waiting list to 2,845.</p> <p>Garage terminations were high during Quarter 1 (141 in total), compared to 128 terminations during Quarter 4. Analysis is underway to identify any trends in relation to this.</p> <p>Communications have been issued to 1,700 garage freeholders around applying charges for cleansing, weeding and sweeping with effect from June 2022. A high level of enquiries have been received (in excess of 150) and the garage team are responding to these.</p> <p>Staffing - There has been difficulty in recruiting an additional Garages Lettings Officer into the team. This has placed additional pressure onto the team to cover the service effectively in the meantime, and recruitment is ongoing.</p> <p>Future Plans - A business case outlining the need for further investment in repairs to void stock is being taken to Executive in September. Although the service has hit targets for two consecutive quarters, this investment is aimed at bringing void stock back for re-letting and correspondingly, driving down the void rate.</p>
HDD1b (formerly NB1) - New Built Spend v Budget of development activity that is contracted	Housing Development	101.00	103.52	95.90	88.16	89.55	85.00	85.00	The reason for the increase from the previous quarter is because the speed of spend at Kenilworth is higher than the development model forecast. The budget itself is unchanged and the scheme remains on budget.
HDD1d: Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) by the Council (since 2014)	Housing Development	272.00	278.00	281.00	286.00	293.00	305.00	355.00	Earlier performance was delayed due to region wide utility connection service bottlenecks which impacts this measure throughout the year on a number of sites.
HDD1e: Number of affordable homes delivered by the Council (current quarter)	Housing Development	11.00	6.00	3.00	5.00	7.00	19.00	50.00	Earlier performance was delayed due to Utility service connections on a particular scheme . This scheme will as a result handover in September.
FRA1: Percentage of dwellings with a valid Fire Risk Assessment	Investment	100.00%	96.94%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	
VAS1: Percentage of communal areas with a valid Asbestos survey	Investment	100.00%	98.21%	98.41%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	
VEC1: Percentage of communal areas with a valid EICR Electrical Certificate	Investment	15.79%	49.38%	81.64%	95.46%	99.35%	100.00%	100.00%	30/06/2022 There are a total of 3 Communal EICRs outstanding, these are all part of major works that are being done to the blocks and should be completed by the end of September 2022.
VED1: Percentage of dwellings with a valid EICR Electrical Certificate	Investment	32.25%	40.84%	48.54%	62.95%	87.85%	100.00%	100.00%	30/06/2022 A total of 976 EICR are now outstanding. The Council recently recruited an additional electrical contractor, to assist with the outstanding work. The Council aims to have all of the remaining EICRs completed by end of October 2022.
VGC1: Percentage of dwellings with a valid gas certificate	Investment	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	

Measure Name		Actual - Quarter 1 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2022/23 YTD	Target - Quarter 1 2022/23	Target - Quarter 2 2022/23	Comments
VLC1: Percentage of sites with valid legionella inspections certificate	Investment	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	
VLT1: Percentage of domestic passenger lifts with an in date LOLER inspection	Investment				57.89%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	
BTC1a: New jobs created through Business Technology Centre	Planning & Regulation	12.00	16.00	20.00	35.00	6.00	18.00	18.00	There has been a lot of activity at the Business & Technology Centre (BTC), with businesses moving-on due to the end of government contracts. Small business start-ups are also continuing to face a number of challenges including impacts such as rising energy costs and difficulties recruiting staff. It should be noted though that there has been an increase in the number of home-based businesses moving to the centre during Quarter 2.
BTC1b: New business start up in Business Technology Centre	Planning & Regulation	12.00	15.00	19.00	30.00	4.00	7.00	7.00	Small businesses are continuing to be faced with a number of issues including the cost of living crisis, i.e. rising energy costs, recruitment etc. This is reflected in the number of businesses starting up and new jobs being created at the btc and across the country.
NI157a: Percentage of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks	Planning & Regulation	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	60.0%	60.0%	
NI157b: Percentage of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks	Planning & Regulation	94.7%	94.0%	88.5%	87.4%	90.0%	65.0%	65.0%	
NI157c: Percentage of other planning applications determined within 8 weeks	Planning & Regulation	96.3%	94.8%	89.3%	89.9%	91.9%	80.0%	80.0%	
ECHFL5: Percentage of Repairs service customers satisfied (telephone survey)	Repairs & Voids			85.50		84.83	90.00	90.00	
ECH-Rep3: Percentage repairs appointment made & kept	Repairs & Voids	97.03	97.48	98.18	98.87		95.00	95.00	30/06/2022 Quarter 1 data not yet available. Due to be provided in quarter 2.
ECH-Rep4: Percentage repairs fixed first time	Repairs & Voids	99.75	99.91	98.68	96.89	93.16	87.50	87.50	
Rep Cost1: Average responsive repair cost per dwelling	Repairs & Voids	61.60	130.45	201.19	267.62	77.00	81.77	163.54	
Rep-Time1: Average end to end repairs time (days) - Emergency Repairs	Repairs & Voids	0.22	0.34	0.65	0.60		1.00	1.00	30/06/2022 Quarter 1 data not yet available. Due to be provided in quarter 2.
Rep-Time2: Average end to end repairs time (days) - Urgent Repairs	Repairs & Voids	2.39	2.87	4.76	5.82		5.00	5.00	30/06/2022 Quarter 1 data not yet available. Due to be provided in quarter 2.
Rep-Time3: Average end to end repairs time (days) - Routine Repairs	Repairs & Voids	8.61	9.30	9.39	11.36		20.00	20.00	30/06/2022 Quarter 1 data not yet available. Due to be provided in quarter 2.

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Transformation & Support

Measure Name		Actual - Quarter 1 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2022/23 YTD	Target - Quarter 1 2022/23	Target - Quarter 2 2022/23	Comments
CompGF1: % of council service customer complaints responded to within deadline	Customer Focus					81.56%	78.00%	82.00%	
CompHRA1: % of housing service customer complaints responded to within deadline	Customer Focus					57.93%	70.00%	74.00%	The backlog of complaints from 2021/22 has impacted upon the Council's response to Quarter 1 complaints. To help address this, three Housing and Investment Strategic Complaints Managers have been recruited. Their role is to co-ordinate, investigate and respond to complaints. Since their recruitment the back-log of complaints has reduced which will be demonstrated when officers report on Quarter 2. The forecast FOR Quarter 2 is that the number of customer complaints responded to within deadline will improve by 10%.The Housing Repairs team are also experiencing both an increased volume of complaints and a backlog to complaints work. A Strategic Complaints Manager for Repairs was recruited in August 2022 to help coordinate and manage responses to complaints. A plan is being implemented to reduce the volume of complaints received by the service, including the mobilisation of new fencing and guttering programmes, and the embedding of new Repairs Supervisors who are responsible for ensuring repairs are undertaken in an efficient, timely and effective way.
Cust1: Percentage complaints progressing to stage 2 and 3 that are upheld or partially upheld	Customer Focus	16.00	22.67	17.56	18.20	11.63	35.00	35.00	-
CSC12: Percentage of calls abandoned in the Customer Service Centre	Customer Service Centre	35.90	35.10	33.80	35.50	39.80	15.00	15.00	The percentage of abandoned calls is an ongoing challenge. There are several challenges the team are faced with including a high turnover of staff and customers having more complex enquiries particularly following the pandemic and more recently the cost of living crisis. recruitment processes have been improved in recent years and the team are improving their advertising reach in the coming weeks by a more targeted approach to recruitment. Additional temporary resource has been agreed to support performance in the short term and strengthen the ability to support customers onto digital services
CSC13: % of calls to Customer Services reported as resolved by customers	Customer Service Centre	73	71	71	67	73	65	65	-
EAA1: Customer satisfaction with CSC customer service	Customer Service Centre	91.00	91.00	91.00	89.50	85.50	90.00	90.00	Customer satisfaction has remained above 90% until recently. Customer comments suggest the waiting times are influencing their overall experience score. Customers continue to leave positive comments about their transaction when they speak with an adviser. It is anticipated that this measure will improve, in line with the activity taking place to reduce call abandonment.
Dig1: % of digital customer transactions	Digital	15	20	19	23	24	23	28	The proportion of online contacts has continued to grow in Q1
BV10: Percentage of non-domestic rates due for the financial year received by the authority	Finance & Estates	33.6%	58.2%	86.6%	98.4%	39.2%	36.0%	59.0%	Business Rates continues to be profile continue to be impacted by COVID reliefs which skew the collection position, this is going to be further affected as a result of the announcement in December regarding the COVID Additional Relief Fund (CARF) which Stevenage has been allocated a maximum of £2.6Million to allocate to the 2021/22 financial year based on the criteria set out by the government.
BV9: Percentage of council tax collected	Finance & Estates	32.9%	59.3%	86.1%	94.5%	32.4%	33.0%	61.0%	No official explanation for the amber performance from Revs & Bens; however, suspect that the current cost of living crisis has a bearing on this measure.
CR1: % of commercial rent collected from estates	Finance & Estates	78.00	85.00			91.00	80.00	95.00	

Measure Name		Actual - Quarter 1 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2022/23 YTD	Target - Quarter 1 2022/23	Target - Quarter 2 2022/23	Comments
FS1a (LACC1): Percentage GF approved savings removed from GF budget for current year	Finance & Estates	93.00	93.00	87.00	83.20	96.60	95.00	95.00	
FS2a (LACC2): Percentage HRA approved savings removed from HRA for current year	Finance & Estates	97.00	97.00	100.00	89.00	100.00	95.00	95.00	
FS3 (Futsav1b): Percentage of GF savings identified to meet one year target	Finance & Estates	38.00	75.06	100.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	20.00	No confirmed savings have been found at that stage towards the target for 23/24 budget setting
FS4 (Futsav2b): Percentage of HRA savings identified to meet one year target	Finance & Estates	7.00	37.08	25.45	25.45	0.00	0.00	20.00	Nothing confirmed as yet for savings towards budget gap for 23/24
NI181: Time taken (days) to process housing benefit new claims and change events	Finance & Estates	12.54	7.78	11.79	2.86	11.88	12.00	12.00	
EoC4a: Percentage of apprentices in post as percentage of workforce.	Human Resources	2.29	2.11	1.05	1.07	1.38	1.50	1.80	The L&D team are working with service managers to identify new apprenticeship opportunities
EoCrec: Time to recruit	Human Resources	54.00	47.60	40.00	41.00	45.00	45.00	45.00	
Pe1: Workforce Stability	Human Resources	84.80	88.34	87.80	94.00	83.00	85.00	85.00	-
Pe2: % of Agency Work assignments exceeding 12 weeks	Human Resources	62.00	61.22	49.20	54.00	63.00	50.00	50.00	Of the agency workers in post during quarter 1, 63% of these have been in post longer than 12 weeks. The reasons for this vary from service to service, however following a review of those with over 12 week service it is known that the workers concerned are primarily located in areas where services are experiencing difficulties in recruiting to the roles on a permanent basis or where agency resource has been brought in to undertake a specific element of project work such as independent living covid testing roles. HR Business Partners continue to work with Assistant Directors to reduce this figure and a number of the agency assignments will cease during quarter 2.
Pe4a: Sickness Absence Rate for the Current Workforce (FTE)	Human Resources	6.20	7.03	9.17	10.63	11.07	8.00	8.00	Sickness absence rates have increased during quarter 1 of 2022/23 to 11.07 days per FTE, of which 33% represents short term absence and 67% related to long term absences (absence lasting over 21 days).Of the short term absence, 37% of this can be attributed to Covid-19 related absence which increased significantly between April and June 2022 following the increased spread of the omicron variants across the UK. It is worth highlighting if the COVID related sickness was removed the Quarter 1 target would be met. The increase in long term sickness absence relates to the number of employees with complex and serious medical conditions, such as cancer.HR Business Partners continue to work with Assistant Directors to support staff including the use of the Council's employee assistance programme and signpost to relevant agencies where appropriate.

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Local Based									
Measure Name		Actual - Quarter 1 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2022/23 YTD	Target - Quarter 1 2022/23 (YTD)	Target - Quarter 2 2022/23 (YTD)	Comments

Measure Name		Actual - Quarter 1 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2021/22 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2022/23 YTD	Target - Quarter 1 2022/23 (YTD)	Target - Quarter 2 2022/23 (YTD)	Comments
Community Safety : CS10: Domestic Abuse per 1,000 population	Community Safety	6.07	6.15	5.67	8.90	5.60	7.00	7.00	
Community Safety : CS8: Anti-social behaviour per 1,000 population	Community Safety	11.00	10.10	6.27	11.30	7.40	9.00	9.00	
Community Safety : NI15b: The rate of violence against the person (victim based crime) per 1,000	Community Safety	7.62	18.15	7.80	33.10	7.60	8.00	10.00	-

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EXECUTIVE – ACTION TRACKER

MEETING DATE	REPORT ITEM	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	ACTIONS	PROGRESS
15 June 2022	Climate Change Update – June 2022	Assistant Director (Planning & Regulation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional Insulation Project – officers to provide written update to Members re: clarification as to whether double or triple glazing should be installed in the social housing properties within the scheme. 	Email sent to Executive Members on 23/8/22
12 July 2022	Corporate Performance Quarter 4 2021/22; Annual Report 2021/22; and Corporate Performance Suite for 2022/23	Chief Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Leader asked the Chief Executive to arrange for the slides used in his presentation to be uploaded to the Council’s website, and he agreed to ensure that the name of a contact officer, with contact details, was included on the slides pertaining to the Council’s priorities for 2022/23. 	The updated presentation (which includes Officer contact details) has been uploaded to the website and can be found here

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Meeting: EXECUTIVE
Portfolio Area: RESOURCES

Agenda Item:



Date: 14 SEPTEMBER 2022

GENERAL FUND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE (2022/23 – 2026/27)

Author – Clare Fletcher
Contributors - Strategic Leadership Team
Lead Officer – Clare Fletcher
Contact Officer – Clare Fletcher

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. To update Members on the General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) including any potential on-going COVID and Cost of Living crisis impacts.
- 1.2. To advise Members concerning the current and future position of the Council's General Fund budget over the next five years.
- 1.3. To update Members regarding the revised inflation projections and pressures for the General Fund MTFS.
- 1.4. To update the 'Making Your Money Count' financial targets for the period 2023/24 – 2026/27.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

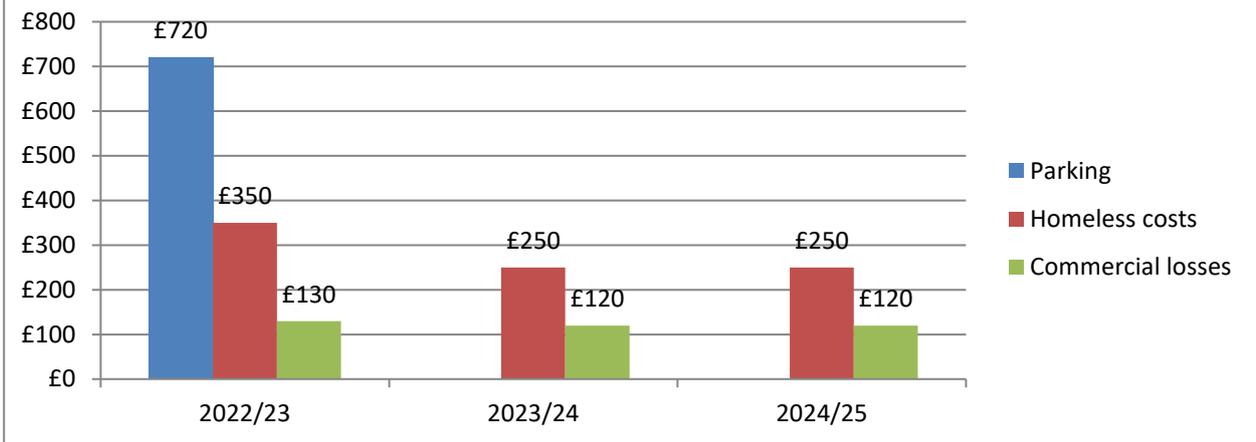
- 2.1 That Members approve the change to the MTFS principles, as outlined in paragraph 3.12 to this report and as amended in paragraph 4.9.9.
- 2.2 That, for modelling purposes, Council tax increases be set at the threshold allowed assumed at 1.99%, subject to any change in government rules, in order to help achieve a balanced budget as set out in paragraph 4.6.8.
- 2.3 That the updated inflation assumptions used in the MTFS as set out in section 4 of the report be approved.
- 2.4 That the approach to Making Your Money Count budget options as set out in section 4.8 be approved.

- 2.5 That an amount of £300,000 for 2023/24 be approved for inclusion in the budget setting process to support the Transformation Fund, to help deliver the MYMC Target, as set out in paragraph 4.8.3.
- 2.6 That a Making Your Money Count Target of £3.03Million, (of which £1.5Million relates to 2023/24), be approved for the period 2023/24- 2025/26 as set out in section 4.9 of the report.
- 2.7 That the revised fees and charges as set out in Appendices B for Engineering charges be approved.
- 2.8 That General Fund growth is only approved for the Council's FTFC priorities and the growth allowance included in the 2023/24 budget is £75,000. Growth above that level will need to be funded by further savings in addition to the £3.03Million target identified.
- 2.9 That a minimum level of balances for the General Fund of £3.57million be approved for 2023/24 as set out in paragraph 4.10.8.
- 2.10 That if there is an underspend in 2022/23, £200K is used to 'top up' the regeneration reserve up as set out paragraph 4.11.3.
- 2.11 The MTFS is regularly reviewed and revised to reflect any material financial pressures so forecasts are updated and re-presented to the Executive for approval.
- 2.12 That the Trade Unions and staff be consulted on the key messages contained within the MTFS and more specifically when drawing up any proposals where there is a risk of redundancy.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The MTFS is presented at least annually to the Executive, however as a result of recent heightened financial risks, COVID and more recently the current cost of living crisis this may have to happen more frequently in future.
- 3.2 This report will provide Members with a projection for the General Fund for the period 2022/23-2026/27, with particular emphasis on the current and next year's budgets. The 2022/23 budget still contains continuing pressures which manifested during the COVID pandemic. These are summarised in the chart below, together with the MTFS assumptions, (prior to this update).

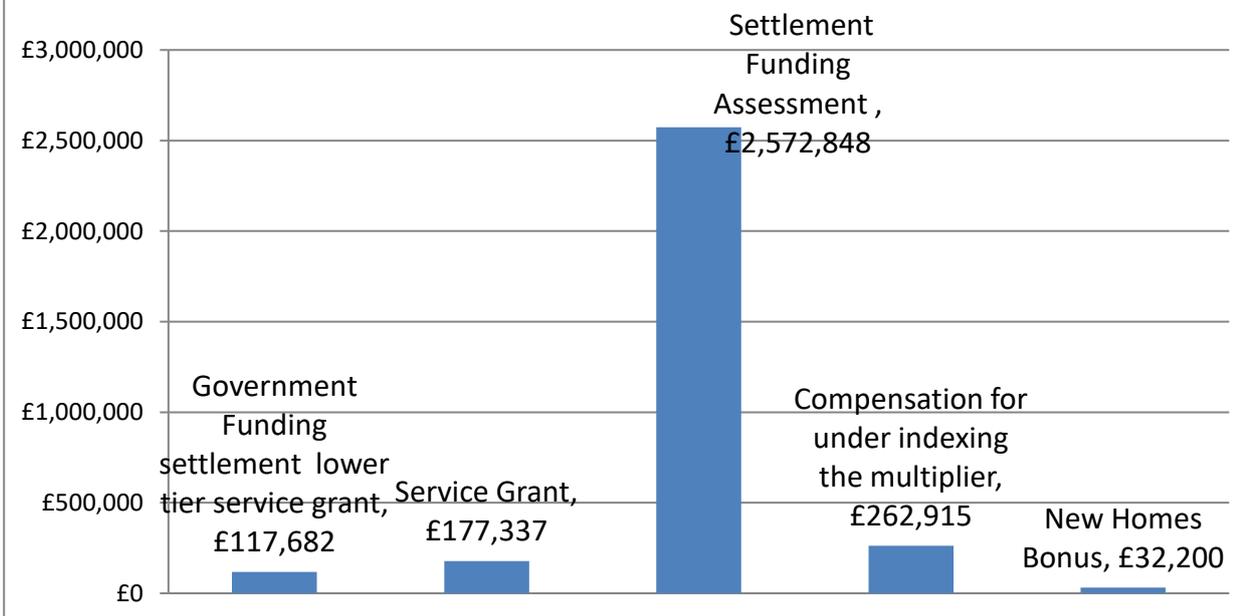
COVID related budget pressures £'000



3.3 The overall cost of COVID to the Council, net of government support is estimated to be circa a £4Million reduction in General Fund balances, (2019/20-2022/23) and after measures taken by the Council in the June 2020 MTFS update report.

3.4 The 2022/23 Finance settlement did not include government COVID related funding but did include a one off service grant payment of £177,337 to recognise the ‘vital services all tiers of local government’ provide. The New Homes Bonus payment was for one year only and the future of the scheme still remains unclear.

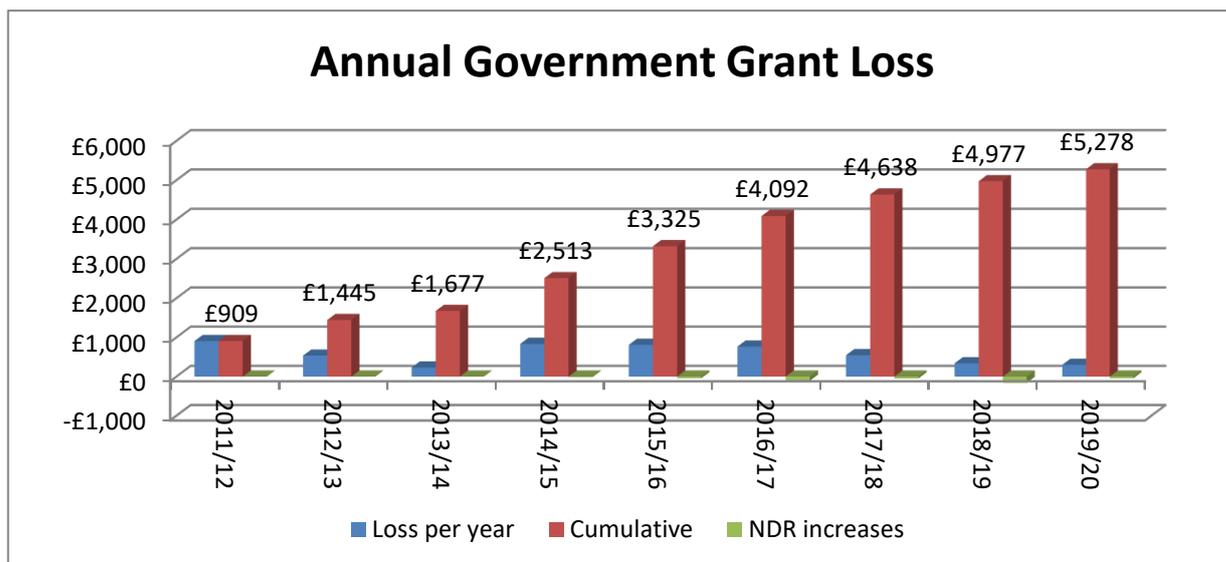
2022/23 Finance Settlement £3.16Million (one off £209K)



*compensation for under-indexing was because the incorrect formula for business rate increases included in the funding assessment was applied by the government and has to be updated each year.

3.5 The CFO anticipates that some level of grant funding may continue and has assumed an amount in the MTFS for the next two years, based on the cost envelope for Local Government published by the government, however it is not clear whether this will be in line with previous allocations.

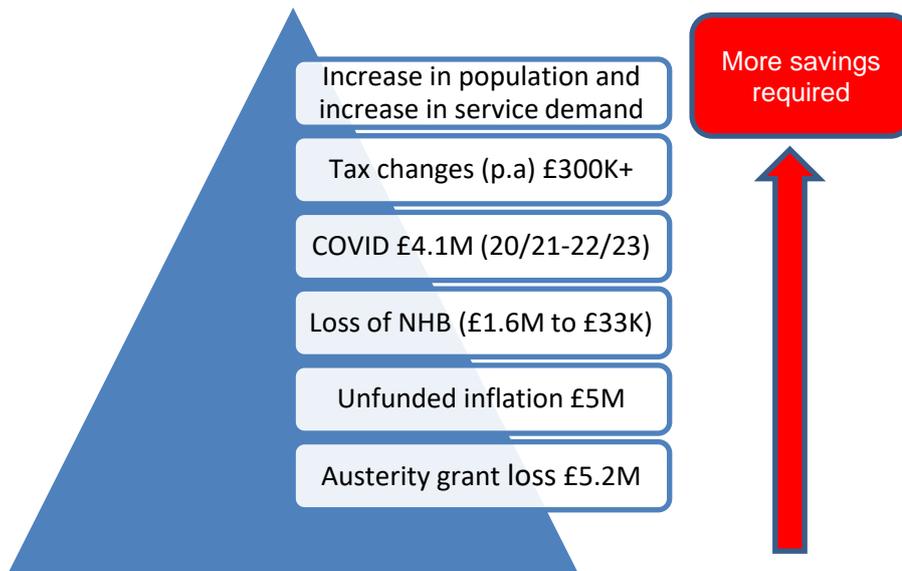
3.6 The impact of more than a decade of funding cuts as well as having to absorb inflationary pressures and taxation changes has meant the General Fund has had to use rather than made a contribution to balances, as well as make significant savings; this is clearly not a sustainable position long term. The MTFFS has a number of principles, the first of which is not to have a draw on balances by 2024/25. This is key to ensuring that reserves are not depleted below a minimum level and that any budget gap identified over that medium term is manageable to be met in any one year, without significant disruption to the delivery of Council's services.



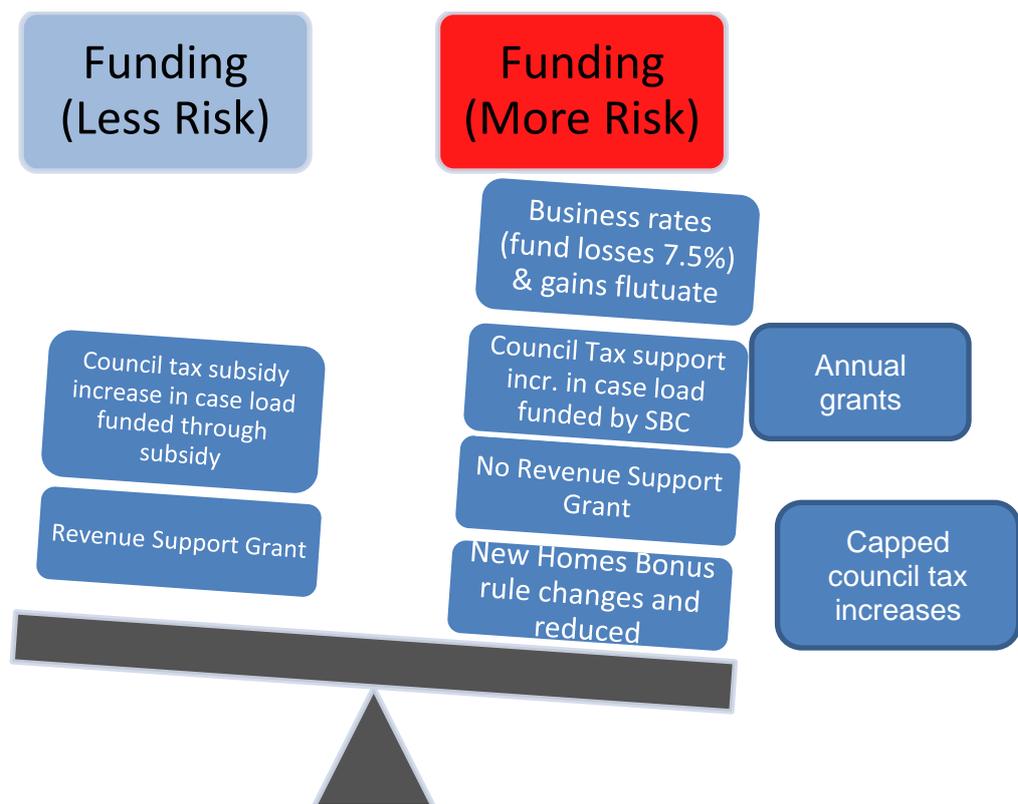
3.7 Looking back to 2010/11, government funding support for SBC was £6.24Million which, when converted to 2021 values, (using the bank of England inflation tool) converts to £7.45Million. This sum is £4.29Million less than the 2022/23 settlement of £3.16Million. The Council is able to further increase funding levels through retaining business rate gains, however these are not guaranteed, fluctuate between years and are subject to government re-setting the amount retained which is now planned to take place every three years. The CFO does not recommend using business rate gains for on-going or base line service provision, due to the risks in securing any given amount in a year.

3.8 The ability to set a balanced budget and retain services has become harder due to the combined financial impacts of government grant reduction, government policy changes and COVID losses. In recent years these impacts have resulted in the Council having to find cumulative savings of £11Million since 2010/11 through what is now called the Making Your Money Count programme.

Pyramid of Pressures for the General Fund



3.9 At the same time there has been a transition towards more inherent risks within local government funding, as illustrated below.



3.10 The MTFS is the mechanism through which the Council assesses the financial impacts of national and local pressures. Any budget challenges are modelled and the impacts on the draw and level of balances are considered, such as:

- National and local government policy on the five year forecast of resources for the General Fund (and Housing Revenue Account);
- Local pressures emerging from service provision, i.e. homeless costs;

- COVID financial impacts that remain due to changes in customer behaviour and the financial impact of COVID on residents.
- Cost of Living inflationary pressures on the Council's finances

3.11 Individually, in year or on-going financial pressures may sometimes be absorbed through a draw on balances or by a small increase to the level of savings, subject to the shortfall in any one year and post considering what is realistically achievable.

3.12 The MTFS principles are set out below.

No	MTFS principles
1	To remove the General Fund's reliance on RSG by 2019/20 when the funding is removed and achieve an on-going balanced budget by 2024/25 (by ensuring inflationary pressures are matched by increases in fees and income or reductions in expenditure from 2024/25)
2	To consider as part of the budget setting process, and throughout the year as necessary, what support can be given to the community, tenants, leaseholders and businesses in times of particular hardship.
3	To use the Council's reserves in a cost-efficient and planned manner to deliver the Council's priorities.
4	To maximise the Council's income by promptly raising all monies due and minimising the levels of arrears and debt write-offs.
5	To identify alternative means of resourcing the Capital Strategy to minimise the impact of borrowing (GF only).
6	In setting General Fund balances a % for overruns (currently 1.5%), specific known risks, loss of savings & risks associated with new ventures and the cost of borrowing for the capital programme is included.
7	To identify variations to the approved budget via quarterly monitoring and only incur additional on-going spending when matched by increased income or identified savings.
8	To propose Council tax increases in line with inflation for modelling purposes with any increase above inflation used to achieve a balanced budget.
9	To ensure that resources are aligned with the Council's Strategic Plan and FTFC priorities and growth limited to the Council's top priorities
10	The Council does not depend upon short term sources of funding such as New Homes Bonus or business rate gains.

3.13 This report makes assumptions about future Local Government spending reviews. For Members information the sector still awaits the outcome of the Fair Funding review (delayed from 2020/21) and the level of business rates to be retained by SBC.

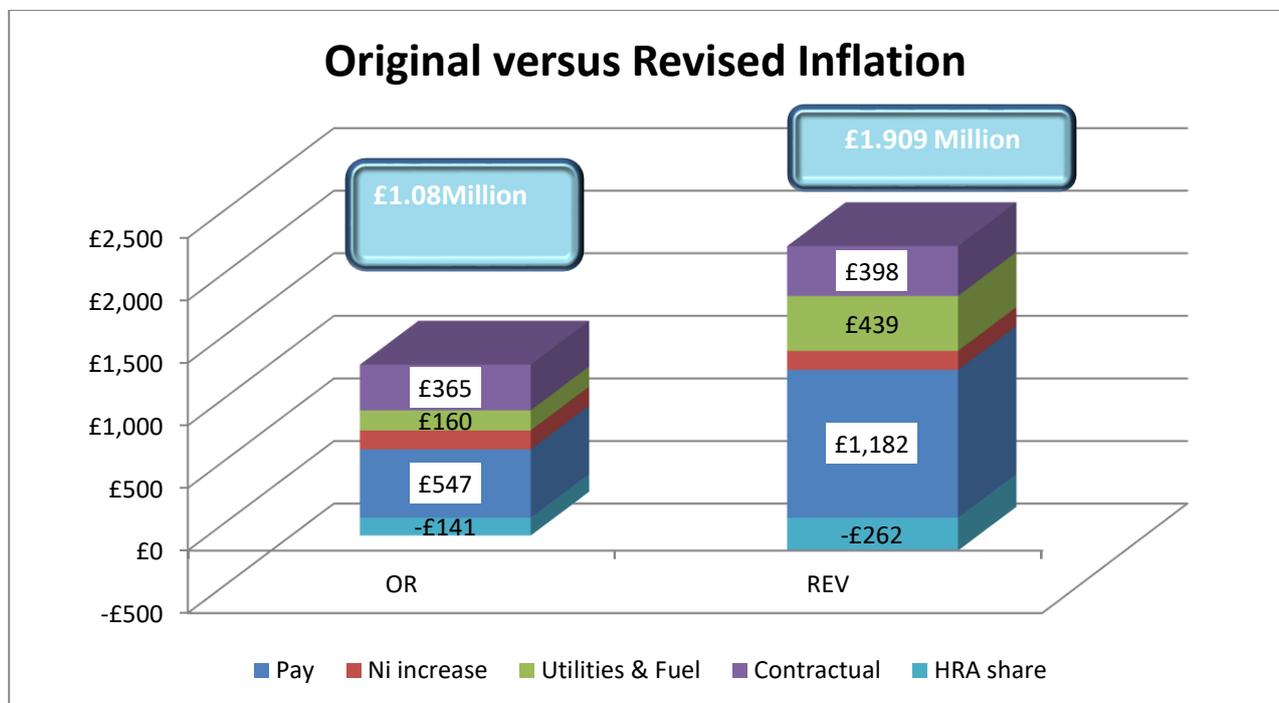
4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

4.1 General Fund pressures

- 4.1.1 Included within the MTFs modelling are a number of considerations which are:
- Inflationary pressures (section 4.2)
 - COVID on-going related fees and charges losses (section 4.3)

4.2 Inflation Pressures

- 4.2.1 The MTFs inflation update would typically focus on future years projections, however this time the MTFs and 1st quarter monitoring report identifies in-year pressures primarily from pay and fuel increases over that which was originally estimated. The 2022/23 General Fund revised inflation impact is estimated to be £827K higher than the approved budget as summarised below.



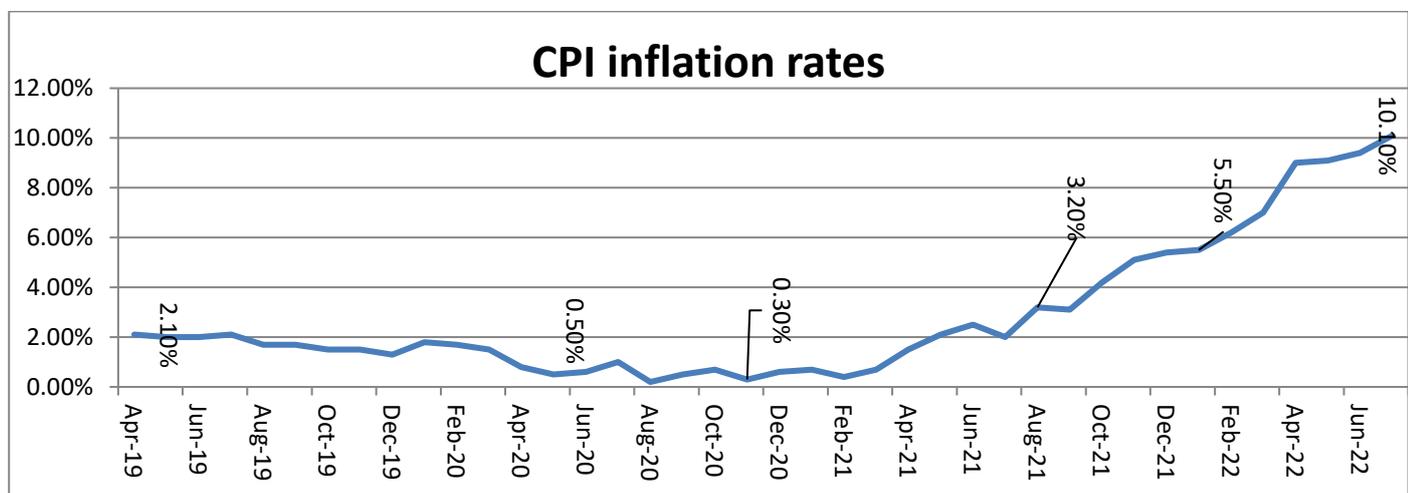
- 4.2.2 The projected inflation increase is due in part to the 2022/23 Local Government employers side pay offer of £1,925 on each spinal point, equating to a 5.66% average increase, versus the General Fund budgeted increase of 2%. The pay level offered was to mitigate the impact on the pay scales from the increases in the minimum wage. While this is welcome for Local Government employees who face an increased cost of living and have had below inflation pay increases in previous years, it does (if agreed in due course) add an extra £662K to the General Fund pay bill, (with a proportion to be charged to the HRA). Union members are still to be balloted on the pay award and the outcome will not be known until October 2022 at the earliest. This matter is outside the control of Councils and the government has been lobbied to increase financial support to Local Authorities as a result of this.

4.2.3 2022/23 utility increases have also exceeded the budget assumptions due to the Ukraine conflict exacerbating the cost of fuel, electricity and gas. The Council buys these through a contract, some of which is purchased for the 1 April and the rest the 1 October each year. The estimates shown in the MTF5 and 1st quarter monitoring are based on current projections but could be even higher for the October renewal. At present the cost is estimated to be £279K in addition to that included in the budget. Again, this is an external national pressure which the Council needs to manage in order to remain financially resilient.

4.2.4 The 2022/23 budget versus 2022/23 projected and 2023/24 onwards are summarised in the table below. There is uncertainty as to when 'normal' levels of inflation will resume and the current predictions assume higher utility costs for 2023/24.

	2022/23	2022/23 Projected	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25	2024/26
Inflation-Applied to:						
September CPI for business rate increases	2.30%	2.30%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%
Salaries - % increase	2.00%	5.66%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%
CPI indices increases	2.50%	10.10%	2.25%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%
RPI indices increases	4.00%	12.30%	3.75%	3.25%	3.00%	3.00%
Fuel Increases	14.17%	53.08%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
Gas (unit charge only)	73.70%	138.19%	50.00%	8.00%	8.00%	8.00%
Electricity (unit charge only)	14.33%	39.42%	45.00%	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%

4.2.5 CPI is the tracked measure for inflation used by the government and used for increases to business rates and council housing rents, (September CPI). The historic CPI trend is shown below, September 2019 was 1.7% compared to 10.10% for June 2022. On the 31 August the government published rent capping consultation proposals.

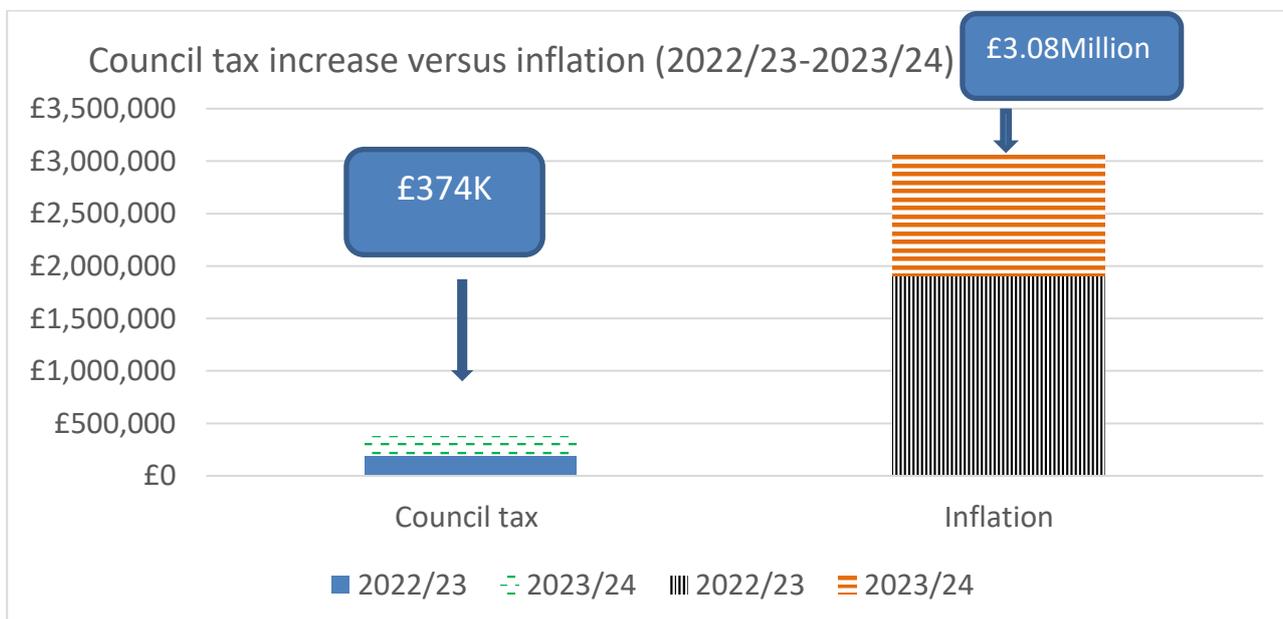


4.2.6 The government has not made any announcements regarding whether the CPI increase will be ameliorated or capped for business rates, but as stated above published rent capping consultation for 2023/24 housing rents. For business rates any reduction in the level set should be compensated by new burdens section 31 grant.

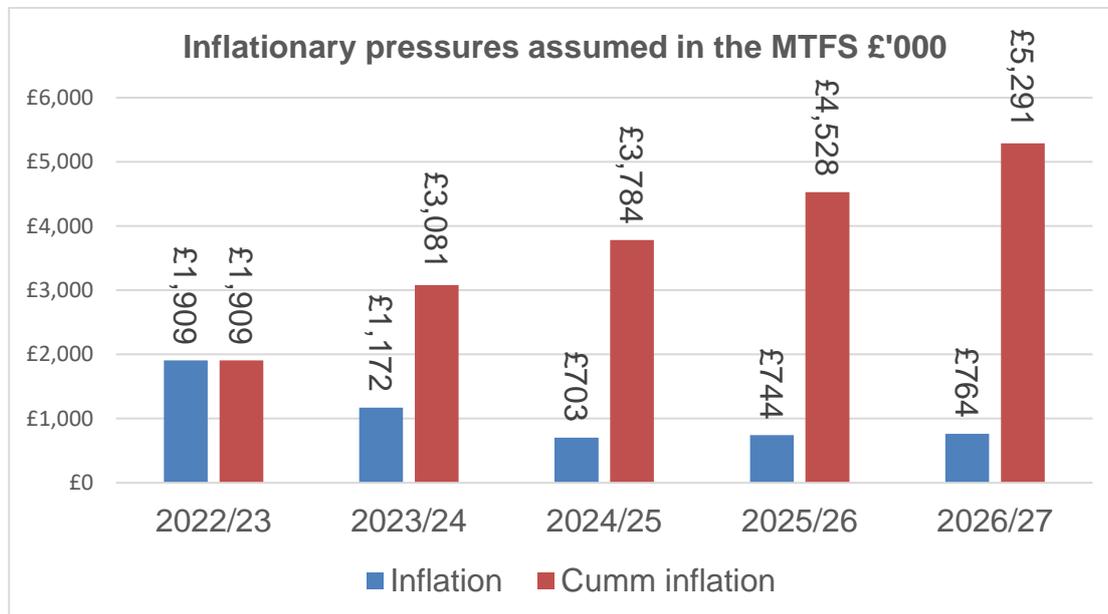
4.2.7 It is difficult to predict how high inflation will go and for how long, but the MTFS rationale and alternative scenarios are set out below.

Rationale for inflation assumption	
Salaries - % increase	Salary inflation is estimated at 3% for the period 2023/24 and then 2% thereafter. Councils already face the financial challenge of dealing with the 2022/23 increase with many having had typically a 2% increase built into their budgets. An additional 1% in 2023/24 would add circa a £200K pressure to the General Fund.
Pension Increase	The previous MTFS included an assumption that there would be a 1% increase as a result of the impact of COVID and BREXIT within the next actuary's projection in 2023/24. However, the current actuarial advice shows a 1% reduction in employers percentage (from 18.5% to 17.5%) which partly offsets the 2022/23 pay award. The difference for 2023/24 when comparing a 1% decrease versus 1% increase is a £320K reduction in cost.
Consumer Price Index (CPI) indices increases	The June CPI is 10.1% and has been modelled to reduce to more normal levels for 2023/24 but still remain higher for fuel related costs. For Business Rates the modelling includes an assumption that the Government will suppress a CPI increase to circa 2% however this is not known and each additional 1% adds circa £8.5K to the Councils costs.

4.2.8 There is a stark difference between the 2022/23-2023-24 inflation pressures compared to any increase in council tax for the same period), which further illustrates the challenge the Council faces in absorbing inflationary pressures.



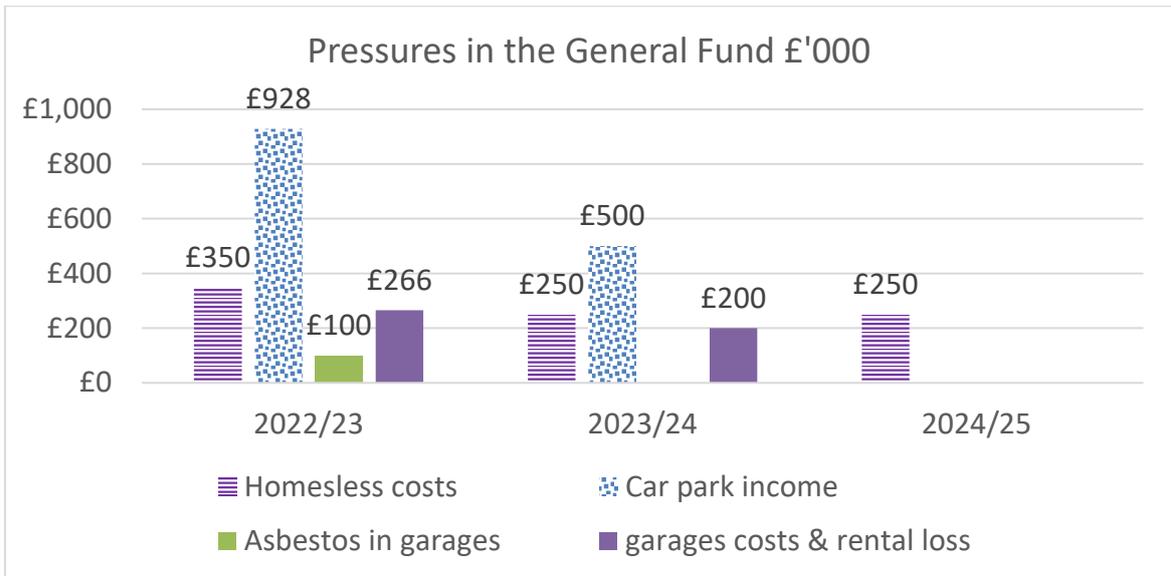
4.2.9 The amount of inflation projected in the current year and MTFS period is a total of £5.291Million as shown in the chart below, versus an increase in council tax of £925K over the same period (based on a 1.99% annual increase). This illustrates the funding gap that needs to be addressed which is exacerbated during periods of high inflation.



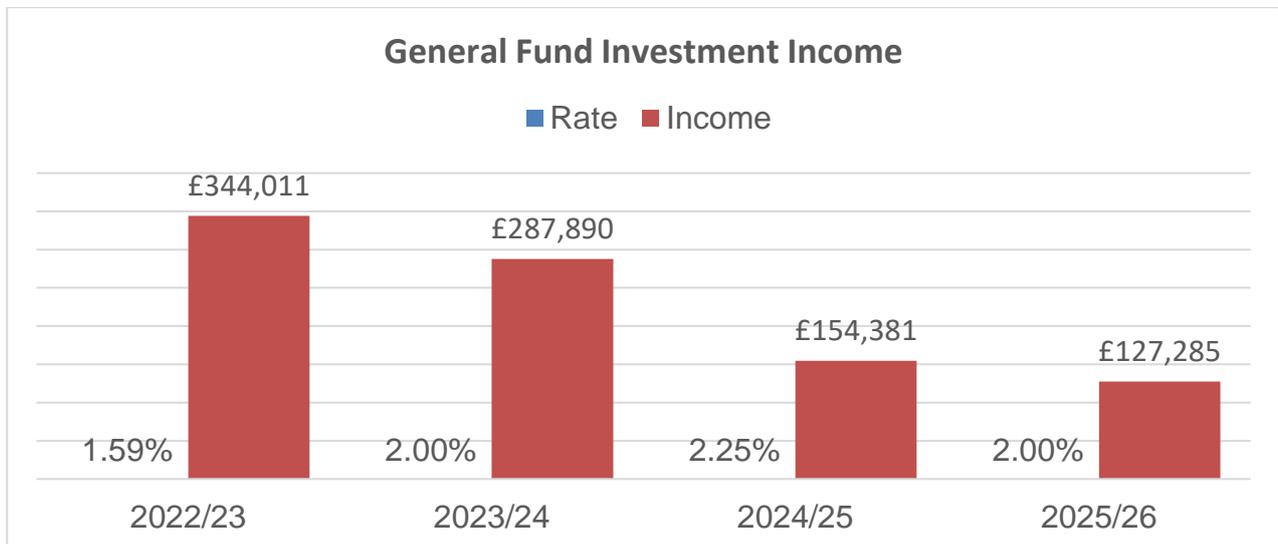
4.3 Other General Fund Pressures and Savings

4.3.1 In addition to the inflation challenge, the MTFS makes some assumptions about other pressures for the General Fund which include:

- **Homeless costs** are projected to increase up to and including 2024/25 as a result of the pressures which are already being experienced. A reduction in cost is anticipated as new accommodation comes in to use and it is hoped that homelessness will reduce beyond 2024/25 as a result of the action the Council is taking.
- **Car park income** continues to be lower than pre-COVID levels, (2020/21 £2Million lower, 2021/22 £1.5Million lower and 2022/23 £928K lower). The income reduction has been into 2023/24 where it is expected to be £500K lower than originally forecasted). However, this will need to be monitored and if the income level doesn't improve, then a permanent reduction for the General Fund will need to be factored in and/or alternative user groups targeted. For note, the new railway station multi storey car park is due to be operational by March 2023.
- **Garage costs and income losses** have been updated in the MTFS to reflect the cost of dealing with the Asbestos issues and the return of void garages back into use. This does not include any additional costs associated with the garage business plan report on this agenda.

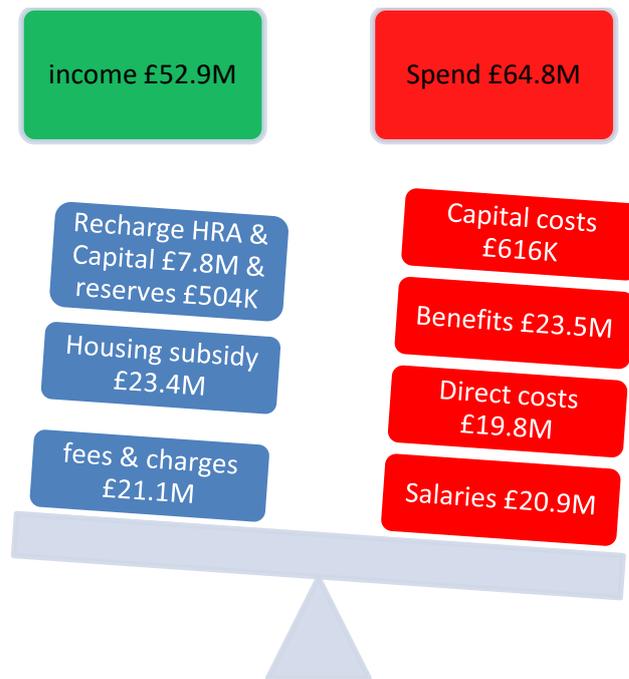


4.3.2 **Investment income** increases with the rise in the Bank of England base rate, partly offsetting some the pressures for the General Fund in 2022/23 as reported in the 1st quarter monitoring report to this Executive. This is due to higher balances and the increase in the base rate which results in an additional £252K being realised). However, investment balances are predicted to reduce by circa £35Million if all the Council’s capital and revenue plans are realised for the current year. The investment income interest has been re-calculated based on level of balances (assuming a level of slippage in spend) and advice from the Council’s Treasury Management advisors.



4.4 General Fund Income and Expenditure and Resources available to fund net cost pressures

4.4.1 The original 2022/23 General Fund net budget was £11.2Million. Adding in the additional inflationary pressures (£827K) results in a revised base budget of £11.9Million. This includes gross costs of circa £64.8Million and grants and fees and other income of £52.9Million.



4.4.2 The cost of General Fund services is not fully funded through fees and charges, grants from central government and other income (i.e. flexible homeless grant and NDR and Council tax admin and housing subsidy grants), hence why the Council sets a net expenditure budget annually for the General Fund.

4.4.3 The General Fund only has three 'core resources' to meet that annual cost of providing services for local people and businesses, namely council tax, retained business rates and any support grants such as the Lower Tier Grant, the latter of which cannot be guaranteed. But the reduction in funding and the gap between inflation and council tax income raised was highlighted in paragraphs 3.6-3.8 of this report.

4.5 Business Rates

4.5.1 Retained business rates are the amount above which the government allows Councils to keep business rates generated in their boundary. This is calculated by:

Step one - The government sets a baseline need value - this is assessed as the amount needed based on the funding formula.

Step two – The Council collects business rates in Stevenage, net of reliefs, and keeps a notional 40%, (50% is sent to the government and 10% to Hertfordshire County Council).

Step three- Calculate the amount of section 31 grant due to the Council based on reliefs the government has legislated (post the business rate methodology was introduced), given to reduce the amount of collectable business rates (i.e. COVID reliefs, extended small business rate relief, zero rating increases in business rates).

Step four -The government applies a tariff which then reduces the collected 40% share of business rates and reliefs (based on the last revaluation on rates), so that it is closer to the baseline need (as identified in step 1).

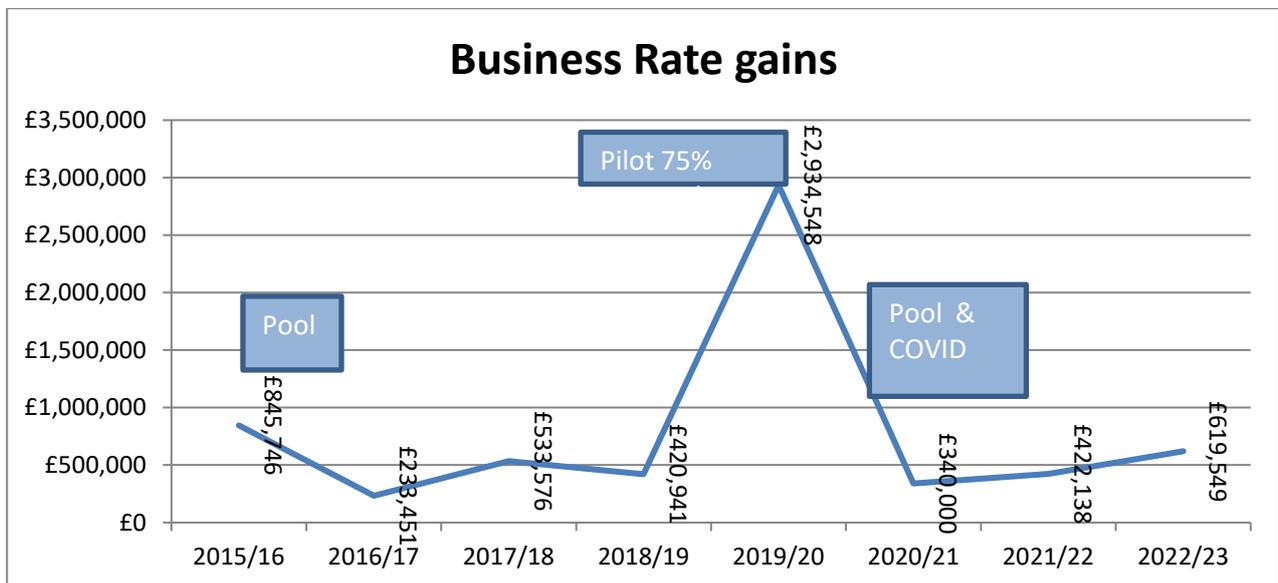
Step five - If there are still gains after step 4, a further levy is applied at 50% so effectively any gains above baseline need are split 50:50 with the government

Or In the event that there are in fact losses (i.e. less business rate income was received than the baseline) SBC must fund the first 7.5% below the base line need (approximately £180,000). The rest of the losses are funded by the government via the 'safety net'

Step six - The levy, safety net and section 31 grants are paid based on the amount due in year, all other payments are paid based on estimate with gains and losses due/paid in future years.

4.5.2 Stevenage has benefited historically from business rate gains, which have been influenced by a number of factors such as opportunities to pool gains among councils or the pilot where Hertfordshire Councils kept 75% of all business rates. However, SBC has only been in the 'Hertfordshire pool' twice and the government has only allowed Hertfordshire Councils to be in one pilot scheme. This adds complexity to projecting income and, in addition to this complexity, gains are not realised in the year they were achieved but are based on the prior year estimates.

4.5.3 The government also plans a business rate reset every three years, (as per recent consultation) which would effectively reset the Tariff, which in Stevenage's case would increase to match the business rates retained in line with the funding assessment thus 'eliminating' the current recognised gains. In addition, the government plans a 2023 revaluation of business rates based on the 2021 year which could result in a reduction in collectable business rates in Stevenage, which happened at the last revaluation.

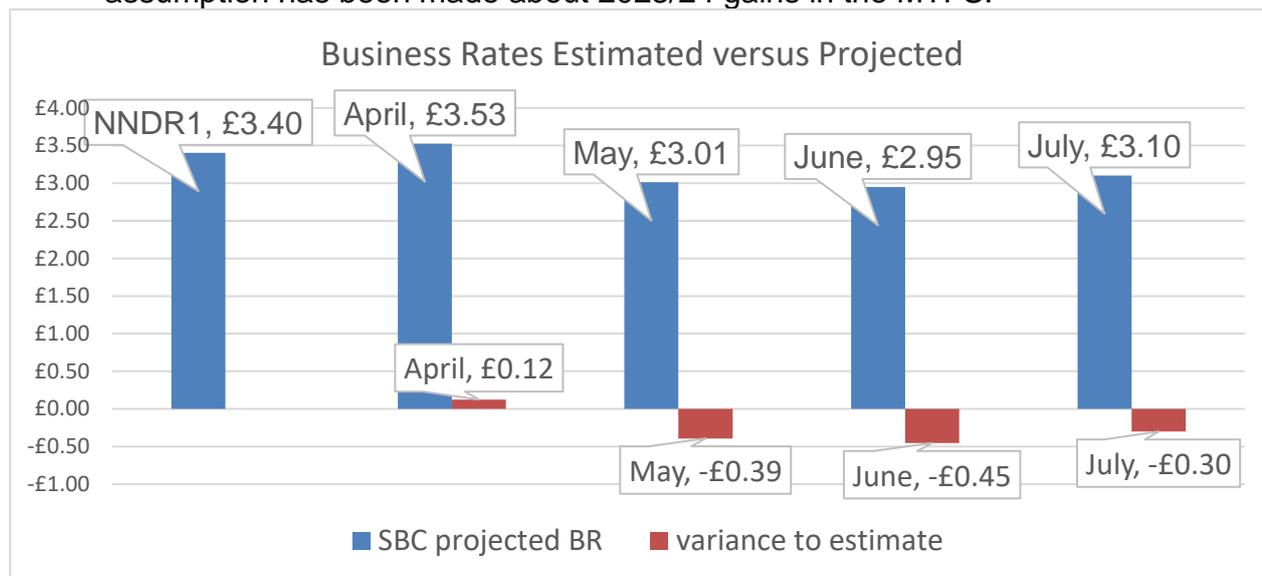


4.5.4 This business rate system, whilst allowing SBC to benefit from gains, is hard to predict as income fluctuates between years and can be reset to reduce the net annual amount retained as stated above. This makes it difficult to 'bank' on and use as a source to fund on-going services. Accordingly, such gains have been used to increase financial resilience or fund priority one off growth pressures.

4.5.6 In terms of the future of business rates, the Government has delayed the fair funding review for the last few years. This relates to the amount of business rates

the Council is 'allowed' to keep or the base line assessment. It is unclear whether any review will adversely impact on Stevenage or not, likewise with regards to the 2023 revaluation, but the former is almost certainly going to eliminate/reduce the gains shown above.

4.5.7 The Business rate yield for 2022/23 is currently lower than originally budgeted and this relates to prior year adjustments of £1.5Million which are currently being investigated. This may relate to appeals which the Council has a provision for, however this highlights the need to only spend business rate gains when there is certainty around the level which is achievable. Members will be updated as part of the November MYMC report on the projected level of 2022/23 business rates. No assumption has been made about 2023/24 gains in the MTFs.

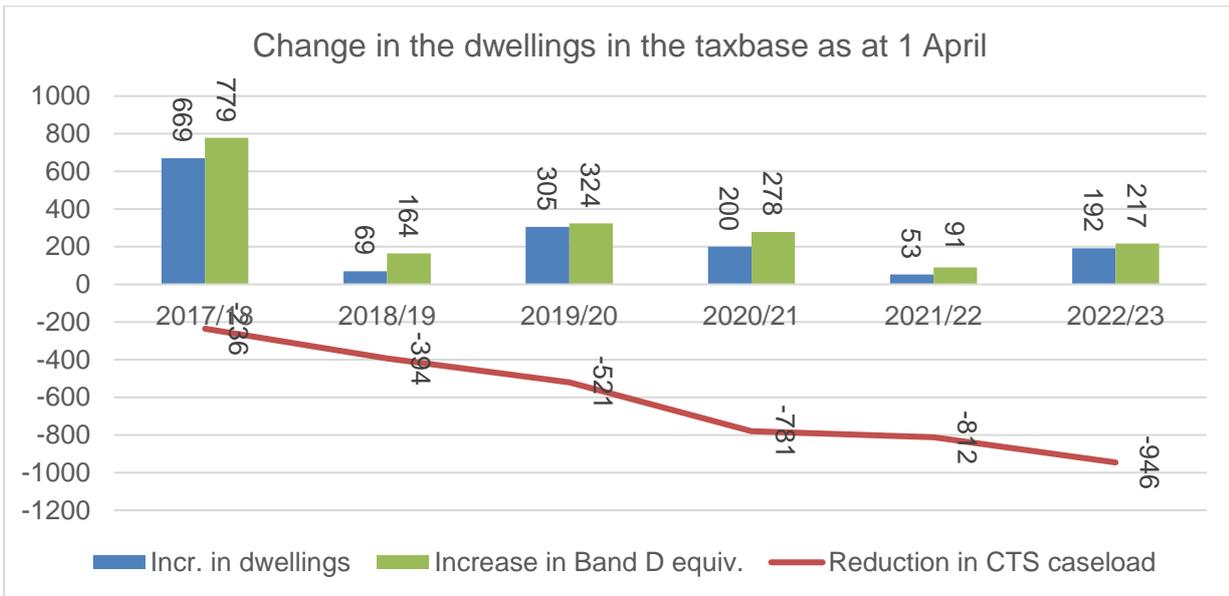


4.5.8 The business rate inflation projection built into the MTFs, are 10% for 2023/24 and 2% thereafter, although the government may suppress the increase by applying section 31 grant new burdens for Councils.

4.6 Council Tax

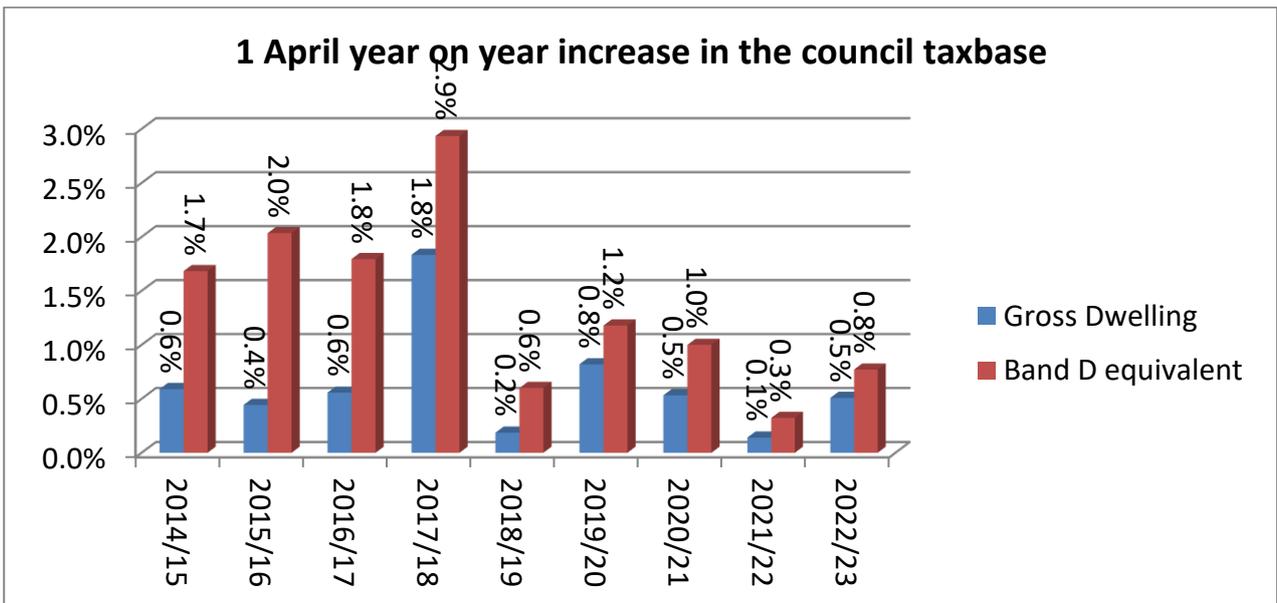
4.6.1 The amount of council tax that can be raised annually is influenced by two factors, firstly the growth in the tax base and secondly the inflationary increase applied each year. The tax base estimates when new properties will be brought into use and converts this to Band D equivalents for the year, together with all the existing properties and discounts given.

4.6.2 The tax base is calculated based on an estimate of the gross dwellings in Stevenage, reduced by the amount of discounts, (single person discount, council tax support and other exemptions).



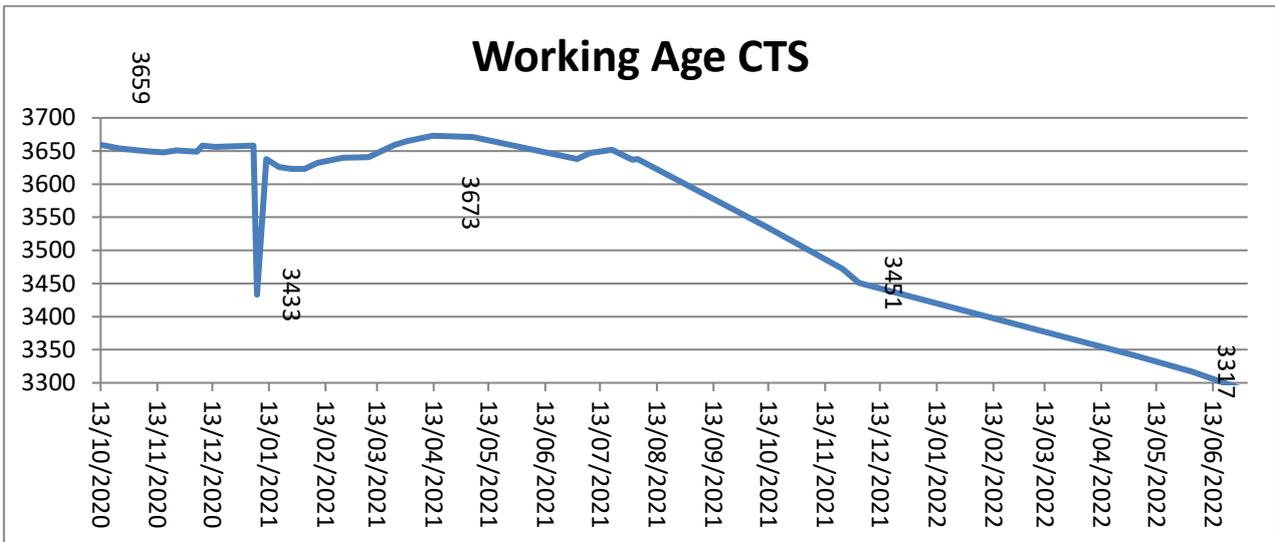
4.6.3 Looking at the growth in the taxbase, the Band D equivalent number of properties, (which should be less as there are more properties banded A to C) has exceeded the gross number of new dwellings on the valuation list, predominately due to the reduction year on year in the number of households claiming Council Tax Support (CTS), (see graph above).

4.6.4 The increase in the taxbase does fluctuates from year to year depending on new properties, CTS and discounts applied, as shown below, this is the amount preceptors will be able to levy council tax on. The MTFS assumes an annual increase of 0.75% per year. For 2022/23 there was an assumption of gross property numbers of 38,060 and as at the 1 August there were 54 properties lower, with a further eight months to go.

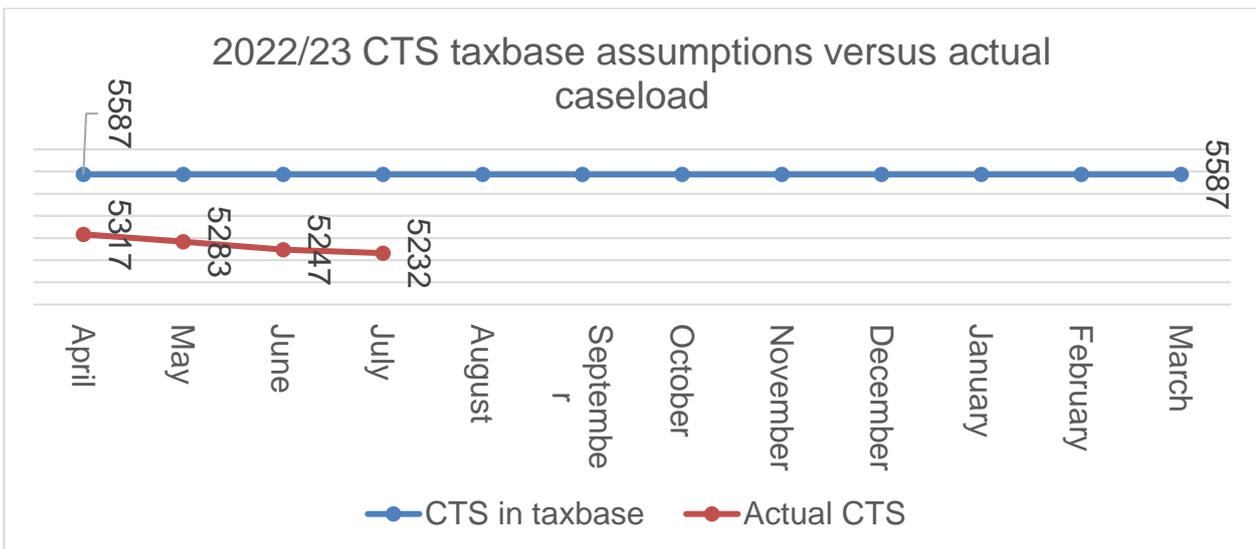


4.6.5 Predicting the taxbase for 2023/24 is difficult as there could be an increase in the council tax support (CTS) caseload, as a result of the current cost of living crisis. A spike was seen temporarily during the COVID pandemic but the caseload subsequently reduced. The shared revenue and benefits service has been

promoting the CTS scheme and information has also been sent to all Members to highlight how residents can see if they are eligible to claim.



4.6.6 in terms of modelling, the 2022/23 taxbase assumes 5,587 CTS claimants (which equated to the November 2021 caseload plus an allowance for new properties). The actual number of claimants is 355 (6.3%) less. Using the current taxbase to scenario plan for 2023/24 plus 0.75% of growth, means there is headroom to absorb additional CTS cases if they arise as a result of the current economic conditions. This will be monitored up to when the taxbase is approved in January for 2023/24. The current net tax base is 28,128.97 as at 1 August 2022, compared to the yearend target of 28,003.7, which is 125.27 band D equivalents higher (mainly due to the reduction in the CTS caseload), equating to an additional £28,257 for Stevenage for a full year.



4.6.7 The MTFS assumes the CTS scheme will remain unchanged at a maximum discount for working aged claimants of 91.5%, until such time there is a significant roll out of Universal Credit as recommended by the Portfolio Holder Advisory Group in 2021/22.

4.6.8 The MTFS currently includes a **1.99% increase in council tax for modelling purposes**. It is not clear whether, as part of the 2023/24 settlement, the

government will allow, (as in previous years) an increase of £5 on a band D. This would equate to an increase of 2.21%, or £14,421 extra based on the current tax base projections. This should be announced as part of the 2022 Spending Review, but in any event an increase of 2.21% does not significantly increase income for SBC when compared to 1.99%. The increase allowed above 1.99% should be considered as part of the overall strategy to meet the 2023/24 funding gap.

4.6.9 Members should note that SBC only retains a relatively small part of the overall Council Tax raised for the year. To illustrate this, taking a Band C property, (the biggest proportion of properties in Stevenage are a band C), the relative shares of council tax for a band C property are shown below.

Authority	2021/22	2022/23	Cost per week	Increase	Share
Hertfordshire County Council	£1,307.22	£1,359.38	£26.14	3.99%	77.32%
Stevenage Borough Council	£196.06	£200.51	£3.86	2.26%	11.40%
Police Crime Commissioner	£189.33	£198.22	£3.81	4.70%	11.27%
Total	£1,692.61	£1,758.11	£33.81	3.86%	100.00%

4.7 New Homes Bonus (NHB) and Support Grants

4.7.1 **NHB** was introduced in 2011/12 and money is paid to Council's based on the increase in properties in the tax base, (top sliced from nationally business rate revenues). The scheme has been amended over the last few years which has made it less financially beneficial to Council's, by:

- Reducing the number of years a payment is made for, from six to four years;
- Introducing a threshold of 0.4% of the tax base before any new payment is made.
- Gains for 2021/22 and 2022/23 to be retained for one year only

4.7.2 The Council received £32,200 in 2022/23, relating to a legacy payment (now finished) of £8,400 and a further amount of £23,800 for new affordable homes in Stevenage. The government hasn't indicated if they will continue with the scheme, but as at 1 August 2022 the NHB calculation showed that SBC was 2.27 properties below the threshold to qualify for a payment. With the calculation for NHB based on the number of new properties (Council Tax base, taken mid-September, CTB1), It is unlikely the threshold would be reached hence why accordingly no future income has been included in the MTFS

4.7.3 **Lower Tier Support Grant-** 2022/23 was the second year for this grant and the amount SBC received was £117,682 and £140,043 for 2022/23 and 2021/22 respectively.

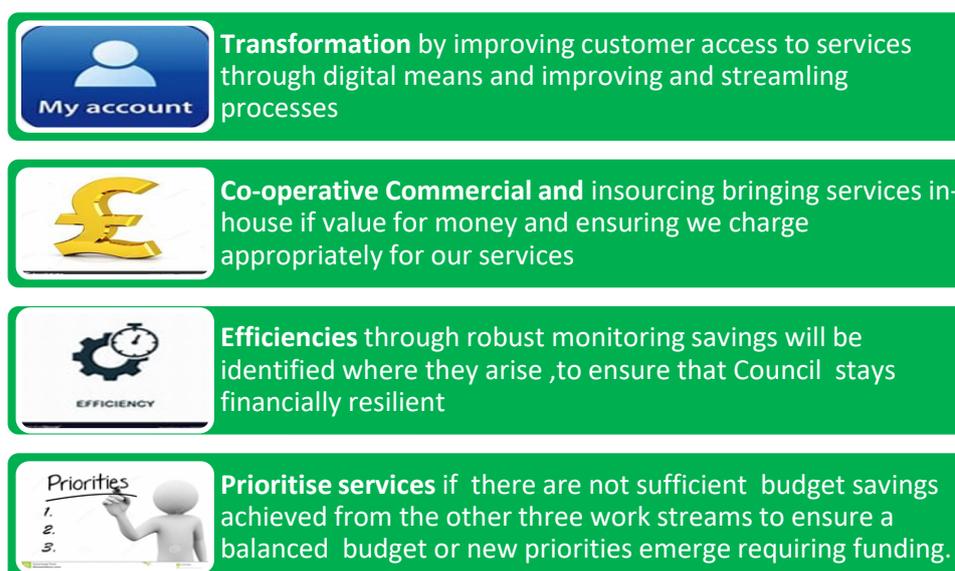
4.7.4 **Service Grant** -has been distributed via 2013/14 Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA) shares. It would appear that this means of distribution is for one year only and that (a) whilst the funding will remain in future years, it will be distributed differently and (b) the government has confirmed there will be no transition

arrangements for changes to this aspect of the CSP in future years, (SBC received £177,377 in 2022/23).

- 4.7.5 The MTFS therefore assumes a further £120,000 grant for 2023/24-2024/25. Based on funding within the Core Spending Power (CSP) there is a risk the amount could be lower or the grant could be removed entirely. However, there are indications that this grant may continue for the next two years.

4.8 Making Your Money Count

- 4.8 1 The 'Making Your Money Count' (MYMC) Cooperative Corporate Plan priority is the programme used to ensure that the Council remains financially resilient whilst striving to deliver against its service and high-level ambitions across both the General Fund and the HRA. MYMC consists of four, streams. The graphic below sets out the process for 2022/23 onwards.



- 4.8.2 **Transformation (including digital)** –Members approved a set of principles to be applied to securing improvements to customer access to services, through the use of digital design at the August 2021 Executive meeting. Customers are at the heart of the Council's services, so the aim of the programme is to ensure that they will be served in a straightforward way, with resolution at the first point of contact and through the provision of easy to access online services that are so good, people choose to use them. This will be achieved working cooperatively with residents to make sure services are designed with their support.

- 4.8.3 A report will be presented at the October 2022 Executive meeting setting out the potential opportunities and savings which could be realised. Further work will be required to consider the detailed changes necessary and the resulting profile of the possible savings; this will require investment and some changes to the delivery of services to help realise the identified benefits. It is proposed that a rolling programme will be established which will start delivering savings during 2023/24. The MTFS assumes a fund of £300K for the period 2023/24-2026/27 and Members are asked in principle to approve the 2023/24 allocation.

- 4.8.4 **Commercialisation**-The Council approved its Co-operative Commercial and Insourcing Strategy at the 12 August 2020 Executive. This strategy set out a

number of work streams which are overseen by an Executive working group. This work has already contributed to MYMC budget savings and new opportunities are considered throughout the year.

4.8.5 The Co-operative Commercial and Insourcing Strategy includes:

- Short term commercial options to be delivered – commercial property, private sector housing
- Review of current charging levels and readiness for complementary or additional services
- Setting a three year fees and charges schedule
- Longer term and level of commercialisation of services
- Insourcing options to be considered and a roadmap has been developed together with a schedule of procurements which are due in the next 12-24 months
- Developing the commercial culture for managers

4.8.6 This workstream has been reviewing fee charging activities to date and Members as asked to approve the revised charging as shown in the Appendix B, (Engineering charges). The fees have been previously been presented to the Commercial and Insourcing Committee. A further update on the work arising from the Co-operative Commercial and Insourcing Strategy will be included in the November Financial Security Report to the Executive.

4.8.7 **Efficiency savings** are reported and removed from the General Fund as part of the formal quarterly monitoring process. However, there may be some savings generated from changing the way we work, as a result of COVID albeit they have become increasingly more difficult to extract with the main cost pressures having already been reported. This places more emphasis on the two strands identified above to deliver budget reductions.

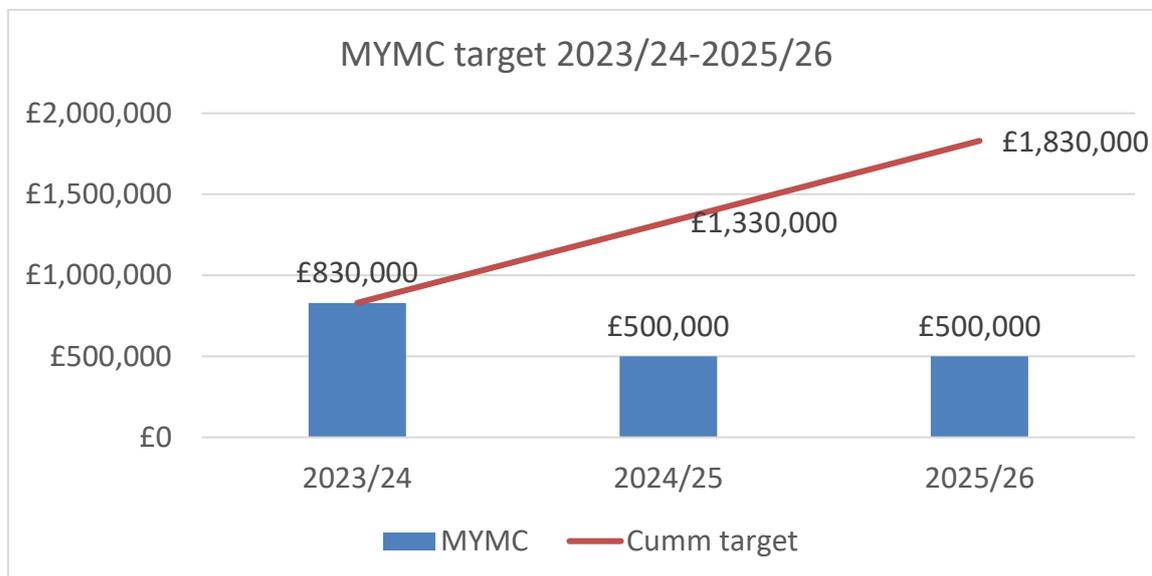
4.8.8 The last strand of Financial Security is to **prioritise services**. If a funding gap remains for the General Fund post taking action in relation to the previous MYMC activities, then the final option is to reduce the level of service provision after giving due regard to the Council's stated priorities. The financial pressures experienced by Councils over the last three years have been exacerbated by COVID with the cost of living crisis adding further pressure. As set out in section 4.2, £827K of additional on-going inflation which reflect costs outside the Council's control, have been added to the General Fund for 2022/23.

4.8.9 The CFO does not consider it prudent to set an undefined savings target for any of the MYMC workstreams, as any interventions need to be identified, scoped, discussed with and ultimately agreed by Members. Furthermore, setting an undefined target would compound risks to the budget and the Council's financial resilience such as:

- The scale on-going income losses exacerbated by COVID and the impact in 2023/24
- Higher inflationary pressures currently identified
- The need to draw on General Fund reserves

4.9 Making Your Money Count Target (MYMC)

4.9.1 The General Fund MTFs has had to set an annual MYMC savings target due to the level of funding reductions and increased financial pressures as set out in this and previous reports. The previous target for 2023/24-2025/26 was £1.8Million as summarised below.



4.9.2 Since approving the 2022/23 budget in February 2022, a number of factors have affected the level of savings which are required. These are:

- Increase in 2022/23 utility cost of living inflationary pressures leading to a £278K pressure in 2022/23, full year impact 2023/24 of £457K
- Increase in 2022/23 pay inflation, as a result of the rise in the living wage levels leading to an on-going pressure of £661K.
- An increase in the estimate for pay in 2023/24 from 2% to 3% based on the levels of inflation, which has increased costs in 2023/24 by a further £200K than previously estimated.
- On-going impact of lower parking income, with an estimated loss of £928K in 2022/23 and a projected £500K loss in 2023/24.
- 2023/24 loss of garage income of £200K one year only

4.9.3 There are a number of mitigations that have dampened the impact of the financial pressures identified above and these are:

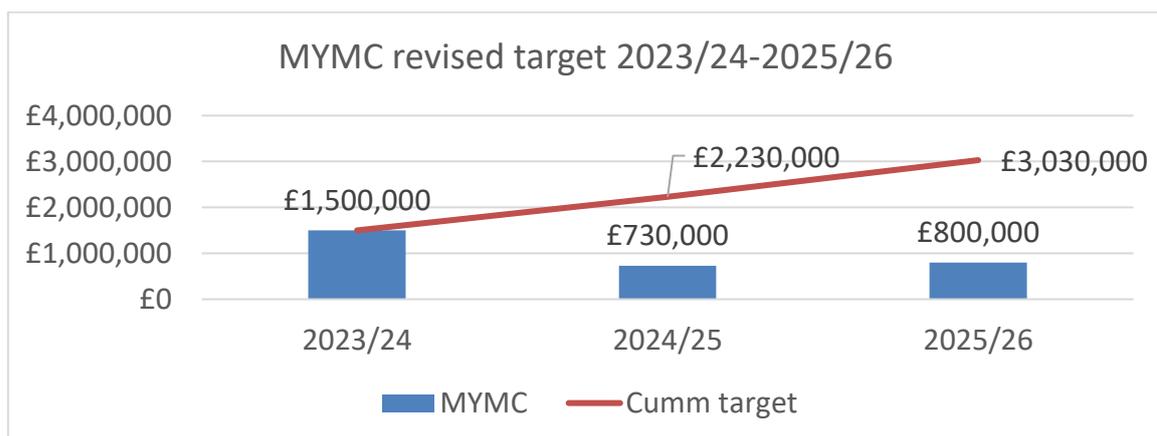
- The February MTFs had assumed a 1% increase in superannuation at the 2023/24 triennial review, however the actuaries have advised that this will be a 1% reduction based on how funded the pension scheme is. This means instead of a cost of £138K, there is a reduction of £138K which decreases spend by £276K.
- The 2021/22 outturn position was an underspend of £1.3Million after carry forwards, which the Executive approved should be used to help maintain financial resilience.
- The Council has approved a wholly owned company business plan which in the short term for 2022/23 and 2023/24, increases General Fund balances by £403K and £313K respectively, before reducing to return a net on-going saving of £33.6K per year.

4.9.4 The mitigations outlined above mean the 2022/23 inflation increases do not require additional savings to be found in this year to ensure the General Fund has sufficient balances, but the 2023/24 target has had to be increased. Further resilient measures taken by Members include the setting aside of:

- Business rate gains in an allocated reserve totalling an estimated £1.16Million as at 31 March 2023, earmarked for financial resilience if the financial position worsens.
- Income equalisation reserve of £458K as at 31 March 2023 to address fluctuations in fees and charges.
- Improvement in investment due to projected higher interest rates

4.9.5 In setting the MYMC target, consideration needs to be given as to whether the target sum is achievable in any given year versus setting an amount which delivers no draw on balances. While at the same time, ensuring the Council is still able to deliver on its priorities and that a budget can be set with a prudent level of balances.

4.9.6 The projected budget gap for 2023/24 is £2Million (before savings). Accordingly, the CFO recommends that a level of savings over the next three years of £3.03Million be approved as set out below.

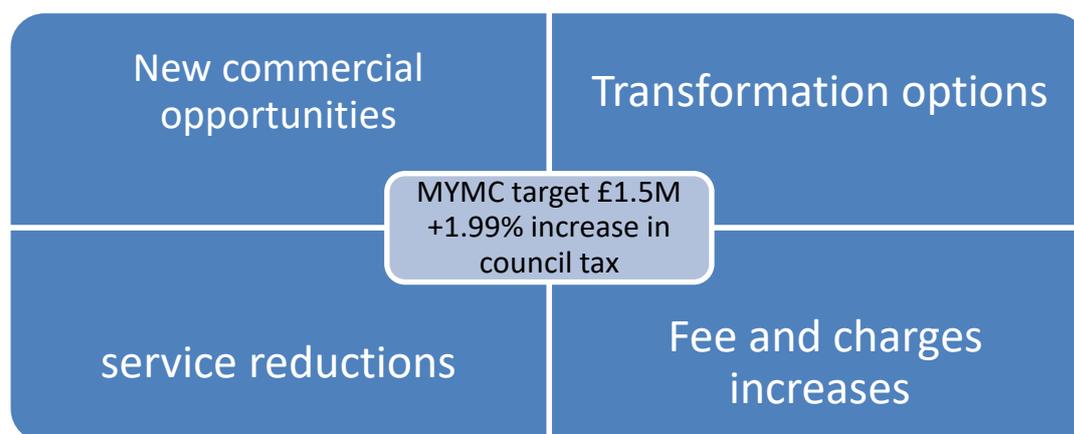


4.9.7 The 2023/24 target has had to increase from £830K to £1.5Million but is less than the 2023/24 identified gap of £2Million, based on the rationale set out in paragraph 4.9.5. In reaching that conclusion the following factors were taken into consideration:

- The 2023/24 MTFS assumptions include a further £500K of car parking losses, however with the new railway MSCP coming on stream March 2023, parking may improve to nearer normal levels and the losses are reducing;
- A further £200K of garage rental losses has been assumed in 2023/24 while the backlog of repairs is carried out, returning to normal levels in 2024/25
- The level of General Fund and allocated reserves available to absorb higher financial risks are sufficient and exceed minimum levels. (General Fund balances £798K above a higher minimum level, plus an additional £1.77Million of allocated reserves 2023/24).

The planned approach will enable the Council to achieve a level of savings in any one year whilst continuing to deliver on priorities. Crucially this approach also enables the Transformation programme to unlock future savings with a view to reducing the need to make service cuts. However, if car parking and garage rental losses do not return to pre-pandemic or near normal levels, then the savings target will need to be increased.

4.9.8 A £1.5Million MYMC target is above the level that has been realised in the last few years and undoubtably will necessitate the Council taking a blended approach. The Senior Leadership Team has instigated a ‘star chamber’ approach to reviewing current expenditure and income to identify a range of options for Members to consider during September and for inclusion in the November MYMC report.



4.9.9 The current MTFS principles require a contribution to balances by 2024/25 and the MTFS now predicts this to be 2025/26, however this assumption pre-dated the current financial climate. Accordingly, Members are asked to approve the revised target date.

4.9.10 A report will be presented to the November 2022 Executive and Scrutiny Committees and will include the options to meet the MYMC target. This will include options from the four MYMC strands identified in this report. As previously noted, whilst the focus will remain on looking for options such as increasing surplus income and transforming how the Council works, it is unlikely that the target will be achieved without changes being made to the frontline services. This means a combination of service improvements, council tax and fees and charges increases are necessary in order to reduce the impact on the front line services.

4.10 General Fund Balances and Reserves in the MTFS

4.10.1 Council’s General Fund reserves are classified as either general or as being held for a specific purpose. The General Fund or the Council’s main reserve is designed to cushion the impact of unexpected events/emergencies and to help absorb the impact of uneven cash flows.

4.10.2 The Council’s General Fund balances projected in the MTFS are summarised in the table below.

General Fund balances	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000
Opening Balance	(£6,401)	(£6,908)	(£4,931)	(£4,368)	(£4,248)
In Year	(£507)	£1,976	£563	£120	(£4)
Closing Balance	(£6,908)	(£4,931)	(£4,368)	(£4,248)	(£4,252)
February Council report 2022	(£4,942)	(£3,886)	(£3,395)	(£3,404)	(£3,605)
Variance	(£1,966)	(£1,045)	(£973)	(£844)	(£647)

() equals surplus

4.10.3 The improvement in General Fund resources is largely due to the 2021/22 yearend underspend. This means the General Fund has increased its financial resilience despite the financial challenges faced and has a bigger financial cushion to absorb unforeseen pressures.

4.10.4 Guidance issued by CIPFA emphasises this requirement, particularly in light of the responsibilities placed upon the S151 Officer on an annual basis (under the Local Government Act 2003), to report on the adequacy of proposed reserves when Council sets the council tax for the forthcoming year.

4.10.5 The Act includes a reserve power for government to lay down the minimum reserves local authorities must allow for when they set their budgets. It is therefore expected, that authorities will have regard to the CIPFA guidance when considering the adequacy of balances and allocated reserves.

4.10.6 Reserves can be held for three main purposes:

- A working balance to help cushion the impact of uneven cash flows and avoid unnecessary temporary borrowing;
- A contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies; and
- A means of building up funds to meet known or predicted liabilities (this is often referred to as allocated reserves).

4.10.7 In order to assess the adequacy of unallocated general reserves when setting the budget, the CFO must take account of the strategic, operational and financial risks facing the authority.

4.10.8 In terms of determining the level of general balances, the CFO has based her advice on consideration of the factors included in the table below which projects a £3.57Million (2022/23 £3.47Million) minimum level. This is higher than in previous years due to the legacy impacts of COVID combined with the risk of further inflationary pressures. This assessment is indicative at the current time and will be further reviewed as part of the budget setting process.

General Fund balances Minimum Level Assessment	2023/24 £Million
Amount to cover a 1.5% overrun in gross expenditure	£0.97
Amount to cover a 1.5% overrun in gross income	£0.79
Amount to cover fee and charges losses through price fluctuation (garages, recycling)	£0.30
Amount to cover higher prices with higher than forecast inflation	£0.60
Amount to increased COVID losses from parking fees	£0.50
Amount to increased homeless costs	£0.10
Amount to cover risk to Financial Security savings	£0.30
Total Estimated General Fund Reserves	£3.57

4.11 Allocated Reserves

4.11.1 The Council's Allocated revenue reserve projections are summarised in the table below. The reserves have been categorised as being allocated for a specific use or available to support the General Fund.

Reserves	Opening 2022/23	Use	Closing 2022/23	Use	Closing 2023/24
NHB reserve	(£479)	£474	(£5)	£0	(£5)
Transformation Reserve	(£506)	£230	(£276)	£276	£0
Homeless reserve	(£544)	£0	(£544)	£544	£0
Planning Delivery	(£62)	£0	(£62)	£0	(£62)
Queensway Car Park monies	(£39)	£0	(£39)	(£40)	(£79)
Town square reserve	(£649)	£40	(£609)	(£376)	(£985)
Regeneration Reserve	(£380)	£166	(£214)	£0	(£214)
Insurance reserve	(£65)	£54	(£11)	£0	(£11)
ICT reserve	(£316)	£151	(£165)	£165	£0
Town centre	(£42)	£14	(£28)	£0	(£28)
New Leisure	(£363)	£363	£0	£0	£0
New Commercial Property repair	(£41)	£0	(£41)	£0	(£41)
Capital reserve	(£44)	£44	£0	£0	£0
Total Allocated for use	(£3,532)	£1,537	(£1,996)	£571	(£1,425)
Income equalisation Reserve	(£258)	(£200)	(£458)	(£150)	(£608)
Gains (NNDR)	(£1,017)	(£145)	(£1,162)	£0	(£1,162)
Total Available to support the GF	(£1,275)	(£345)	(£1,620)	(£150)	(£1,770)
Total allocated reserves	(£4,808)	£1,192	(£3,616)	£421	(£3,195)

4.11.2 There are balances of £1.770Million estimated at the end of 2023/24 that would be available to support the financial resilience of the General Fund if inflationary pressures continue to increase and if fees and charge are impacted. This includes balances relating to 2022/23 business rate gains transferred to the NNDR reserve

(in this year), which could be returned to the General Fund if they are realised. The CFO does not recommend returning those balances until they are achieved.

4.11.3 The Regeneration reserve will require reviewing to determine whether additional funds need to be added to support the SG1 regeneration priority. The CFO recommends that if 2022/23 yearend underspends occur, the reserve should be increased by £200K.

4.12 CFO commentary

4.12.1 The MTFs projects that 2023/24 general balances will be above minimum levels - based on the revised calculation in paragraph 4.10.8, with an additional £1.770Million of allocated reserves. However, the General Fund faces some financial uncertainty for the reasons previously stated and those set out below:

- There is still a draw on balances projected until 2025/26.
- There is a potential on-going risk to income streams from COVID such as parking and commercial.
- There is a risk of higher costs due to homelessness and higher cost of materials and contracts as a result of supply issues.
- There is a risk to higher inflationary pressures from utilities, contracts and pay negotiations
- There is considerable uncertainty around future funding and whether the fair funding review will reduce government funding further.

4.12.2 It is critical that General Fund reserve resilience measures, such as the Locality Review receipts, meet the in-year target required and the MYMC targets are achieved as set out in the Strategy. This means that options, identified and presented to the November Executive, must meet the target for 2023/24 and that the October Executive Transformation report sets out future year savings opportunities.

4.12.3 Growth should be limited to that which is necessary to deliver the Council's top priorities only, based on the ability to deliver the existing Corporate Plan commitments and should be met by increasing the MYMC target. The growth allowance for 2022/23 is modelled at £75,000. There is a need to increase resources to enable the Council to meet its 2030 net zero pledge including maximising grant funding opportunities and the ongoing development of the strategy and implementation of the related action plan which will be necessary to meet the deadline and mitigate costs to both the General Fund and the HRA. It should be noted though that further support from the Government with regards to elements such as social housing decarbonisation will also be needed in order for that target to be met.

4.12.5 The cost of living crisis and COVID legacy impacts are outside the control of the Council but this report sets out a roadmap to address the potential impacts. The Council cannot just rely on unplanned underspends to improve balances, which are one off in nature and may not always happen.

4.13 Approach to Consultation

4.13.1 Previously the Council has sought the views of residents and stakeholders through consultation, finding out their preferences for reducing services, increasing fees and charges and increasing Council Tax. The recent residents' survey results showed what priority the Council should make savings.

4.13.2 The 2021/22 Residents survey shows that resident's preferences are firstly to reduce costs through the provision of more on line services. Moving services on line was ranked the highest (out of five options in 2021 and 2017) with 41% of those responding to the survey indicating that this was their preferred option; this ranking has increased from 2017 and supports proposals being developed via the Transformation programme as a method to reduce costs and improve customer satisfaction / response times.

Please tell us your order of preference for each of the following options by ordering them 1 to 5	2021 rank	2017 rank	1st
Reduce time and money spent on paperwork by interacting with more residents and customers online	1	1	41%
Increase income from fees and chargeable services, to keep the council's element of Council Tax as low as possible	2	3	24%
Spend less by reducing or cutting the services that you tell us are not a priority	3	2	16%
Make money by selling more of our services to residents and customers	4	5	9%
Increase our element of Council Tax (for example from 51p per day to 55p per day)	5	4	10%

4.13.3 In addition, the CFO is reviewing what additional consultation with residents could be developed for the 2023/24 MYMC budget options. These options will be discussed with Members and through the a Member Led cross party group.

4.14 Decision Making Process

4.14.1 It is currently planned that the following approval process will be followed:

Date	Meeting	Report
Nov-22	Executive	Financial Security Report with the three year savings proposals for the General Fund and HRA
	Overview and Scrutiny	Financial Security Report with the three year savings proposals for the General Fund and HRA
Dec-22	Executive	Draft 2022/23 HRA budget and rent setting report
	Overview and Scrutiny	Draft 2022/23 HRA budget and rent setting report
Jan-23	Executive	Final 2022/23 HRA budget and rent setting report Draft 2022/23 General Fund budget, Council Tax and Council Tax Support

Date	Meeting	Report
	Overview and Scrutiny	Draft 2022/23 General Fund budget, Council Tax and Council Tax Support
	Council	Final 2022/23 HRA budget and rent setting report
Feb-23	Executive	Final 2022/23 General Fund budget, Council Tax and Council Tax Support
	Overview and Scrutiny	Final 2022/23 General Fund budget, Council Tax and Council Tax Support
	Council	Final 2022/23 General Fund budget, Council Tax and Council Tax Support

4.14.2 Following the approval of the proposed MYMC options for 2023/24, the Council will have an obligation to begin consultation with staff and partners.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Financial Implications

5.1.1 The CFO view is set out within this report. There is still a draw on balances which increases the necessity to adhere to the spending and saving plans.

5.1.2 There may also be pressure on fees and charges targets as increases in fees or new commercial options may conflict with other business objectives and COVID and the cost of living crisis have diminished the ability to achieve previous levels of rents and charges.

5.2. Legal Implications

5.2.1 The objective of this report is to outline a MTFs and forecast for the next five years. There are no legal implications at this stage of the planning cycle, however, Members are reminded of their duty to set a balanced budget.

5.2.2 MYMC savings options considered will have due regard to any consultation carried out, if consultation is required.

5.5.3 The Borough Solicitor has considered and confirmed that the Council has the necessary statutory powers to provide & charge for services as detailed under this report (Appendix B) and will keep this under review, working closely with the officers concerned

5.3. Risk Implications

5.3.1 A review of the risks facing the General Fund budgets has been listed in the table below, not all the impacts are known at the present time. The current MTFs projections are based on prudent assumptions, and include the CFO's best assessment of the financial risks. However, if any of these risks become a reality then the MTFs will need to be updated once the actual impacts are known.

Risk Area	Risk Mitigation	Likelihood	Impact
<p>Anticipated MYMC options not achieved (Negative Risk) –agreed options do not deliver expected level of savings either on a one-off basis or On-going.</p>	<p>Regular monitoring and reporting takes place, but the size of the net budget reductions increases the risk into the future. Non achievement of options would require other options to be brought forward. General Fund reserves should be held to ensure that decisions to reduce net costs are taken in a considered manner. This may become more of a risk as options around commercialisation are explored.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium</p>
<p>REVISED: Council Tax Support (CTS) (Negative Risk) – increased demand is under- estimated.</p>	<p>An increase in demand would impact on future years as the deficit in the collection fund would need to be repaid by the General Fund. However the modelling in the MTFS leaves the higher level of CTS caseload as set out in para 4.6.6</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>Medium</p>
<p>Localisation of Business Rates (Potential Negative) – A major employer leaves the town and impacts the business rate yield due to the Council</p>	<p>Negative: The safety net means a maximum loss in year of £190K which the council has included in an allocated reserve. On-going this would impact on the savings target and ultimately services.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Loss of Business Rates due to Companies going into administration</p>	<p>As above.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>The NDR Check Challenge Appeal process impacts on the council's baseline assessment and increases the level of successful appeals and reduces the yield (Negative risk)</p>	<p>Officers will be monitoring changes to the NDR system and will be talking to the Valuation office. However since the system has been introduced, little has been completed in Stevenage and there are appeals from the 2010 list remaining.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium</p>
<p>Impact of the Universal Credit (Negative Risk) – The grant given to the Council is cut before the Revenue and Benefits Partnership is able to reduce costs. The Welfare reform bill may</p>	<p>A reduction in the amount of grant assumed within the MTFS would require compensating reductions in planned spending within services. However UC is being implemented at a very slow pace and the current case load is reducing.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>High</p>

Risk Area	Risk Mitigation	Likelihood	Impact
impact on residents' ability to pay council bills.			
NEW: pay inflation pressures increase	General balances are risk assessed to ensure overall levels are maintained that can meet higher than expected inflation rates. The inflation projections include a 3% pay award for 2023/24 (was 2%), however this remains a significant risk for the Council as a insourcing Council. However it reduces the risk to inflationary pressures on external contracts	Medium	High
NEW: Utility inflation pressures increase	General balances are risk assessed to ensure overall levels are maintained that can meet higher than expected inflation rates. The inflation projections include a higher increase for 2023/24 while inflation remains higher. However this remains a significant risk for the Council.	High	High
New: Recession risk due to high inflation	General balances are risk assessed to ensure overall levels are maintained that meet an in-year short fall in income and higher costs. In addition the Council is building an income equalisation reserve to mitigate against fluctuating income levels	High	High
Impact of Future Welfare Reforms (Negative Risk) – There could be an increase in the need for the council's services requiring additional resources to be put into those services	Regular monitoring and reporting and the council has a welfare reform group which monitors impacts.	Medium	Medium
All MTFS risks not adequately identified (Negative or Positive Risk) – Financial risks and their timing are not accurately judged leading to either a pressure or benefit to the MTFS.	Council's risk management framework ensures operational and strategic risks are identified as part of the annual service and MTFS planning process.	Low	High

Risk Area	Risk Mitigation	Likelihood	Impact
NEW: The impact of Ukraine war (negative risk) causes supply chain issues increasing costs such as steel	An amount has been included in the minimum level of balances and the inflation increases for contracts and utilities has been included in the MTFs modelling.	Medium	Medium
Impact of future years capital programme (Negative) There could be increased pressure from the capital programme on the General Fund.	There is a robust challenge process for capital bids. Officers will be required to confirm that resources are in place to deliver any approved spend. The Locality reviews should identify capital receipt opportunities.	Medium	High
The Council's regeneration of SG1 increases the financial resources the Council must find.	The Council has already approved the use of ring fenced NDR gains for this purpose and the MTFs recommends this continues. However a full reset of business rate gains could see this reduce and put a pressure on the General Fund.	High	High
Fees and Charges target may not be reached (negative risk)	Non achievement of the target may require other options to be brought forward, for future years. But the Council has an income equalisation reserve to meet in year losses and an assumption is also contained within the minimum level of balances to meet an in year loss.	High	High
Homeless Bed and Breakfast costs increase over that budgeted	An allocation of £250,000 has been included in the MTFs for 2023/24. However the cost of living crisis could see more residents presenting as homeless.	High	High

5.4. Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.4.1 The Council has committed itself to providing high quality services that are relevant to the needs and responsive to the views of all sections of the local community, irrespective of their race, gender, disability, culture, religion, age, sexual orientation or marital status. The General Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) requires the Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in the exercise of its functions. The Equality Duty and the impact of decisions on people with protected characteristics must be considered by decision makers before making relevant decisions, including budget savings.
- 5.4.2 The process used to develop the Council's budget has been designed to ensure appropriate measures are in place to ensure the impact of decisions on the

community is considered as part of the decision making process. It is officers' view that undertaking an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIAs) on the strategy is not appropriate at this stage. EqIAs will be done on individual savings proposals (when relevant) at an early stage in the budget savings process to aid decision makers in their consideration of the Equality Duty. This work is being planned into the budget setting process.

5.5. Policy Implications

5.5.1 The approval of the revised budget framework includes a link for the Council's service planning requirements to ensure service priorities are identified. In addition, the budget framework represents a development of a policy led budgeting approach across Council services and the overall Financial Strategy.

5.6 Staffing and Accommodation Implications

5.6.1 It will be evident that there are potentially staffing implications in this report. The associated matters will be discussed with the Trade Unions at the earliest opportunity.

5.7 Climate Change Implications

5.7.1 The Budget and Policy setting process prioritised growth for climate change as part of the 2022/23 budget setting process. However as set out in the report, there will be a need to provide more resource than what is currently included in the budget to meet the 2030 deadline. The 2023/24 process should have due regard for climate change implications based on the Council's approved Climate Change Strategy.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

BD1 - 2021 September MTFS Strategy

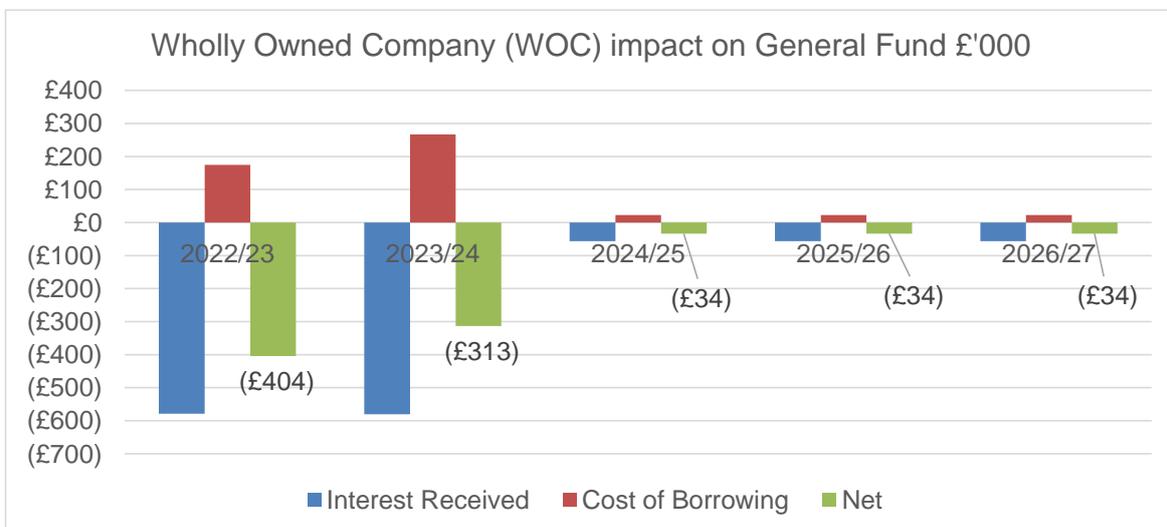
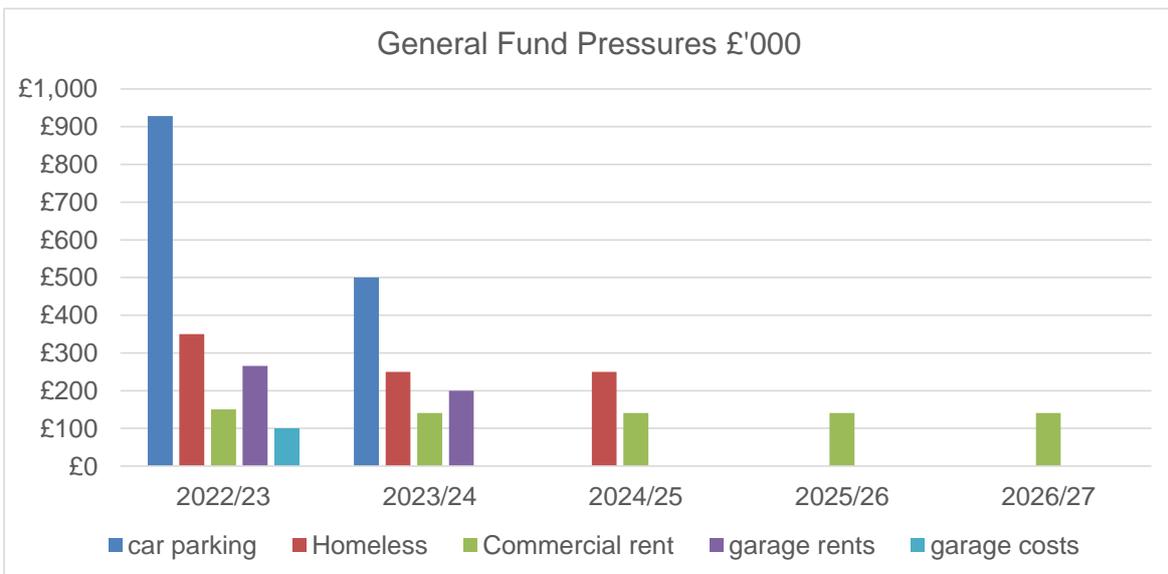
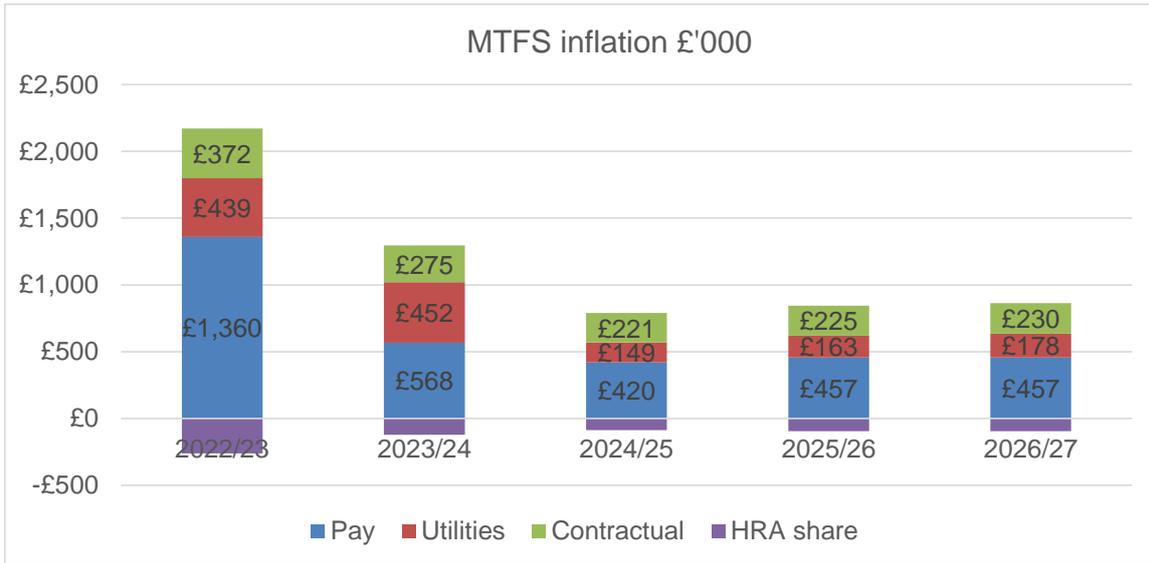
APPENDICES

Appendix A MTFS

Appendix B Engineering fees and charges

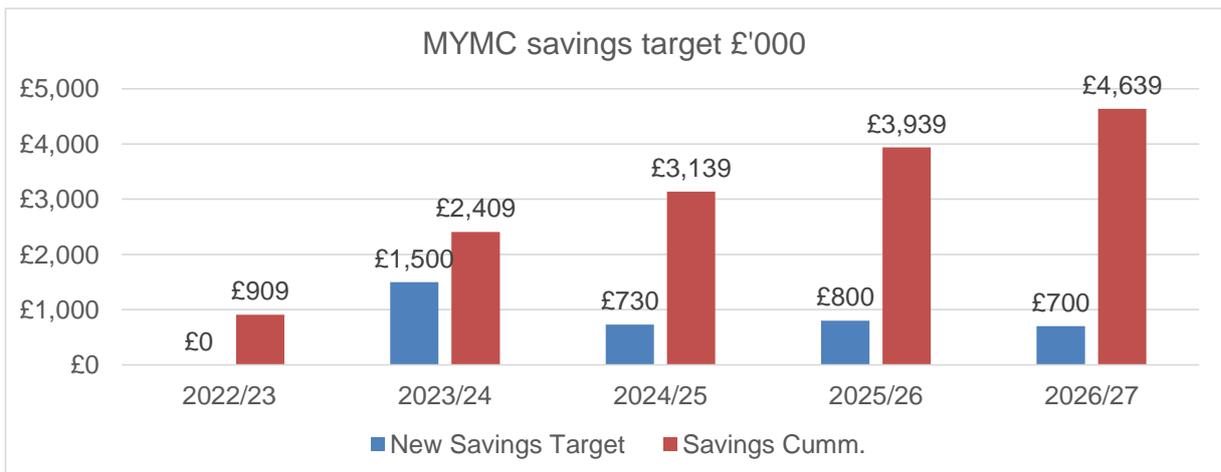
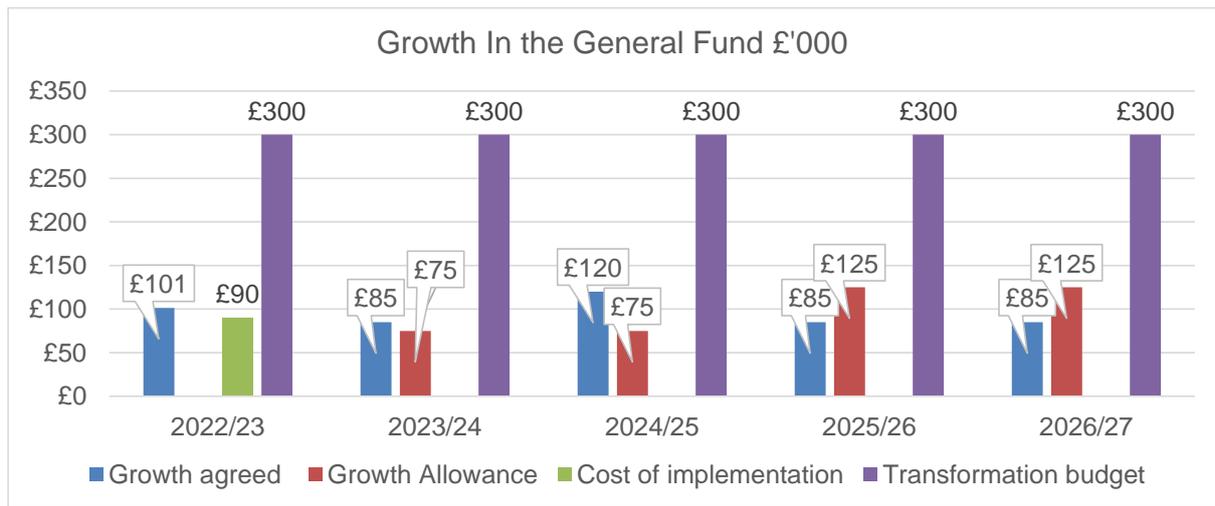
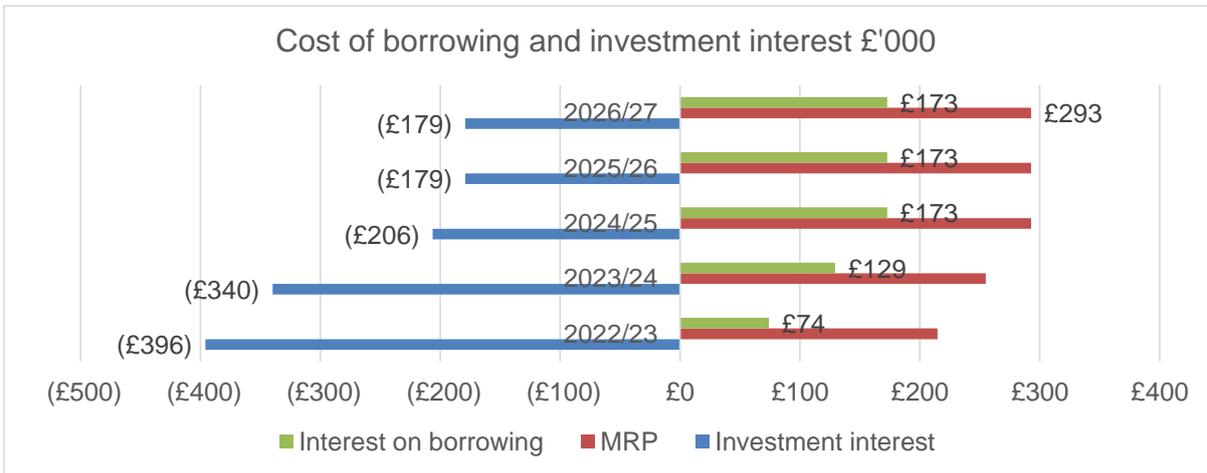
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APPENDIX A GENERAL FUND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

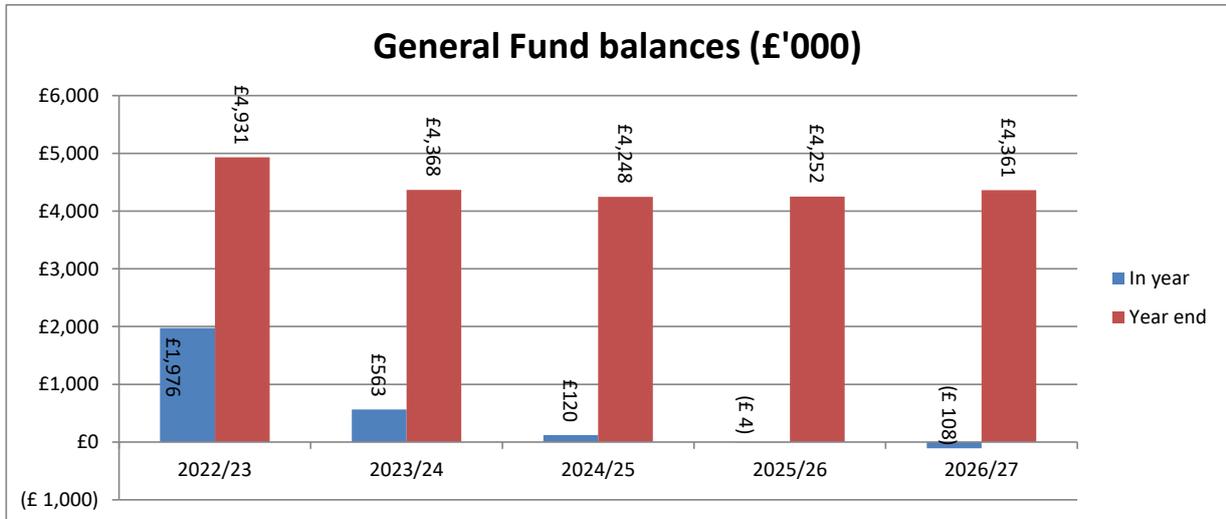
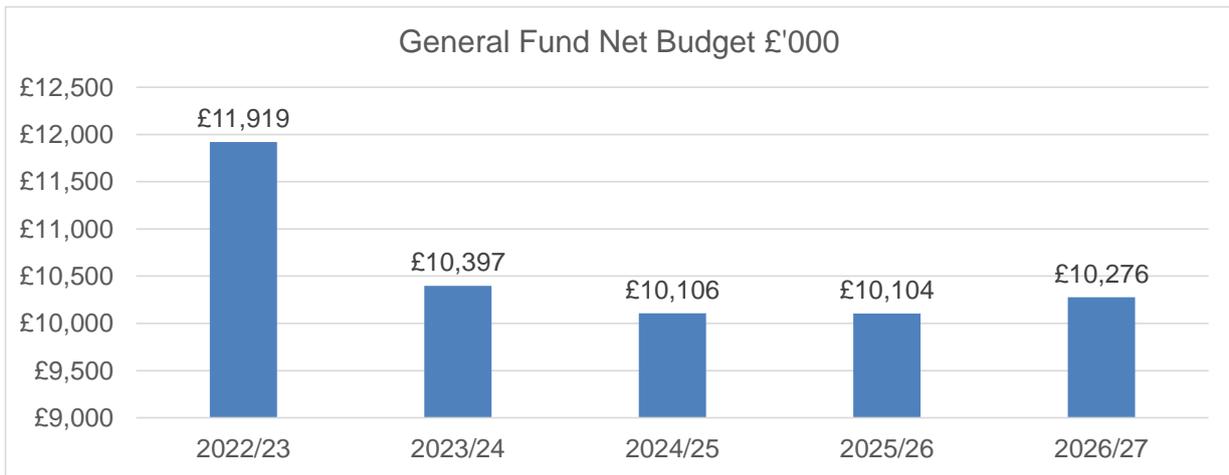
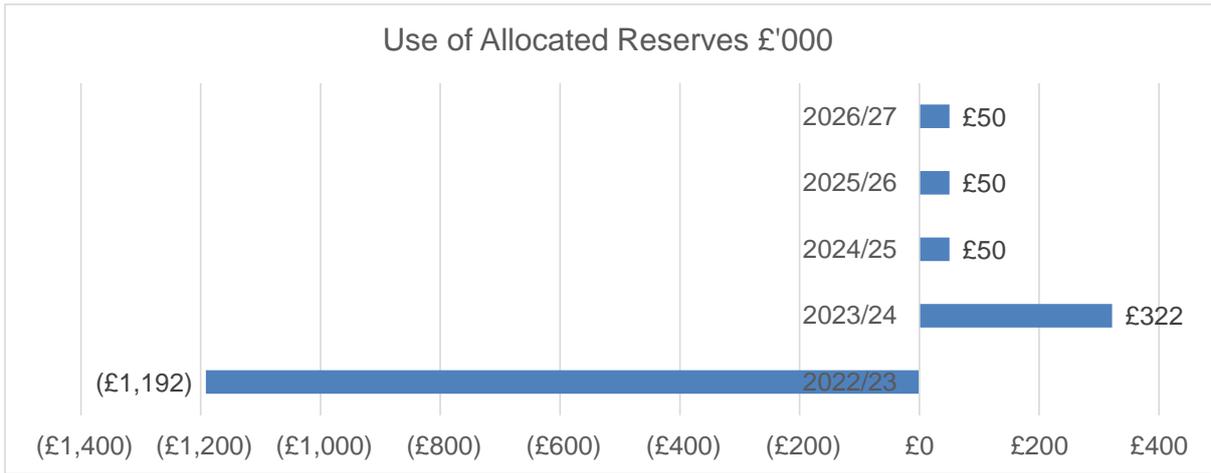


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APPENDIX A GENERAL FUND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

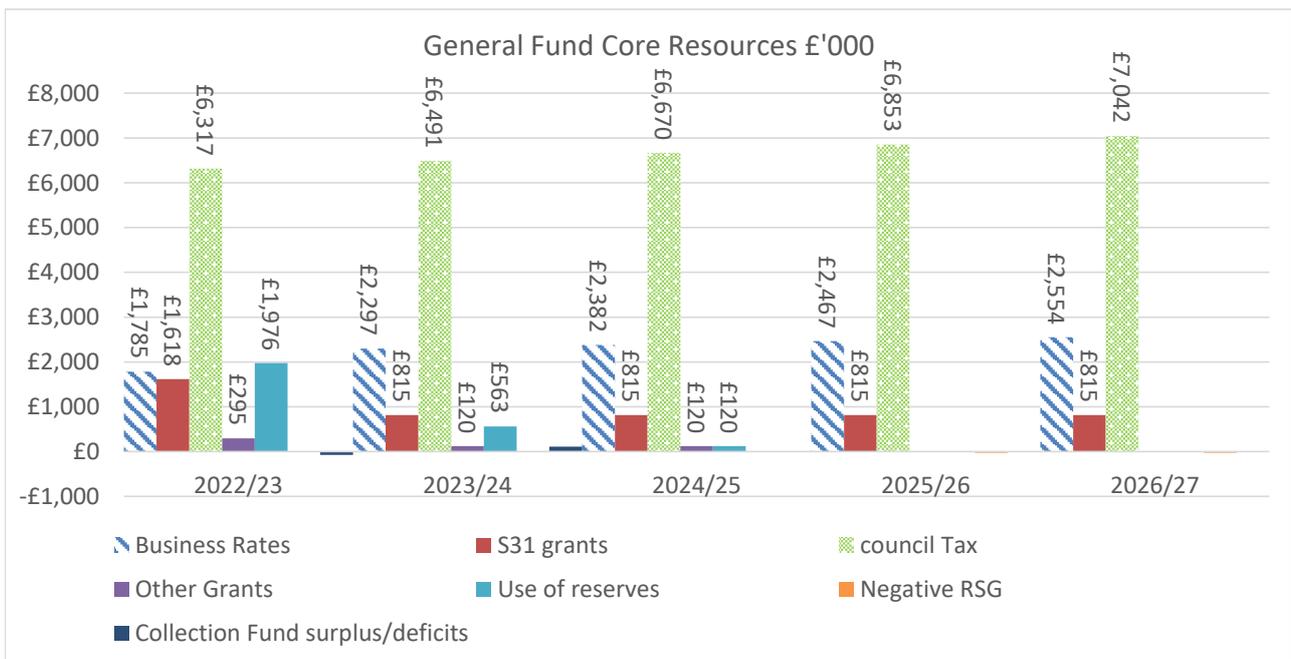
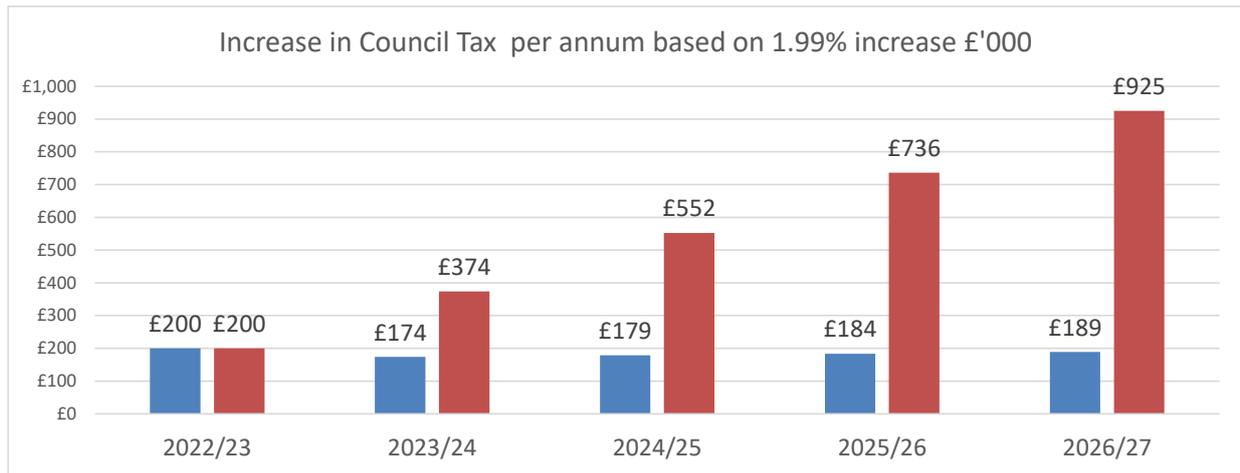


APPENDIX A GENERAL FUND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY



()= contribution to balances

APPENDIX A GENERAL FUND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY



APPENDIX B: REVIEW OF ENGINEERING CHARGES

Overview

Regeneration of the Stevenage Town Centre is fully underway with many ongoing and upcoming developments in the town centre. Works affecting the highway can negatively impact the public, causing inconvenience to pedestrians (especially those with disabilities), an increase in traffic travel time and noise pollution as well as often causing a visual eyesore. The following fees will ensure that cost are covered with the usual margin and any surplus is invested back into the services, as well as incentivising developments to be completed on schedule and have effective site management.

Following recent cost analysis and benchmarking it is proposed that the charges for hoarding, scaffolding, and parking bay suspensions are increased. Additionally, it is proposed that the fees for Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs) Permanent Traffic Regulation Orders (PTROs), Street Development Agreements (SDAs) & Land Rental Charges are formalised.

Hoarding & Scaffolding charges

	Current charge	New charge
Hoarding and Scaffolding	£50 per 100m per week	£50 per 50 m per week
Application fee	£0	£100

Parking Bay Suspension charges

Current charging structure	
Suspension timescales	Fee / Reduction
Suspension fee (per week, up to 5 bays / 30m)	£210 / £242 per bay
Additional bay / 6 metres (per week)	£6
After four weeks, the weekly fee is reduced by	5%
After thirteen weeks, the weekly fee is reduced by	20%
After twenty-six weeks, the weekly fee is reduced by	35%
After fifty-two weeks, the weekly fee is reduced by	50%

New charging structure	
Per bay per day (from 5m for bays parallel to the edge of the carriageway)	Fee
Week 1	£20
Weeks 2 -8	£22
Weeks 9-16	£25
Weeks 17 +	£29
Pay and Display & controlled parking zones	Daily loss of parking income in addition to the above charges
Overstay charge – per bay per day	£50
Application Fee	£120

Formalisation of new Traffic Regulation Orders (TTRO)/Permanent Traffic Regulations (PTRO) charges

Application Type	Application Fee	Additional charges/Validity
TTRO / PTRO	£2,000	Additional fees for advertisement, signage & additional site inspections will be identified and charged for. Application will be valid for 18 months
Emergency TTRO	£1,200	Application will be valid for 21 days

Formalisation of Street Development Agreement charges

Service	Fee	Additional detail
SDA	Application Fee of £750 10% of the total agreed value of the construction works proposed	Developers will need to take out a bond to the value of 110% of the agreed value of the roadworks

Formalisation of Land Rental charges

Current Land Rental Charges	Fee - per m ² per week
Zone A : Town Square, Queensway North, Danestrete North including for the Arrival Square (from Mecca Bingo to the Leisure Centre)	£2.35/m ² /week
Zone B : The Forum, Queensway South, Danestrete South, Swingate and Danesgate	£2.03/m ² /week
Zone C: All other town centre roads and footways	£1.28/m ² /week

Proposed Land Rental Charges	Fee - per m ² per week		
	Weeks 0-26	Weeks 27-52	Weeks 53+
Zone A - Town Square, Queensway North, Danestrete North including for the Arrival Square (from Mecca Bingo to Leisure Centre)	£2.50	£2.75	£3.00
Zone B - The Forum, Queensway South, Danestrete South, Swingate and Danesgate - All other town centre roads and footways	£2.15	£2.40	£2.65
Zone C – all SBC owned land, roads, and footways outside town centre. This can include areas surrounding Council owned community centres, hubs, pavilions and buildings outside the Town Centre.	£1.90	£2.10	£2.30
Application Fee	£150.00		

Principles of Charging

- The land rental charges relate only to the enclosure of SBC maintained streets, not to streets that are part of the adopted highway network for which HCC is responsible (sites will be mainly

brownfield town centre developments and greenfield sites are unlikely to be served by SBC roads)

- The land rental charges will apply to developers of private land
- The land rental charges will not apply where SBC is the developer of its own land but will apply to developers which have taken ownership of sites from the Council
- All charges will be non-negotiable. They will almost always represent far less than 1% of total development costs
- If developers claim that they cannot afford to pay the above fees it suggests that the development may be financially unviable
- Any waiving of charges in exceptional circumstances should be approved by the Strategic Director (TP)

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Meeting: EXECUTIVE

Agenda Item:

Portfolio Area: Resources



Date: 14 September 2022

1ST QUARTER REVENUE MONITORING REPORT – GENERAL FUND AND HRA

KEY DECISION

Author – Tim Greenwood/Keith Reynoldson Ext. 2403/2943
Contributor – Brian Moldon, Finance team and budget Managers
Lead Officers – Brian Moldon Ext. 2933
Contact Officer – Brian Moldon Ext.2933

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update Members on the projected General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 2022/23 net expenditure and seek approval to amend the General Fund and HRA budgets as part of the quarterly revenue review.
- 1.2 To update Members on the reserves and balances available to support revenue expenditure and seek approval for revisions to the allocated reserves.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

General Fund

- 2.1 That Members approve the 2022/23 1st quarter projected net increase in General Fund expenditure of £119,930.
- 2.2 That Members note the cumulative changes made to the General Fund net budget remains within the £400,000 increase variation limit delegated to the Executive, as set out in paragraph 4.1.20.

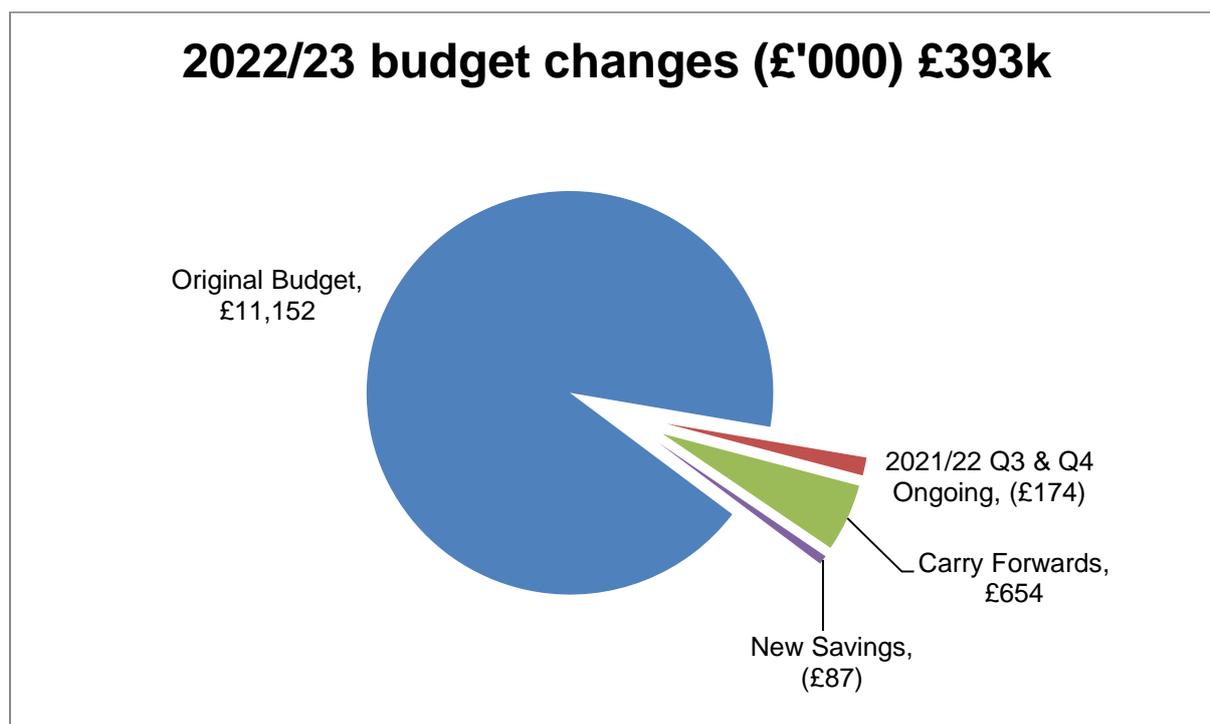
Housing Revenue Account

- 2.3 That the 2022/23 1st quarter projected net increase in HRA expenditure of £249,890 be approved.

2.4 That Members note the cumulative increases made to the HRA net budget remains within the £250,000 increase variation limit delegated to the Executive.

3. BACKGROUND - GENERAL FUND

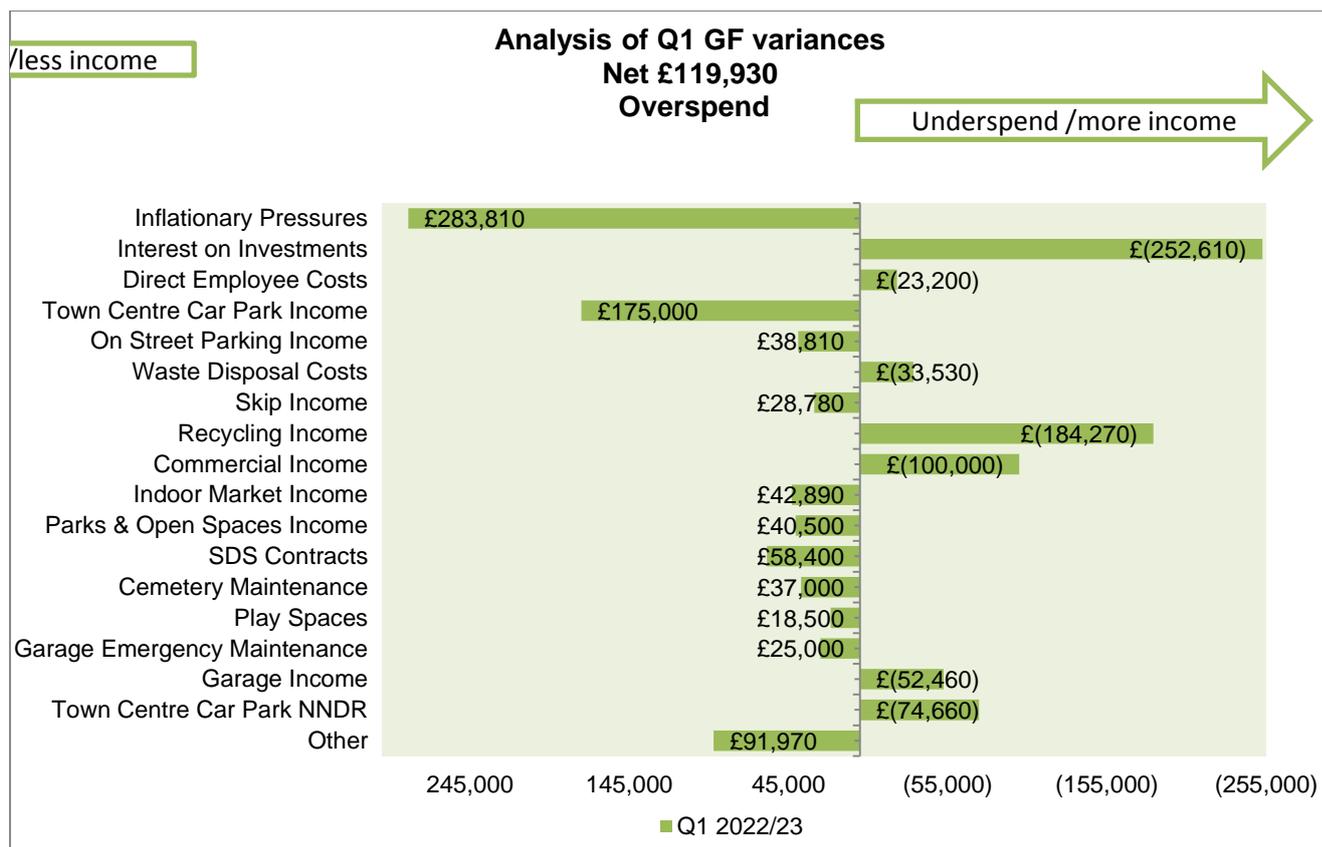
3.1. Since the General Fund net budget of £11,151,570 was approved at Council, Members have approved net budget changes of £392,820 as detailed in the chart below:



4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

4.1 General Fund – Budget Review

4.1.1 Following the 1st quarter review of revenue budgets officers have identified the following budget movements.



(-) lower expenditure / more income

4.1.2 Inflationary Pressures – ongoing pressure

- Utilities of £176,760. SBC have now had the new contract prices for NHH (Non Half Hourly) sites. The NHH sites increased by 61%, more than the anticipated 40% inflation projected. The costs of energy have risen significantly and continue to increase and anticipate further pressures on HH (Half Hourly) sites and Gas. The CCS report in June 2022 estimated HH increase of 106% and Gas 279%. This pressure is net of £17,100 charged to the HRA.
- Vehicle Fuel of £107,050 - Price per litre has increased by 26.21% against budgeted price in June and if this level of increase is maintained throughout the year this will be the impact on the General Fund.

Although not reported at quarter 1 the budgeted pay award was based on 2.00% increase, but an offer of £1,925 per employee has been made (not yet agreed with the unions). If agreed this award would add in the region of £662K to the General Fund pay bill (on-going pressure).

4.1.3 **Interest on balances – increased income £252,610.** Following the increases to the Bank of England base rate (to 1.75%), it is projected that the General Fund interest earned will be £252K higher than the budgeted amount

4.1.4 Direct Employee Expenses – saving £23,200. This includes a number of changes which are detailed below:

- **£70,000 HRA management** underspend, following the appointment of the interim Operational Director, this recharge reflects the new management arrangements performed by the Operational Director of Communities and Neighbourhoods.
- **£33,000 Accountancy** pressure, this represents the costs of short term agency staff brought in to assist with the closure of accounts and to support capital.
- **£13,800 Town Centre Management** pressure, Costs associated with the provision of maternity leave cover of the town centre manager which will be funded from the town centre reserve.

4.1.5 Town Centre Parking Income – in year additional pressure £175,000.

Parking income has been significantly impacted by COVID and continues to be in 2022/23 due to the change in working habits. After three months, income levels are £85K down on the cumulative running target (previous month, £50k down); the reasons for the shortfall are combination of continued hybrid working habits, combined with the closure of Railway North (and transfer to cheaper car parks), and "one off events" such as the train strikes during June which saw a fall of £10k income in one week. Clearly, the threat/likelihood of future strikes may continue to have an impact on our car parking budgets.

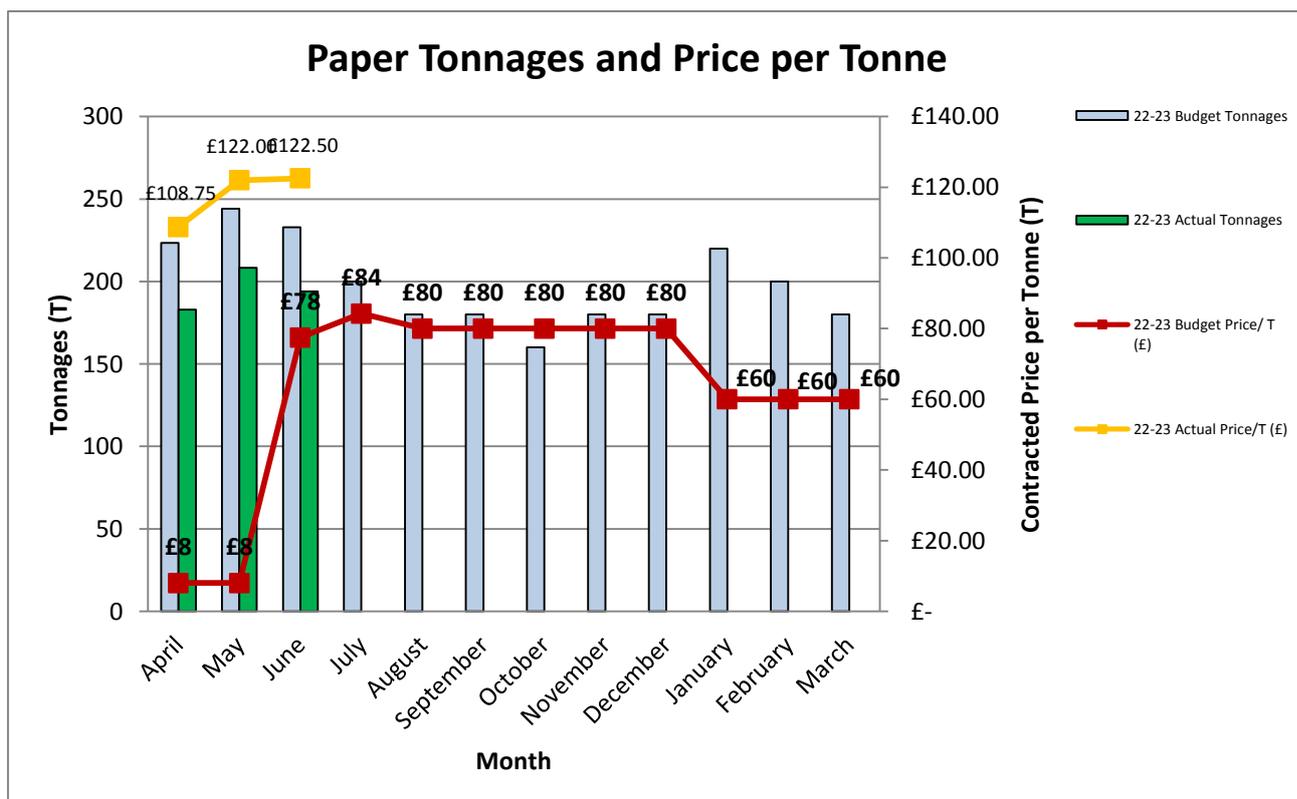
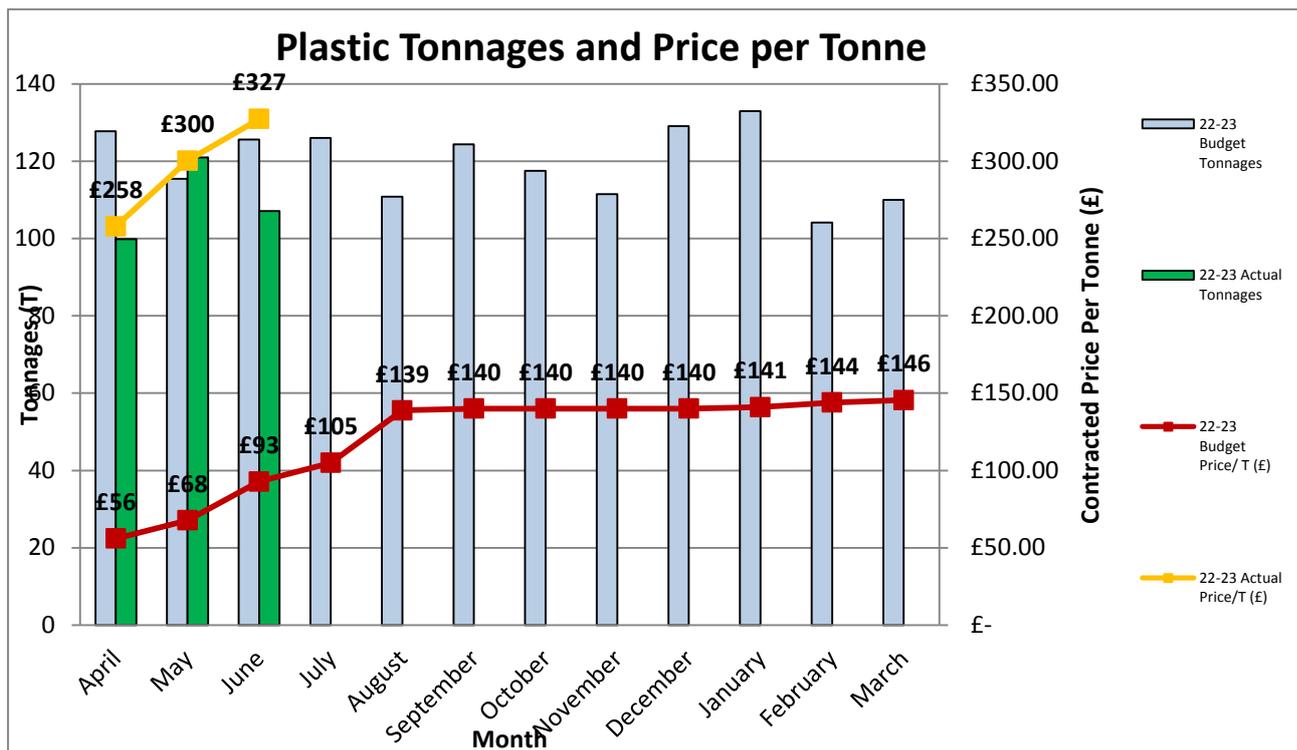
4.1.6 On Street Parking – pressure £38,810. There has also been an impact on On-Street parking especially at Corey's Mill where demand has not returned to pre-pandemic levels due to changes in practices at the hospital. This has been offset in part by a reduction in enforcement costs.

4.1.7 Waste Disposal Costs – in year saving of £33,720. Disposal costs associated with the waste collected from skips has fallen in line with the reduced demand for the skip service.

4.1.8 Skip Income – pressure £28,780. The skip service continues to struggle in a competitive market, resulting in lower income - a drop of 50%. Service provision will be reviewed as part of the 2023/24 budget setting process.

4.1.9 Recycling Income – saving £184,270. Additional income is expected from recycling as prices have continued to rise during the first quarter of 2022/23. Whilst prices can be volatile, it is expected that they remain between the current price and £250 until March 2023. Income from recycling is volatile and not only affected by price but also the tonnage collected. Year to date tonnages have fallen by approximately 5%. This reduction has been built into the quarter 1 estimates, any further reductions in tonnage could have a significant impact on recycling income.

4.1.10 Detail of the projected income from recycling of plastics and paper, which make up 92% of recycling income are shown in the charts below.



4.1.11 Commercial Income – Additional income of £100,000. Following 2 years of no increase, rents at the Business and Technology Centre have now been increased in line with the contract and as a result more income is expected (£50,000). Also income from the council's portfolio of shops etc. is expected

exceed estimates (£50,000). Further work being undertaken to ascertain if this income will be ongoing.

4.1.12 **Indoor Market Income – pressure £42,890.** Trading conditions at the market continue to be challenging with some stall holders struggling, void rates have increased to 31% (in-year only)

4.1.13 **Parks and open Spaces Income – pressure £40,500.** Fees have increased but demand for the hire of pavilions etc. has not met expectations. Further work is being undertaken to assess a more realistic budget for income.

4.1.14 **Repairs and Maintenance at the Cemetery – pressure £37,000.** Works of a health and safety nature have been identified at the cemetery, which requires funding.

4.1.15 **Play Space Maintenance – pressure £18,500.** Works of a health and safety nature associated with playground flooring have been identified which requires funding.

4.1.16 **Garage Emergency Maintenance – pressure £25,000.** Backlog works identified as a result of asbestos inspection of garage blocks.

4.1.17 **Garages additional income of £52,460.** 30 additional garage lets since April, but in the current cost of living crisis this trend may not continue.

4.1.18 **Car Park Business Rates – saving £74,660.** Refunds received due to the closure of some town centre car parks, redevelopment of other sites and reduced parking income.

4.1.19 **Other pressures of £91,970.** There are small net variances across General Fund Services and as such are not reported separately. The budget setting process will assess whether any in-year budget changes identified in this report have an on-going impact and this will be reported as part of the quarter 2 report. However, Members should note that while some of the income projections have improved (recycling), there are significant pressures around pay and parking income.

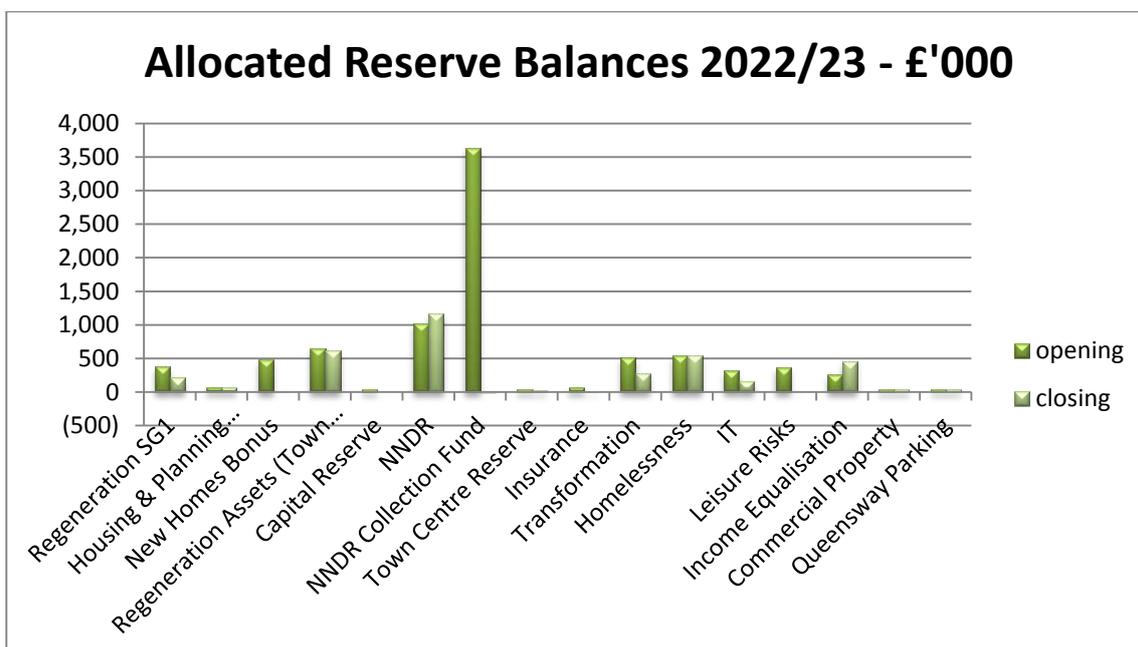
4.1.20 The cumulative changes made to the General Fund net budget remains within the £400,000 increase variation limit delegated to the Executive. The total value of changes is £119,930.

Executive Delegation - General Fund	£
Original Net General Fund Budget	11,151,760
Q4 Carry Forwards	653,660
2021/22 Q3 & Q4 Ongoing	(174,080)
New Savings	(86,780)
Total	11,544,580
Quarterly monitoring Q1	119,930

Executive Delegation - General Fund	£
Within Executive Delegated Limit	119,930

4.2 Review of General Fund Balances

4.2.1 **Allocated Reserves** – these balances are ‘ring fenced’ and have been set aside for specific purposes. The estimated total value of (revenue) allocated reserves as at 31 March 2023 is **£3,616,048**, (31 March 2022, £8,430,125). Reserve balances are projected to decrease by £4,814,077 during this year, the majority of this reduction relates to NNDR repayments to the Collection Fund (£3,622,429), regeneration and new build projects.



4.2.3 **General Fund Balance** – Following the 1st quarter review and MTFs to the September Executive the General Fund balance as at the 31 March 2023 is now forecast to be **£5,195,442**.

General Fund Balances	£
Original Net General Fund Budget	11,151,760
Approved budget changes	392,820
Net Working budget approved to Date	11,544,580
1 st Quarter review	119,930
Total Net Expenditure post Q1 review	11,664,510
Adjustment to core resources	153,681
less core resources	(10,096,132)
Transfer (to)/from General Fund balances	1,722,059
General Fund balance 31/3/22*	(6,907,501)
Transfer (to)/from General Fund balances	1,722,059
Projected General Fund balance 31/3/23	(5,185,442)

General Fund Balances	£
Allocated Revenue Reserves –repayment to Collection Fund	(1,162,483)
Other Allocated Revenue Reserves	(2,453,565)
Total General Fund Revenue balances (estimated 31/3/23)	(8,801,490)

**may not include other assumptions included in the MTFS*

*** Adjustment to core resources relates to 2021/22 lower business rates received in year lowering the transfer to the allocated reserve. A gain of £171K re 2021/22 will be received in 2023/24.*

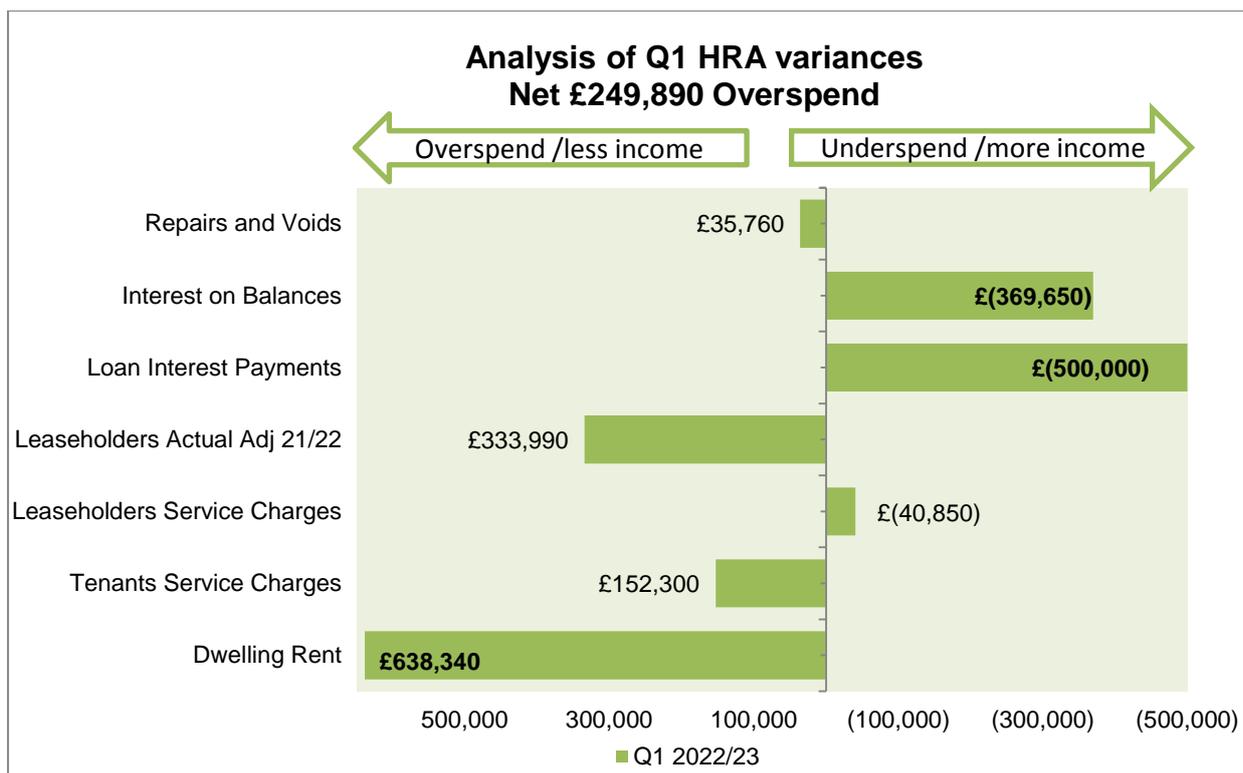
4.3 Housing Revenue Account

- 4.3.1 Since the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) net budget surplus of £1.956Million was approved at Council, Members have further approved net changes of £1.36Million as detailed in the following table. The majority of these changes are from unspent budgets in the prior year and will be met from the higher surplus in 2021/22.

HRA Working Budget	£'000
Original Budget 2022/23	(1,956)
21/22 Q3 Carry Forwards	325
21/22 Q4 Carry Forwards	973
21/22 Q4 Ongoing Budget Pressures	64
Approved Movement	1,362
Total Working Budget	(594)

4.4 Housing Revenue Account - Budget Review

- 4.4.1 Following the first quarter review of revenue budgets officers have identified the following budget movements.



4.4.2 Interest on Balances (£369,650). Following recent base rate changes and allowing for the closing balances from the last financial year, new forecasts for income on balances have been made. This has led to a £370K increase in investment income for the year.

4.4.3 Loan Interest Payments (£500,000). Despite recent interest rate rises, the expected timing and amount of loans borrowed in this year has led to loan interest being reduced from a budget of £8.2Million to a revised figure of £7.7Million. Financing decisions are often taken later in the financial year, when actual spend has been more firmly established, so this area will be reviewed again during the year.

4.4.4 Leaseholders Service Charge Actual Adj. £333,990. Leaseholder's service charges are billed on an estimated amount in year and then adjusted to the actual figures in September of the following year. The estimates are mainly calculated using averages of prior year's activity levels and detailed estimates where known. Normally, due to the demand led nature of some of the charges, there is a small variance that can be favourable, or a small pressure. Unfortunately, the actuals for last year were substantially lower than the estimates leading to a budget pressure of £334K. The main reasons for the lower charges were on caretaking and repairs. Repairs costs were £147K lower than estimated, due to both the major works programme on the blocks and the impact of Covid on normal operations. Caretaking costs were also lower by £127K and again this was as a result of the ongoing major repairs

programme negating the need for block cleaning and the impact of Covid on the operations during the year.

4.4.5 **Leaseholders Service Charges (£40,850).** The budget for these charges is forecast in November before the actual bills are calculated and sent out in January. Comparing the actual bills to the original budget there is a small positive variance of £41K anticipated in the current year.

4.4.6 **Tenants Service Charges £152,300.** Much like leaseholder's charges, there is a timing difference between the budget being set and the actual bills being calculated. After taking account of the actual charges to tenants in this year there is a £152K fall in income compared to the original budget. The single biggest element in the lower charge is on caretaking that has been based on planned cleaning schedules for the blocks and is lower than the budgeted level of activity and the cost recovery rates that were used to form the budget.

4.4.7 **Dwelling Rents £638,340.** The latest forecast for dwelling rents for the year shows a pressure of £638,340, which is 1.5% lower than the budget of £43Million. The main reasons for the fall in income are detailed in the table below.

Rent income variations to the budget	£
Timing of New Property Completions	470,610
Timing of RTB sales	14,710
Void Loss	153,020
Total	638,340

4.4.8 The largest difference from the original budget has been caused by slippage on the Kenilworth and Symonds Green redevelopment schemes. The budget anticipated that 179 new properties would be included in the rent for half of the current year. However, latest estimates indicate that 71 properties will be completed in this year, with the majority of the others coming into use in the first half of 2023/24. The delayed delivery at both of these schemes is a result of supply and labour difficulties currently being faced by the construction industry. These have been caused by the domestic and international impact of the Covid pandemic and more difficult post Brexit supply chains. If the timetables improve over the remainder of this year, this will be reflected in future reports.

4.4.9 When the budgets are calculated, rent loss from right to buy sales is spread evenly over the year. However, there were a large number of sales in the first

quarter that have accelerated the forecast rent lost. Despite this first quarter performance, taking into account the current number of applications and likely completions this year, the projected total number of sales still remains at 35 properties for 2022/23.

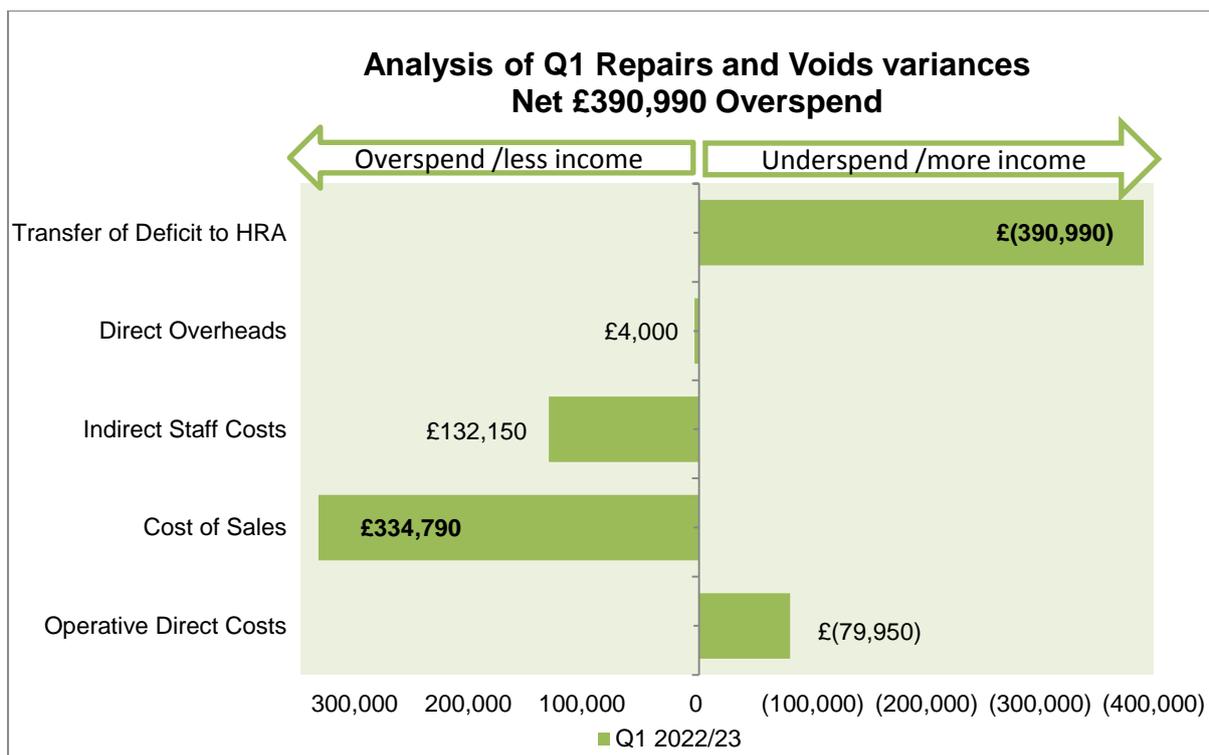
4.4.10 The last major change from the original rent budget is due to current void loss rates. Void loss on the general needs housing stock was budgeted at 0.79%, but is currently running at 1.35%. With no improvement this would increase the void loss from £374K to £671K, a pressure of £296K. However, the forecast has assumed an improvement in void performance over the year, giving a projected pressure of £153K. This has been based on the current action plan and the intention to provide specific resources to ensure homes are returned to occupation as soon as possible.

4.4.11 **Repairs and Voids £35,760.** There is currently a £36K net pressure within this area. While the deficit on the trading account is forecast to increase by £391K (more details for the trading account are included in 4.5 of the report), this has been partially offset by a reduction in repairs costs charged to the HRA of £322K. There are also other net savings on the account of £34K that have further reduced the impact of the trading deficit.

4.4.12 In addition to the variances highlighted above there are two further significant areas of concern to note. Firstly, the current employers offer in the national pay negotiations would increase costs by approximately £350K, based on the full establishment budget. The second area of concern is on utility costs, where the HRA could see over a £500K increase in costs during this financial year. These would relate directly to both tenant and leaseholders service charges and modelling is being undertaken to assess the impact of these increases and any potential recovery through charging. Both of these areas will be need to be addressed during the remainder of the year.

4.5 **Responsive Repairs and Voids Performance**

4.5.1 The Repairs and Voids team's financial position is included in the overall HRA. The Q1 projection expects the deficit to increase by £391K for this year.



- 4.5.2 **Operative Direct Costs (£79,950).** There are currently 7 operative posts vacant within the structure, with 5 covered by agency. Allowing for the timing to recruit to the vacancies an £80K under spend is currently projected.
- 4.5.3 **Cost of Sales £334,790.** The majority of this overspend is due to the forecast for subcontractor costs that are projected to be £279K higher than the budget. This increase is due to the type of work being undertaken, particularly on behalf of the Investment Team, and higher material costs now showing in subcontractor invoicing. Even with this increase, subcontractor costs will be reduced by 13.6% from last year's outturn. Other areas that are showing a pressure are additional fuel costs of £15K, due to current prices, and higher compensation payments of £40K, due to an increase in "no win, no fee" cases being seen.
- 4.5.4 **Indirect Staff Costs £132,150.** Offsetting the saving shown on direct employees there is a projected over spend of £132K on back office staffing. This is mainly due to the delay in the roll out of the tenant self-service programme. This has led to the need for 3 additional posts in order to operate with the existing systems. Additional resources have also been needed to process the rise in complaint cases, also highlighted in the section above.
- 4.5.5 **Direct Overheads £4,000.** Additional utility costs have been forecast in the recharge for the Cavendish site and this has led to a £4K increase in overheads to the repairs service.
- 4.5.6 **Transfer of Deficit to HRA (£390,990).** The impact of these changes is an increase in the deficit charged to the HRA of £391K. **However, it should be**

noted that inflation is now much higher than the 3.6% increase in the job rates (charged to the HRA) that were included in the budget. Subcontractor prices, material costs and staff costs, are all set to increase at a higher rate in this year and will need to be monitored closely. Despite these pressures, the deficit increase has currently been mitigated by a £322K reduction in responsive repair costs and the trading account is expected to increase income earned from other work streams to compensate for the lower repairs charges in this financial year.

4.6 Housing Revenue Account Balances

4.6.1 Following the 1st quarter review the HRA balance is now forecast to be a surplus of £28.6Million.

Housing Revenue Account Outturn Position	£'000
Working Budget	(594)
1st Quarter Net Projected Pressure	250
Projected net Surplus post 1st Quarter review	(344)
HRA balance brought forward 1/4/22	(28,208)
Surplus in year	(344)
Projected HRA balance 31/3/23	(28,552)

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

5.1.1 This report is financial in nature and consequently financial implications are included above.

5.2 Legal Implications

5.2.1 The objective of this report is to outline the projected General Fund net expenditure for 2022/23 and the impact on the General Fund balances. While there are no legal consequences at this stage Members are reminded of their duty to set a balanced budget.

5.3 Equalities and Diversity Implications

5.3.1 This report summarises external and internal factors that impact on approved budgets and recommends changes to those budgets in year. Budget changes identified for future years that could adversely impact on groups covered by statutory equality duties will be incorporated into the budget setting process which includes Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA). None of the budget changes reported will change any existing equalities and diversity policies.

5.3.2 The service department has been asked to look at the equalities and diversity implications in the increase in void re-let times and any potential impact on protected groups.

5.4 Risk Implications

5.4.1 A risk based assessment of balances is undertaken and reported to Council as part of the General Fund Budget setting process. Both the General Fund and HRA balances are projected to be above minimum levels.

5.4.2 A key element in mitigating financial risks within the HRA is the regular revision of the 30 year business plan model for the ring fenced account. It was intended that this plan would be recalculated for the start of the 2023/24 financial year. However, the current statutory and regulatory structures for the HRA are undergoing significant changes, making it difficult to produce a meaningful business plan at this time. It is now proposed that an incremental approach to be taken, starting with a current position paper in the autumn and fully revising the business plan when the impact of any changes can be more accurately assessed. In the meantime, financial risks will continue to be mitigated by use of the medium term financial strategy and the annual budget setting process.

5.5 Policy Implications

5.5.1 The budget framework represents a development of a policy led budgeting approach across Council services and the overall Medium Term Financial Strategy.

5.6 Climate Change Implications

5.6.1 The Budget and Policy setting process prioritised growth for climate change as part of the 2022/23 budget setting process. The 2022/23 process should have due regard for climate change implications based on the Council's Climate Change Strategy. There are no direct climate change implications from the budget changes in this report.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

BD1 – 2022/23 Council Tax Setting and General Fund Budget (Council 24 February 2022)

BD2- 2022/23 Final HRA and Rent setting report (Council 28 January 2022)

BD3- General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy Update (2021/22 – 2025/26)



**AUDIT COMMITTEE/ EXECUTIVE
/ COUNCIL**

Portfolio Area: Resources

**Date: 7 September 2022 / 15
September 2022 / 19 October
2022**



**ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW OF 2021/22 INCLUDING
PRUDENTIAL CODE**

NON-KEY DECISION

Author	– Brian Moldon	Ext. 2515
Contributor	– Rhona Bellis / Kaha Olad	Ext. 2730
Lead Officer	– Brian Moldon	Ext. 2515
Contact Officer	– Brian Moldon	Ext. 2515

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To review the operation of the 2021/22 Treasury Management and Investment Strategy.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Audit Committee

That subject to any comments by the Audit Committee to the Executive, the 2021/22 Annual Treasury Management Review is recommended to Council for approval.

2.2 Executive

That subject to any comments made by the Executive, in addition to those made by the Audit Committee, the 2021/22 Annual Treasury Management Review is recommended to Council for approval.

2.3 Council

That subject to any comments from the Audit Committee and the Executive, the 2021/22 Annual Treasury Management Review be approved by Council.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Regulatory requirement

3.1.1 The Council is required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual treasury management review of activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2021/22. This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, (the Code), and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, (the Prudential Code).

3.1.2 During 2021/22 the minimum reporting requirements were that the Council should receive the following reports:

- an annual treasury strategy in advance of the year (Council 24/02/2021)
- a mid-year treasury update report (Council 15/12/2021)
- an annual review following the end of the year describing the activity compared to the strategy (this report).

3.1.3 The regulatory environment places responsibility on Members for the review and scrutiny of treasury management policy and activities. This report is, therefore, important in that respect, as it provides details of the outturn position for treasury activities and highlights compliance with the Council's policies previously approved by Members.

3.1.4 Officers confirm that they have complied with the requirement under the Code to give prior scrutiny to all of the above treasury management reports by the Audit Committee and the Executive before they were reported to the Council.

3.2 The Economy and Interest rates in 2021/22 and current position

3.2.1 **Bank Rate.** Over the last two years, the coronavirus outbreak has done huge economic damage to the UK and to economies around the world. After the Bank of England took emergency action in March 2020 to cut Bank Rate to 0.10%, it left Bank Rate unchanged at its subsequent meetings until raising it to 0.25% at its meeting on 16th December 2021, 0.50% at its meeting of 4th February 2022 and then to 0.75% in March 2022. Since the new year, there have been a further two increases of 0.25% in June and then on the 4 August the Monetary Policy Committee voted to increase the bank rate to 1.75%.

3.2.2 **GDP.** The UK economy has had several periods of lock down through 2021/22, but with most of the economy now opened up and returning to business-as-usual, the GDP numbers have been robust (9% y/y Q1 2022) and sufficient for the MPC to focus on tackling the second-round effects of inflation, now that the CPI measure has already risen to 10.1% in June 2022 and commentators are now predicting a rise to even 18% by October.

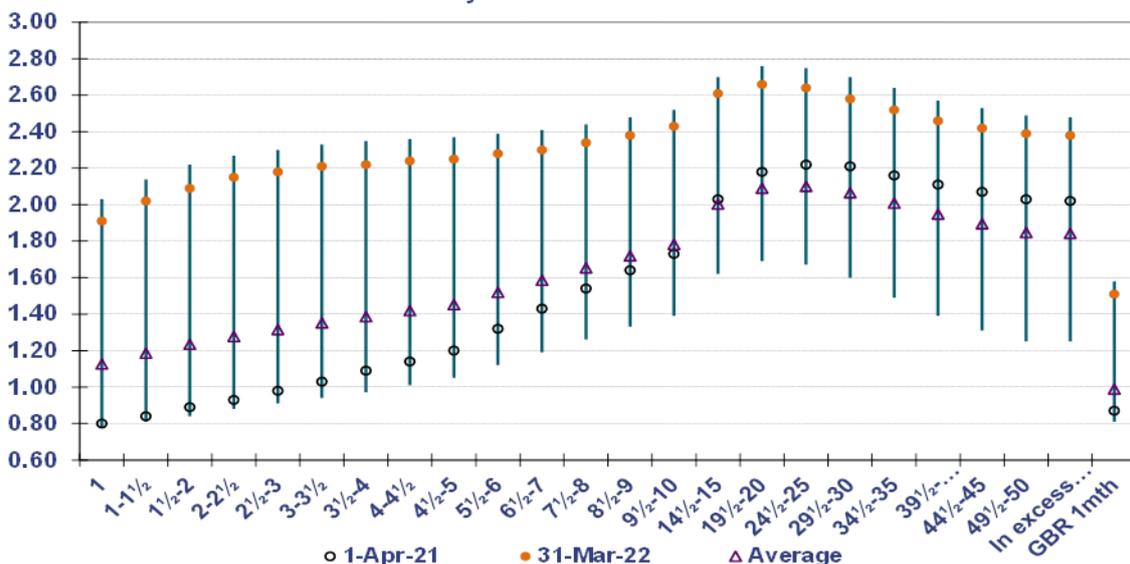
Part I
Release to Press

3.2.3 **Inflation.** This was the major change in 2020/21 adopted by the Bank of England in terms of implementing its inflation target of 2%. The key addition to the Bank’s forward guidance in August 2020 was a new phrase in the policy statement, namely that “it does not intend to tighten monetary policy until there is clear evidence that significant progress is being made in eliminating spare capacity and *achieving the 2% target sustainably*”. That does seem out of date in the current economic situation. There is now an issue of supply side shortages, labour shortages, commodity price inflation, the impact of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and subsequent Western sanctions all point to inflation being at elevated levels until well into 2023

3.2.4 The upward pressure on inflation from higher oil prices and potential knock-on impacts on supply chains all argue for tighter policy (with CPI at 10.1% for June) but the hit to real disposable incomes and the additional uncertainty points in the opposite direction.

3.2.5 **PWLB borrowing rates** are based on gilt (UK Government bonds) yields through H.M.Treasury determining a specified margin to add to gilt yields. The main influences on gilt yields are Bank Rate, inflation expectations and movements in US treasury yields. Inflation targeting by the major central banks has been successful over the last 30 years in lowering inflation and the real equilibrium rate for central rates has fallen considerably due to the high level of borrowing by consumers: this means that central banks do not need to raise rates as much now to have a major impact on consumer spending, inflation, etc. This has pulled down the overall level of interest rates and bond yields in financial markets over the last 30 years. We have seen, over the last two years, many bond yields up to 10 years in the Eurozone turn negative on expectations that the EU would struggle to get growth rates and inflation up from low levels. In addition, there has, at times, been an inversion of bond yields in the US whereby 10 year yields have fallen below shorter term yields. In the past, this has been a precursor of a recession. Recently, yields have risen since the turn of the year on the back of global inflation concerns.

PWLB Certainty Rate Variations 1.4.21 to 31.3.2022



Part I
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3.2.6 The target average borrowing rate in the latest HRA Business Plan last updated 2021 (HRA BP) was 1.6% for 2020, rising to 1.72% in 2021 and 1.74% in 2022. New HRA borrowing of £10Million was taken externally in March 2021 at 2.06% and in February 2022 the following loans were taken. £5Million for 25.5 years at 2.22% and £4.047Million for 21 years at 2.24%. The HRA BP assumed a 3.5% average rate for future loans. Recent interest rate rises have led to current forecast rates exceeding (for loans longer than 20 years) the original HRA BP forecasts and the HRA BP will be revised and reported to the November 2022 Executive.

Rates* as at:	Mar-21	Feb-22	Aug-22
Years	Actual Rate %	Actual Rate %	Actual Rate %
5			3.46
10			3.37
15			3.38
20	2.06		3.53
21		2.24	3.57
25.5		2.22	3.71

* Rates include a 0.2% Certainty Rate reduction

3.2.7 There are alternatives to the PWLB for borrowing, for both the General Fund and the HRA, including the UK Municipal Bonds Agency. The UKMBA provides funding through three lending programmes.

- Proportionally guaranteed, pooled loans of £1 million or more for maturities greater than one year.
- Standalone loans to a single local authority for £250 million or more for maturities greater than one year. These loans are outside of the proportional guarantee and are guaranteed solely by the borrower, who must obtain an external credit rating from one or more of the major credit rating agencies.
- Short term, pooled loans, outside of the proportional guarantee for maturities of less than one year.

The UKMBA borrow primarily in the capital markets to lend to local authorities to fund pre-agreed loans. Borrowing rates may be lower using the UKMBA but lead times and administration are greater than for PWLB borrowing arrangements.

4 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

4.1 OVERALL TREASURY POSITION AS AT 31 MARCH 2022

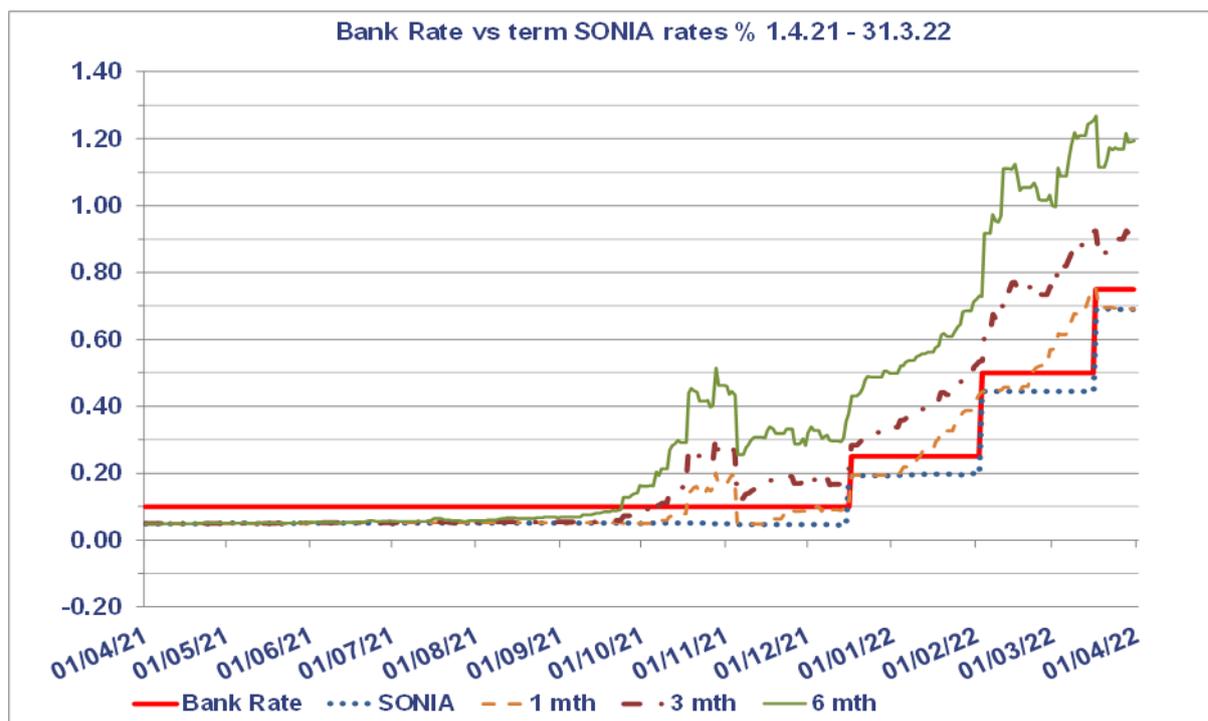
4.1.1 As at 31 March 2021 and 2022 the Council's treasury position was as follows:

Table two: Treasury Position						
	2020/21			2021/22		
	31 March 2021 Principal £'000s	Rate / Return %	Average Life (Yrs)	31 March 2022 Principal £'000s	Rate / Return %	Average Life (Yrs)
Total PWLB Borrowing	218,966	3.34	12.53	227,750	3.28	12.89
Capital Financing Requirement	267,432			305,223		
Over/(under) borrowing	(48,466)			(77,473)		
Investments Portfolio (see section 4.2.5)	69,700	0.65		68,750	0.35	

4.1.2 Investment balances reduced year-on-year by £950k. The balances include restricted use funds that can only be used to finance capital spend, money set aside as provisions and monies held on behalf of others including council tax and business rates provisions and advance payments (see paragraph 4.2.3.2). Members should note the investment balances have been distorted by COVID related grants to be paid to businesses and residents and the reliefs given by the government to compensate the Council for changes to the business rate regime. compared to a 'normal' year

4.1.3 During the year the average investment balance was £80.908 Million, earning interest of £286,304 and achieving an average interest rate of 0.35%. The comparable rate was 0.14% (Sterling Overnight Index Average (SONIA) rate). This compares with an original budget assumption of £202,910 investment interest based on average investment rate of 0.25%.

4.1.4 The following chart shows UK Bank Rate and SONIA rates in 2021/22. It can be seen that SONIA rates remained below Bank Rate all year.



4.2 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2021/22

4.2.1 The original 2021/22 Treasury Management strategy had projected Bank Rate of 0.10% for the duration of 2021/22. The actual Bank Rate was 0.10% until February 2022 when it increased to 0.5% and then went to 0.75% during March 2022. The returns achievable on the Council's investments are currently modest based on the low Bank of England base rate and the risk appetite of the TM Strategy, which is compliant with the advice from the Council's treasury advisors, Link Asset Management.

4.2.2 The Council's Capital Expenditure and Financing 2021/22.

4.2.2.1 In 2021/22 the Council spent £61.342Million on capital projects (General Fund and Housing Revenue Account). The capital programme was funded from a combination of existing capital resources and an increase in borrowing (General Fund £12.364 Million, HRA £25.487 Million). Table three details capital expenditure and financing used in 2021/22.

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Table three : 2021/22 Capital Expenditure and Financing				
	2021/22	2021/22	2021/22	2021/22
	Original Estimate	Quarter 3 Working Budget	Actual	Variance Actual to Q3 Working Budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital Expenditure:				
General Fund Capital Expenditure	17,399	28,987	24,121	(4,866)
HRA Capital Expenditure	52,488	43,594	37,221	(6,373)
Total Capital Expenditure	69,887	72,581	61,342	(11,239)
Resources Available for Capital Expenditure:				
Capital Receipts	(14,958)	(11,829)	(9,493)	2,336
Capital Grants /Contributions	(9,131)	(9,909)	(8,308)	1,601
Capital Reserves	(1,869)	(802)	0	802
Revenue contributions	(342)	(1,969)	(1,862)	107
Major Repairs Reserve	(11,798)	(8,839)	(3,828)	5,011
Total Resources Available	(38,097)	(33,348)	(23,491)	9,857
Capital Expenditure Requiring Borrowing	(31,790)	(39,233)	(37,851)	(1,382)

4.2.2.2 The Treasury Management review of 2021/22 and Prudential Indicators have been updated to reflect changes to capital budgets which have been approved throughout the year. The actual capital expenditure for 2021/22 was reported to the Executive on 12 July 2022.

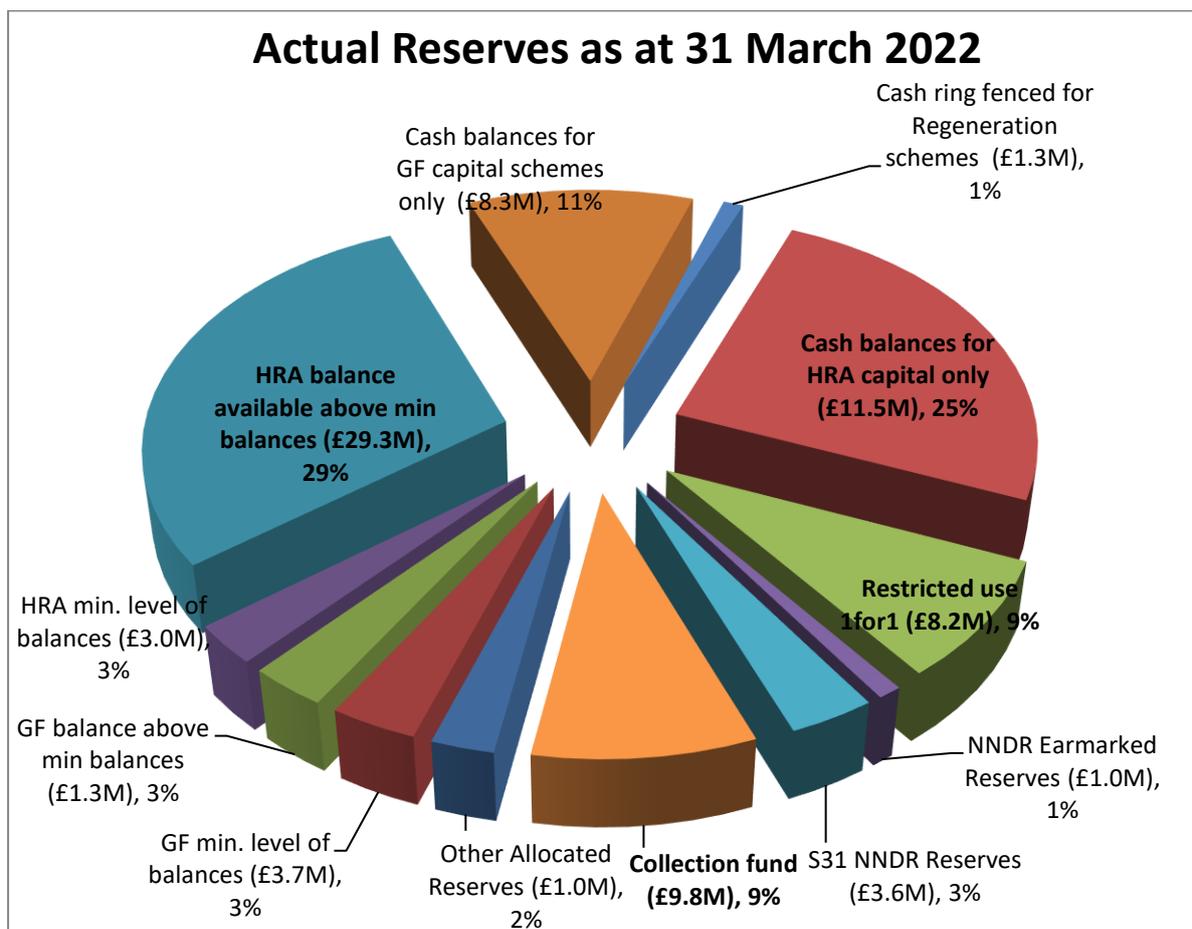
4.2.3 The Council's overall need to borrow and Capital Financing Requirement

4.2.3.1 The Council's underlying need to borrow to finance capital expenditure is termed the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). It represents the amount of debt it needs to/has taken out to fund the capital programme (and includes both internal and external borrowing). The CFR is then reduced as debt repayments are made and Minimum Revenue Provisions (MRP – see also section 4.2.4) are made. A separate CFR is calculated for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account and any transfers of assets (such as land or buildings) between the two accounts will impact on each fund's CFR. The CFR will go up on the fund "receiving" the assets and go down (by the same amount) on the fund "giving" the asset.

4.2.3.2 Cash balances enable the Council to use internal borrowing in line with its Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy. This position is kept under review taking into account future cash balances and forecast borrowing rates. The apportionment of General Fund and HRA cash balances on 31 March 2022 is shown in the following chart, but Members should note that these cash balances relate in part to the restricted use right to buy "one for one" receipts (£9Million) and balances relating to Council Tax and NNDR

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(£14Million), which includes the £9Million for the business rate appeals provision, (there are outstanding appeals on the 2010 rating list).



4.2.3.3 As at the 31 March 2022 the Council had total external borrowing of £227.750Million. The debt repayment profile is shown in the following table:

Table four Maturity of Debt Portfolio for 2020/21 and 2021/22		
Time to maturity	31 March 2021 Actual £'000's	31 March 2022 Actual £'000's
Maturing within one year	263	263
1 year or more and less than 2 years	263	0
2 years or more and less than 5 years	500	8,500
5 years or more and less than 10 years	49,656	57,656
10 years or more	168,284	161,331
Total	218,966	227,750

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4.2.3.4 The General Fund had external borrowing of £2.019Million with the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB). The HRA had external borrowing of £225.731Million all held with the PWLB, of which £30.820Million relates to the Decent Homes programme, £7.763Million from pre 2012, £4.010Million taken out in 2019/20, £10.0 Million taken out in 2020/21 and new loans of £9.047Million taken out in year. The remainder of £194.911 Million relates to self- finance the payment made to central government in 2012.

4.2.3.5 In addition to the PWLB borrowing, the General Fund also has loans from the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) in relation to regeneration activities. The schedule as at the 31 March 2022 is set out below. Discussions took place with the LEP regarding making these re-investible loans for further regeneration of the town, rather than needing to be repaid on the dates originally agreed. As indicated in the table, the current position is that only £209K of the £7.279Million received to date has been repaid. The remaining balance is repayable - £6.57Million in 2030 and £0.5Million in 2025. The loans are at zero interest.

Table Five: LEP Loans						
Loan Received	Site Assembly	Land Assembly	SG1	Repaid	Total	Repayment Date
2015/16	762,488			(208,795)	553,693	31/03/22
2018/19	416,306				416,306	
2019/20		4,108,709			4,108,709	
2020/21		1,491,291	500,000		1,991,291	
Total	1,178,794	5,600,000	500,000	(208,795)	7,069,999	

4.2.3.6 The Council's CFR is one of the key prudential indicators and is shown in the following table.

Table Six : Capital Financing Requirement 2020/21 and 2021/22			
CFR Calculation	31-Mar-21 (£'000)	31-Mar-22 (£'000)	Movement in Year (£'000)
Opening Balance	244,656	267,432	
Closing Capital Financing Requirement (General Fund)	34,338	46,642	12,304
Closing Capital Financing Requirement (Housing Revenue Account)	233,094	258,581	25,487
Closing Balance	267,432	305,223	37,791

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Table Six : Capital Financing Requirement 2020/21 and 2021/22			
CFR Calculation	31-Mar-21	31-Mar-22	Movement in Year
	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)
Increase/ (Decrease)	22,776	37,791	

4.2.3.7 The CFR for the HRA has increased by £25.487Million, due to increased borrowing requirement to fund major repairs & improvements and new housing.

- 4.2.3.8 The General Fund's CFR has increased by £12.304Million, due to;
- Borrowing requirement of +£2.154Million
 - New Marshgate Ltd loans of +£11.179Million
 - less Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) (see section 4.2.4) of -£195K
 - less loan repayments made in year totalling -£834K

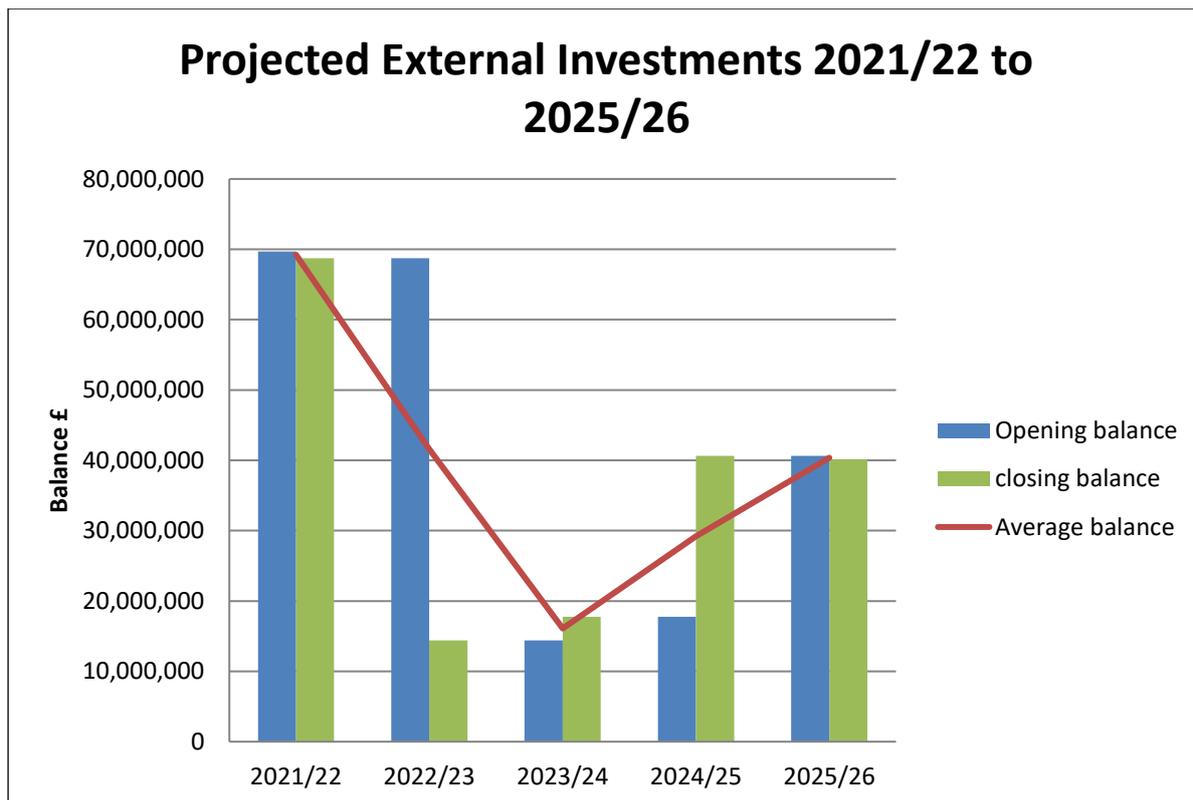
4.2.4 Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

4.2.4.1 The Prudential Code, by which the Council has to make its borrowing decisions, requires the Council to demonstrate that borrowing is required and affordable. The MRP is a statutory requirement to ensure borrowing is affordable for the General Fund and does not apply to the HRA (the HRA affordability is determined in the HRA BP). The Council is required to make annual MRP based on its policy approved by Council as part of the Treasury Management Strategy. The calculation of MRP is based upon prior years' borrowing requirement (regardless of whether that borrowing was internal or external) and the life of the asset for which the borrowing was required.

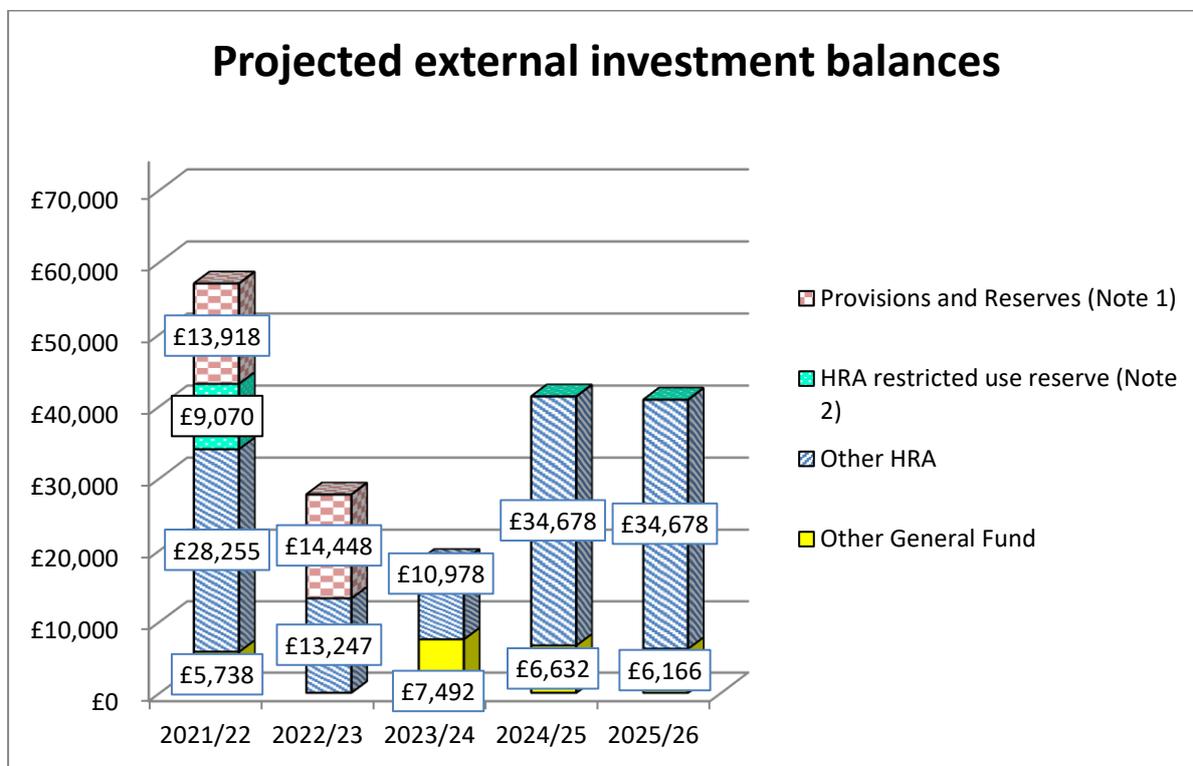
- 4.2.4.2 The MRP charged to the General Fund in 2021/22 was £195,200, of which
- £35,100 is funded from investment property
 - £29,400 is funded by the Garage Improvements Programme
 - £130,700 is a net cost to the General Fund

4.2.5 Cash Balances and Investment

4.2.5.1 The restrictive use of a proportion of the cash balances set out in paragraph 4.2.3.2, plus the planned use of resources in line with the Council's capital and revenue strategies mean that these resources are not available for new expenditure. The following chart shows the level of balances as at 31st March 2022 and the projected position following the planned use to 2025/26.



4.2.5.2 The chart below shows the breakdown of the projected external investment balances, showing what the external investments are held to fund.



- 1) Council Tax & NNDR held for bad debts and appeals and collection fund reserves.
- 2) 1-4-1 new build

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4.2.5.3 In accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy approved by Council on 24 February 2021, the Council invests its surplus cash balances, that are committed for future approved spending. The policy sets out the approach for choosing investment counterparties, and is based on credit ratings provided by the three main credit rating agencies, supplemented by additional market data and counterparty limits dependant on level of cash balances held.

4.2.5.4 There were no breaches to this policy in 2021/22 with the investment activity during the year conforming to the approved strategy. The Council had no liquidity difficulties and no funds were placed with the Debt Management Office (DMO) during 2021/22, demonstrating that counterparty limits and availability for placing funds approved in the TM Strategy were working effectively. It is possible that surplus funds borrowed during 2022/23 will be placed in the DMO temporarily, if PWLB borrowing rates are advantageous and cash balances due to the timing of taking out new loans would breach other counterparty limits.

4.2.5.5 The Specified and Non-Specified Investment Criteria (Appendix C) have been reviewed and updated in the Treasury Management Strategy 2022/23 agreed at Full Council in February 2022. Appendix C reflects the strategy in place for 2021/22. No further amendments are proposed at this stage.

4.2.6 Other Prudential Indicators

4.2.6.1 The treasury management indicators for 2021/22 onwards have been updated based on the updated Capital Strategy approved by Council in February 2022 and subsequently updated in the 3rd quarter capital update reported to Executive in March 2022 and the 4th quarter (Outturn) capital update reported to Executive in July 2022.

4.2.6.2 The **net borrowing position** for the Council as at 31 March 2022 was **£159Million** (total external borrowings/loans of £227.750Million less total investments held of £68.750Million).

4.2.6.3 The **operational boundary** and **authorised limit** refers to the borrowing limits within which the treasury team operate. A temporary breach of the operational boundary is permissible for short term cash flow purposes however a breach of the authorised limit would require a report to Council. **There were no breaches of either limit in 2021/22.**

4.2.6.4 The **ratio of financing costs** to net revenue stream is equal to General Fund interest costs divided by the General Fund net revenue income from Council tax, Revenue Support Grant and retained business rates. The 2021/22 indicator is **2.10%**. This means the cost of borrowing represents a very small proportion of the General Fund's core resources.

4.2.6.5 The full list of treasury prudential indicators is shown in Appendix A and has been updated for the 2021/22 outturn position.

4.3 OTHER ISSUES

4.3.1 Operational and Authorised Borrowing Limits

4.3.1.1 General Fund limits will be reviewed if necessary in the Mid-Year 2022/23 Treasury Management Strategy, due to go to Executive and Audit Committee in November 2022 and Council in December 2022.

4.3.1.2 HRA limits will be revisited as part of the HRA BP review to be reported to Executive in December 2022.

4.3.2 **Property Funds and Commercial Strategy.** As reported in the most recent Treasury Management Strategy, approved by Council in February 2022, Commercial investments (including investment properties), which are entered into primarily for gain by earning a positive net financial return are no longer permitted in the Capital Strategy, in order to access PWLB rates. Therefore this activity, and the borrowing requirement for it, is no longer included in the Prudential Indicators set out in Appendix A.

4.3.3 **UK Sovereign rating and investment criteria.** The UK sovereign rating could come under continued pressure from the impact of COVID and / or following the post-Brexit trade agreements agreed and their impact on the UK economy. The Council's investment criteria only use countries with a rating of AA- or above. Moody's UK Sovereign rating is Aa3 (AA-equivalent), the same as Fitch, while Standard & Poor's has it rated at AA. The UK rating remains exempt from the sovereign rating investment criteria so in this event if it were to result in the UK being downgraded below AA- it would not impact on the Council's ability to invest with UK institutions. Other investment criteria will be considered in this event to ensure security of funds for the Council.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

5.1.1 This report is of a financial nature and reviews the treasury management function for 2021/22. Any consequential financial impacts identified in the Capital strategy and Revenue budget monitoring reports have been incorporated into this report.

5.1.2 During the financial year Officers operated within the treasury and prudential indicators set out in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement and in compliance with the Council's Treasury Management Practices.

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5.2 Legal Implications

- 5.2.1 Approval of the Prudential Code Indicators and the Treasury Management Strategy are intended to ensure that the Council complies with relevant legislation and best practice.
- 5.2.2 The changes to PWLB borrowing arrangements as per paragraph 4.3.2, prohibiting access to PWLB where Council's retain commercial investments within their Capital Strategy, have been addressed and these activities removed.

5.3 Risk Implications

- 5.3.1 The current policy of minimising external borrowing only remains financially viable while cash balances are high and the differentials between investment income and borrowing rates remain. Should these conditions change the Council may need to take borrowing at higher rates which would increase revenue costs.
- 5.3.2 There remains uncertainty on the long-term implications of exiting the EU on the UK economy and borrowing rates. Officers monitor interest rate forecasts to inform the timing of borrowing decisions.
- 5.3.3 The Council's Treasury Management Strategy is based on limits for counterparties to reduce risk of investing with only a small number of institutions.
- 5.3.4 The thresholds and time limits set for investments in the Strategy are based on the relative ratings of investment vehicles and counter parties. These are designed to take into account the relative risk of investments and also to preclude certain grades of investments and counterparties to prevent loss of income to the Council.
- 5.3.5 There is a risk to the HRA BP's ability to fund the approved 30 year spending plans if interest rates continue to rise, this will included in the revision to the BP in November 2022.

5.4 Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.4.1 This report is technical in nature and there are no implications associated with equalities and diversity within this report. In addition to remaining within agreed counterparty rules, the council retains the discretion not to invest in countries that meet the minimum rating but where there are concerns over human rights issues. Counterparty rules will also be overlaid by any other ethical considerations from time to time as appropriate.
- 5.4.2 The Treasury Management Policy does not have the potential to discriminate against people on grounds of age; disability; gender; ethnicity; sexual orientation; religion/belief; or by way of financial exclusion. As such a detailed Equality Impact Assessment has not been undertaken.

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5.5 Climate Change Implications

- 5.5.1 The council's investment portfolio is sterling investments and not directly in companies. However, the TM team continue to review the use of Money Market funds to ensure, where possible, money market funds that invest in environmentally sustainable companies are used. In this way the TM team aligns with the Councils ambition to attempt to be carbon neutral by 2030.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- BD1 Treasury Management Strategy including Prudential Code Indicators 2021/22 (Council 24 February 2021)
- BD2 Mid-year Treasury update (Council 15 December 2021)

APPENDICES

- Appendix A - Prudential Indicators
- Appendix B - Investment and Borrowing Portfolio
- Appendix C - Specified and Non-Specified Investment Criteria

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Prudential Indicators

(a) Capital Expenditure

Capital expenditure is where the Council spends money on assets, such as property or vehicles that will be used for more than one year. This includes spending on assets owned by other bodies, loans and grants to other bodies enabling them to buy assets.

Capital Expenditure	31/03/2022 Estimate £'000	31/03/2022 Actual £'000
General Fund	20,929	24,121
HRA	53,656	37,221
Total Capital Expenditure	74,585	61,342

(b) Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)

The Council's cumulative maximum external borrowing requirement for 2021/22 is shown in the table below:

Capital Financing Requirement	31/03/2022 Estimate £'000	31/03/2022 Actual £'000
General Fund	37,920	46,642
HRA	262,144	258,581
Total CFR	300,064	305,223

(c) Gross Debt and Net Debt

The level of external borrowing is required to be compared to the Capital Financing Requirement which represents the underlying need to borrow. Requires that borrowing in the medium term can only be for capital purposes.

Debt	31/03/2022 Estimate £'000	31/03/2022 Actual £'000
General Fund	6,201	2,019
HRA	255,278	225,731
<i>Less Investments</i>	<i>(71,447)</i>	<i>(68,750)</i>
Total Debt	190,032	159,000

(d) Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary for External Debt

The operational boundary - is the maximum borrowing position of the Council expected during the year. Periods where the actual position is either below or over the boundary is acceptable subject to the authorised limit not being breached.

The authorised limit - A further key prudential indicator represents a control on the maximum level of borrowing. This represents a limit beyond which external debt is prohibited, and this limit needs to be set or revised by the full Council. It reflects the level of external debt which, while not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term.

The table below demonstrates that during 2021/22 the Council has maintained gross borrowing within its authorised limit.

Authorised limits	Operational Boundary £'000	Authorised Limit £'000	Actual External Debt 31/03/2022 £'000
Borrowing	329,299	337,299	227,750
Less Investments			(68,750)
Total	329,299	337,299	159,000

(e) Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream

General Fund: Net revenue stream is the RSG, NNDR grant and Council Tax raised for the year.

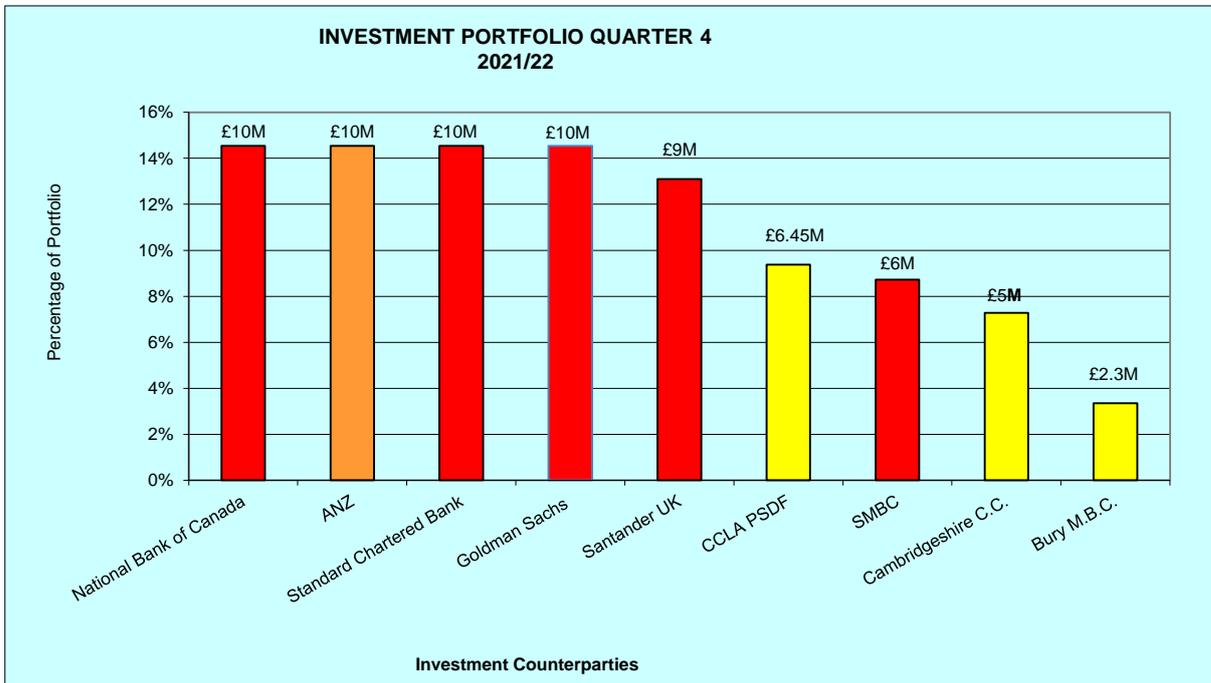
HRA: The net revenue stream is the total HRA income shown in the Council's accounts from received rents, service charges and other incomes. The ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream reflects the high level of debt as a result of self financing.

Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream	31/03/2022 Estimate %	31/03/2022 Actual %
General Fund	5.27%	2.10%
HRA	15.71%	15.50%

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Average interest rate - 2020/21 0.98%
 Average interest rate - 2021/22 0.35%
 Bank of England Bank Rate (at 31 March 2022) 0.75%

Borrower	Nation	Sovereign Rating (Fitch)	Amount £'s	From	To	Rate %
Money Market Funds (Instant Access)						
CCLA PSDF	UK		6,450,000			0.46
60 Day Notice Santander UK	UK	AA-	1,000,000			0.50
95 Day Notice Standard Chartered Bank	UK	AA-	7,000,000			1.00
Fixed Term Deposit						
National Bank of Canada	Can	AA+	5,000,000.00	03-Feb-22	03-May-22	0.37
Standard Chartered Bank	UK	AA-	3,000,000.00	26-Nov-21	26-May-22	0.28
SMBC	UK	AA-	6,000,000.00	29-Nov-21	27-May-22	0.22
Santander UK	UK	AA-	8,000,000.00	30-Dec-21	30-Jun-22	0.30
Goldman Sachs International	UK	AA-	8,000,000.00	31-Dec-21	30-Jun-22	0.51
National Bank of Canada	Can	AA+	5,000,000.00	03-Feb-22	03-Aug-22	0.67
Goldman Sachs International	UK	AA-	2,000,000.00	04-Feb-22	04-Aug-22	1.01
Australia & New Zealand Banking Corp (ANZ)	Aus	AAA	2,700,000.00	15-Sep-21	14-Sep-22	0.19
Australia & New Zealand Banking Corp (ANZ)	Aus	AAA	5,000,000.00	27-Sep-21	26-Sep-22	0.25
Australia & New Zealand Banking Corp (ANZ)	Aus	AAA	2,300,000.00	19-Oct-21	18-Oct-22	0.62
Cambridgeshire C.C.	UK	AA-	5,000,000.00	13-Apr-21	12-Apr-23	0.44
Bury M.B.C.	UK	AA-	2,300,000.00	18-May-20	18-Nov-24	2.00
			68,750,000			



Decent Homes Borrowing

<u>Lender</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Rate %</u>	<u>Amount £'s</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Life of Loan</u>
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	4.75	2,000,000	04/03/2010	04/03/2035	25 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	4.28	1,800,000	25/05/2010	25/05/2035	25 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	4.24	963,000	17/08/2010	17/08/2035	25 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	4.65	3,000,000	25/03/2010	25/09/2035	25 1/2 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	1.60	3,500,000	25/03/2020	25/03/2037	17 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	2.06	10,000,000	30/03/2021	30/03/2041	20 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	2.24	4,047,150	03/02/2022	03/02/2043	21 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	1.72	510,000	25/03/2020	25/03/2045	25 Years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	2.22	5,000,000	03/02/2022	03/08/2047	25 1/2 years
			30,820,150			

Self Financing Borrowing

<u>Lender</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Rate %</u>	<u>Amount £'s</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Life of Loan</u>
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	2.92	500,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2026	14 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	3.01	8,000,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2027	15 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	3.08	8,700,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2028	16 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	3.15	9,600,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2029	17 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	3.21	10,600,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2030	18 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	3.26	11,000,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2031	19 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	3.30	16,000,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2032	20 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	3.34	17,500,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2033	21 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	3.37	17,600,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2034	22 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	3.40	17,300,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2035	23 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	3.42	15,300,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2036	24 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	3.44	21,000,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2037	25 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	3.46	18,200,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2038	26 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	3.47	19,611,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2039	27 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	3.48	4,000,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2040	28 years
			194,911,000			

General Fund Prudential Borrowing

<u>Lender</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Rate %</u>	<u>Amount £'s</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Life of Loan</u>
PWLB	Fixed Rate/EIP	2.37	263,158	19/08/2013	19/02/2022	9 1/2 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate	2.29	1,755,950	19/03/2018	19/03/2028	10 years
			2,019,108			

Total Borrowing

227,750,258

Table 1 - Specified Investments are sterling denominated with maturities up to maximum of one year and must meet the following minimum high credit quality criteria:

Investment Counterparty	Investment Instrument	Minimum High Credit Quality Criteria	Investment Duration
Banks or Building Societies	Overnight Deposit	Fitch: Short Term F1 and Long Term A and Moody, Standard & Poor, equivalent where rated, the lowest rating used where different OR Part-nationalised or Nationalised UK banking institutions (subject to regular reviews of government share percentage).	Maximum duration as per Treasury Advisor's (Capita's) colour coded Credit List, and less than one year
	Notice Account		
	Short Term Deposit		
Debt Management Office or UK Local Authority	Any deposit	No limit.	
Money Market Funds	Instant Access	AAA rated	Instant Access

Table 2 - Non-Specified Investment are sterling denominated with a maturity longer than one year but no longer than five years, and must meet the following criteria:

Investment Counterparty	Investment Instrument	Minimum High Credit Quality Criteria	Investment Duration
Banks or Building Societies	Any deposits with maturity up to a maximum of five years	Fitch: Short Term F1+ and Long Term AA- and Moody, Standard & Poor, equivalent where rated, the lowest rating used where different	Maximum duration suggested by Treasury Advisor's (Capita's) colour coded Credit List, and not in excess of five years
Debt Management Office or UK Local Authority		No Limit.	

Please Turn Over

Table 3 - Treasury Limits

Investment Instrument	Cash balances less than £30Million	Cash balances higher than £30Million
	Limits	Limits
Variable Rate Investments (Excluding Enhanced Cash Funds)	Maximum holding £30M	Maximum holding 100%
Counterparty limits (to encompass all forms of investment)	Maximum £5M	Maximum £10M
Instant Access Or Overnight Deposit	Maximum holding 100%	
Fixed Rate less than 12 month maturity	Maximum holding 100%	
Fixed Rate more than 12 months to maturity (includes all types of Fixed Rate Investments i.e. Certificates of Deposits)	Maximum £5M	Maximum £10M
Money Market Funds - Traditional Instant Access (Counterparty Limit per Fund)	Maximum £5M per MMF	Maximum £10M per MMF
	No limit on total cash held	
Enhanced Cash Funds	Maximum £3M	
Certificates of Deposits	Maximum £5M	
Property Funds	Maximum of £3M - No durational limit. Use would be subject to consultation and approval	

Procedures of Applying the Criteria and Limits

Before the Treasury Team makes an investment, the Team will follow the procedure to ensure full compliance with the Specified and Non-Specified Criteria and Treasury Limits:

1 Check that the Counterparty is on the Counterparty List (also known as Current Counterparty Report for Stevenage) produced by Link Asset Services (LAS), specifically meeting the Council's Specified and Non-specified Minimum High Credit Quality Criteria in the above Table 1 & 2. If it is not on the list, the Treasury Team will not invest with them.

2 If the Counterparty is on the list, then the Treasury Team refers to the Credit List produced by LAS in colour coding, to determine the maximum investment duration suggested for the deposit, as per the column of Suggested Duration (CDS Adjusted with manual override).

3 Refer to the Treasury Limits in the above Table 3 to ensure the amount invested complies with the Treasury Limits.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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