

Appendix Two

Future Town, Future Council Scope and Focus for 2020/21

External Facing Programmes

1. Stevenage Centre Town Centre Regeneration Programme

1.1. Programme Outcomes

- A new vibrant town centre delivered through a phased regeneration programme.
- Two major regeneration schemes to advance.

1.2. Programme Overview

1.3. Regeneration of the town centre is the Council's number one priority and was the priority most often placed in residents' 'top three' in the town-wide survey undertaken in 2017. The Council wants to make Stevenage a destination of choice through delivering a new vibrant town centre, with quality shopping, office and leisure facilities.

1.4. The Council officially announced the appointment of Mace as the development partner for the first phase of town centre regeneration (SG1) in February 2018. This ambitious scheme will bring £350million of private investment into the town centre. It will see the area covering the Council (Daneshill House) offices, the Plaza, bus station and some of the adjacent car parks redeveloped with new shops, bars and restaurants, homes, new public spaces, and a central public sector hub accommodating the Council offices, a library, exhibition space, and health services

1.5. During 2020/21 the programme will primarily focus on:

- Developing the Town Fund investment plan which will be overseen by the Stevenage Development board.
- Working with the LEP to ensure Growth Deal funding is secured for specific schemes.
- Supporting and enabling the start of Phase 1 of the £350m+ SG1 project in conjunction with Mace, including Swingate House and the former police station site.
- Completing a business case for bringing forward the Public Sector hub development, to enable acceleration of the broader SG1 scheme.
- Completing works on the Town Square and Town Square North Block projects.
- The transformation of Queensway through the completion of the first phases of work as part of the Reef development.

- Beginning construction of the new Bus Interchange, subject to permission being granted.
- Developing long term plans to support development around the station area.
- Developing the funded CITB (Construction Industry Training Board) on-site Training Hub as part of the Stevenage Works initiative in conjunction with Job Centre Plus and North Herts College.
- Delivering the 2020/21 Marketing Strategy, focussing on inclusive engagement.

2. Housing Development Programme

2.1. Programme Outcomes

- Increased number of affordable houses in Stevenage.
- Improve access to the housing market in Stevenage for a greater number of residents.

2.2. Programme Overview

2.3. Providing decent, affordable homes appropriate to the needs of residents is one of the Council's key priorities and again was high on the agenda for many respondents to the town-wide Resident Survey. The Council is meeting this priority by delivering its own new build programme. Overall the programme remains on track for delivery of 300 homes by 2020.

2.4. The Council continued to work proactively during 2018/19 to get the Secretary of State's Holding Direction on the adoption of the Local Plan lifted. This was achieved in March 2019 and the Council has subsequently adopted the Local Plan since the year-end. This will provide the certainty needed to encourage developers to bring forward their schemes to provide a range of housing, including a proportion of affordable homes.

2.5. During 2020/21 the programme will primarily focus on:

- Completing work on 10 new homes at Ditchmore Lane and continuing to work on delivering a further 240 homes, including sites at Shephall Way, Kenilworth Close, North Road and Symonds Green.
- Seeking planning permission on future schemes for approximately 300 more new homes.
- Procuring the design team for the Oval scheme masterplan, undertaking consultation on the designs and setting out a timetable for the development.

- Exploring the viability of other potential areas of development across the town including opportunities to work in partnership with other providers.
- Continuing to work with partners to enable the delivery of additional affordable homes.
- Forming a Wholly Owned Company (WOC) to deliver homes outside the HRA.

3. Excellent Council Homes Programme

3.1. Programme Outcomes

- Transforming the Housing and Investment service to better meet the needs of its customers.
- Effective investment in council homes through planned programmes of work.

3.2. Programme Overview

3.3. The Council's aim is to provide high quality, efficient and effective housing services. The Council has committed through the Excellent Council Homes programme to transform its housing services to better meet the needs of its customers.

3.4. The programme comprises five main themes:

- Embedding corporate values and unified customer service: This is to ensure that customers will receive the same, excellent customer service from every member and area of business.
- Digital Housing: aimed at improving back office processes and enhancing internal systems in order to support digital development and access to information for our customers.
- Service and Personal Development: focused on delivery of a cohesive team provided with the right tools and skills to deliver excellent customer service.
- Knowing our Customers: aimed at understanding our customers' needs and prioritising them to provide bespoke services where possible. This is to improve contact with our customers and visibility and approachability of our staff.
- Major Investment in Flat Blocks: focused on delivery of the Major Refurbishment Contract (MRC), sprinkler systems and lift replacements in council-owned flat blocks.

3.5. During 2020/21 the programme will primarily focus on:

- Finalising the Housing Older People's Strategy in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council.
- Delivering Phase 2 of the 5-year MRC programme.
- Refurbishing a further 4 lifts as part of the lift refurbishment programme.

- Consulting with residents about the sprinkler retro-fitting programme, mobilising the contract and commencing works.
- Continuing to improve services to the customer through the housing on-line application; a review of the end-to-end repairs process; building on the use of mobile working applications; and evaluating the outcome of the innovation labs.
- Supporting homeless people by delivering the Homeless and Rough Sleeper Action plan and responding to the Government's initiatives for rough sleepers in light of Covid-19.
- Completing recruitment to vacant posts within the new Business Unit structure and evaluating how successful the new structure has been in terms of the service delivery/customer satisfaction and staff satisfaction.
- Introducing a series of 'innovation labs' to involve staff in influencing further digitalisation of the housing offer.
- Assessing and evaluating the Housing All Under One Roof Transformation programme to inform further service improvement opportunities.

4. Co-operative and Neighbourhood Management Programme

4.1. Programme Outcomes

- Public spaces are more attractive, better cared for by the Council and residents, and help to give people pride in the place they live.
- Residents feel that they can work with the Council and other organisations to help meet the needs of the local area.
- The town's community centres are efficiently run, well-managed and most importantly, meet local needs.
- Staff better understand the town's communities and through doing so are more able to deliver the change that is required.

4.2. Programme Overview

4.3. The Co-operative Neighbourhood Management (CNM) programme sets out how the Council will work with communities to improve neighbourhoods. Through working together with residents and other partners the Council believes public spaces can be made more attractive and in turn help to give people pride in the place they live. The CNM programme was formally launched at Stevenage Day in June 2017 and is complemented by an 'Our Neighbourhood' area on the Council's website. Focused investment in neighbourhood improvements has continued to progress throughout the year. The programme has been further re-purposed to provide the FTFC oversight for the development of the Council's approach to area-based co-operative neighbourhood management.

4.4. During 2020/21 the programme will primarily focus on:

- Implementing the Co-operative Neighbourhood working model, to enhance co-operative working across council services in neighbourhoods.
- Beginning to roll out elements of the new sustainable model for the provision and management of community centres.
- Public realm investments in Bedwell and Longmeadow, which will be determined by the community and seek co-operation from local groups, businesses and partner agencies, subject to funding becoming available.
- Replacing and installing new litter bins across Roebuck and Old Town.
- Progressing the Garage Programme.

5. Connected to our Customers Programme

5.1. Programme Outcomes

- Use of self-service is encouraged, so more time can be spent with customers that need extra help.
- Increased customer satisfaction for residents interacting with key services.
- Online customer data protected and better used to provide useful insight.
- The Council uses technology to meet its ambitions and make its workforce more modern, efficient and responsive to customer needs.
- A simple and clearer website with more self-service choices.

5.2. Programme Overview

5.3. The 'Connected to our Customers' programme aims to improve the accessibility of Council services and the customer experience. It will enhance the way residents can access Council services through increasing the use of digital options, whilst ensuring that officers continue to spend time with those customers who require additional assistance.

5.4. The Council's digital aspirations will evolve as we co-operatively redesign services with our workforce and customers. This modernisation of service delivery will allow the Council to be more responsive to customer needs and flexible in order to adapt more quickly to changing demands or priorities.

5.5. During 2020/21 the programme will primarily focus on:

- Improving the online offer for residents and businesses by delivering a simple, clearer website and straightforward online self-service options for key council services.
- Developing and implementing the Council's channel management approach and enabling people to use digital services.

- Supporting the overall customer service offer and efficiency by improving back office processes and technology within the Council.
- Developing the digital platform to support the Coronavirus response and those who are vulnerable.
- Ensuring the new website is compliant with digital accessibility regulations.
- Developing a new Digital Strategy that will set out how the Council will embrace digital change to support corporate priorities.

6. Place of Choice Programme

6.1. Programme Outcomes

- Working to reduce health inequalities and improve the health and wellbeing of Stevenage residents.
- Building resilient communities, reducing crime and disorder and helping people feel safe.
- Making Stevenage a 'destination creative' town.
- Unlocking opportunities for the local economy and our residents, ensuring that future regeneration and growth in Stevenage works for everyone.
- Achieving net zero Council emissions by 2030 and leading work to achieve this aim for the town, its businesses and residents.
- Establishing Stevenage as a leader in sustainable transport.
- Enhancing Stevenage's biodiversity by conserving, restoring, recreating and reconnecting wildlife habitats, whilst increasing awareness and appreciation of Stevenage's wildlife.

6.2. Programme Overview

6.3. At the Executive meeting on 11th September 2019, Members requested that officers scope the 'Place of Choice' FTFC strand to incorporate the place based strategies that the Council has developed with partners.

6.4. Key priorities are well-established for the existing strategies and are in development for the emerging strategies. The scope of this strand will develop further over time as new priorities emerge.

6.5. During 2020/21 the programme will primarily focus on:

Healthy Stevenage

- Launching a new Young People's Healthy Hub project to reduce physical inactivity, improve mental wellbeing, and provide advice and support for residents aged 11-16 years old.

- Improving the way we evidence and evaluate the impact of health and wellbeing projects and interventions working closely with the University of Hertfordshire.
- Communicating better with local residents and professionals to raise awareness of local health improvement projects and services via a wider variety of communication channels.
- Continuing to work with health and physical activity partners to deliver the Healthy Stevenage Strategy 2018-2022.
- Continuing to collaborate and integrate our work with other key health and wellbeing strategies across Hertfordshire.
- Improving the way we work with local communities in co-designing health and wellbeing projects and services.

Community Safety

- Working with partners to deliver initiatives to respond to the key Community Safety priorities of Violent Crime, Hate Crime and Community Reassurance.
- Cooperatively working to break the cycle of substance misuse and offending.
- Tackling perceptions of ASB through a media campaign highlighting how Stevenage is a safe place to live, visit and work in.
- Increased cooperative work in the community to tackle ASB.
- Improving awareness of safeguarding issues in our community.

Stevenage Re-Imagined

- Implementing arts and heritage installations in the planning phase.
- Implementing the Creative Use Scheme pilot in the town centre, giving local artists/artisans/creatives the opportunity to utilise underproductive/ empty buildings in Stevenage town centre.
- Developing new cultural proposals and initiatives in the town centre and across neighbourhoods.
- Undertaking Hertfordshire Cultural Education Partnership needs analysis & early commissioned delivery.
- Piloting new heritage activities as we develop plans for a new museum for Stevenage.
- Working co-operatively with the newly formed Junction 7 Creatives and others in the local creative community on the above projects.
- Developing a series of options that could potentially form part of the Council's Town Deal Proposition to Government

Community Wealth Building

- Launching an Inclusive Economy Charter as part of the Council's commitment to Community Wealth Building, ensuring local people and businesses can benefit from opportunities created.
- Supporting Herts Growth Board to develop a policy statement and action plan for community wealth building across Hertfordshire.

Climate Change

- Adopting the new Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, co-produced with the community, and supporting county-wide climate actions through the Herts Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership.
- Securing commitment from local businesses and residents through the Climate Change Business Charter and Community Pledge list.
- Developing and implementing the SBC Carbon Management Plan.

Sustainable Transport

- Refreshing the Future Town Future Transport Strategy.
- Working towards the designation of Stevenage as a 'Sustainable Transport town'.
- Delivery of sustainable transport projects included the Town Centre Regeneration Programme (permission for the bus interchange as referred to in paragraph 3.15; and scoping options for the multi-storey car park, cycle hub and cycleway improvements).
- Updating the Parking and Sustainable Transport Supplementary Planning Document and Strategy.
- Developing the options for the cycle hire scheme.

Biodiversity

- Developing Shackledell Grassland as a designated local nature reserve.
- Developing site specific hedgerow management plans.
- Protecting woodland sites through improved vertical structure in woodlands (subject to being able to work on-site in the autumn/winter months).
- Developing new orchard and grassland habitats (subject to being able to work on-site in the autumn/winter months).

Internal Facing Programmes

7. Financial Security Programme

7.1. Programme Outcomes

- As meet the Financial Security three year savings target.
- To ensure that the General Fund expenditure equals income without the use of balances from 2022/23 onwards.
- To ensure the Housing Revenue Account has sufficient funding to meet the capital needs of the Housing Asset Management Strategy and identified revenue needs.
- To identify Financial Security options using the three revised workstreams (efficiency, commercial and improved processes), before recommending any service rationalisation options, as summarised below.

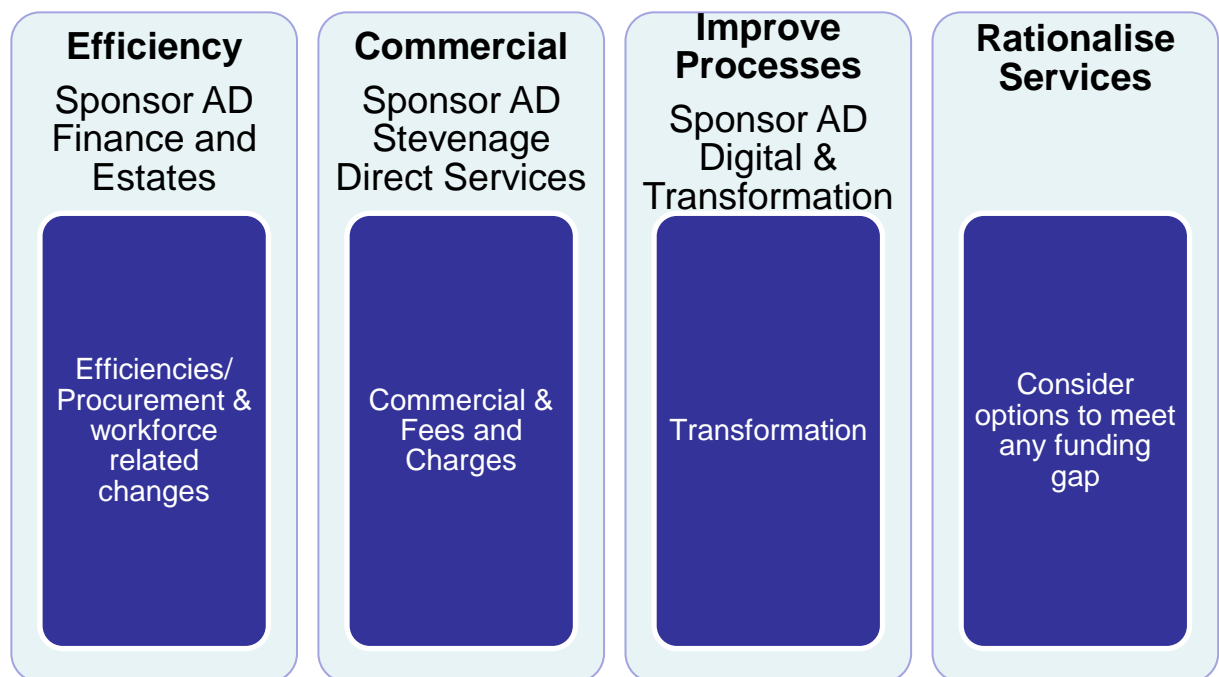


Figure 2: Financial Security workstreams

7.2. Programme Overview

7.3. This programme aims to ensure that the Council has sufficient funds available to deliver quality services that residents want and need. The Council aims to break away from the cycle of dependency on Government grant through becoming more efficient in its processes and developing new and innovative funding streams to ensure it has the resources it needs to be a Council fit for the future and build a vibrant town that residents deserve.

7.4. During 2020/21 the programme will primarily focus on:

- Reviewing the Medium Term Financial Strategies, including assessments of the impact of Covid-19 on General Fund and HRA budgets and identification and implementation of mitigating actions.
- Identification of Financial Security options to meet the General Fund and HRA funding gap for the period 2021/22-2023/24 via the Financial Security workstreams.
- Further developing and implementing the Council's Commercial and Insourcing Strategy.
- Continuing to undertake an appraisal of the Council's assets across all Stevenage neighbourhoods, to meet the objectives of the General Fund Asset Management Strategy.
- Undertaking a Transformation Opportunity Assessment as a key first stage in the transformational approach to addressing the funding challenge.
- Identifying options to improve productivity via use of digital interventions.

8. Employer of Choice Programme

8.1. Programme Outcomes

- Improved employee engagement.
- Right person, right place, right time – recruiting/retaining staff to hard to fill posts.
- Improved managerial competency.
- Improved reputation as a place to work.
- Evidence of staff progressing to higher grades and new roles.

8.2. Programme Overview

8.3. The Council aims to create a flexible, collaborative, creative and modern workforce to ensure it can deliver the priorities set out in the FTFC programme and give residents the standard of services they expect. This programme aims to transform the way the Council works, ensuring that staff have the skills, abilities and experience to deliver excellence. The Council must become an employer of choice so that it can compete in today's market place and attract and retain the best staff to build for the future.

8.4. Through Future Council Business Reviews, work has begun on shaping the next stage of the transformation programme to ensure the Council has the right structures, teams and people in place.

8.5. During 2020/21 the programme will primarily focus on:

- Developing a new Workforce strategy and supporting work programme to ensure that our workforce and workplace are developed and engaged to deliver our services now and in the future. The strategy will focus on ways of working, workforce

communication, workforce inclusion and diversity and workforce development.

- Working closely with the business to ensure that our workforce have the appropriate skills and knowledge to deliver now and in the future.
- Preparing for new ways of working having learned from the experience of operating the services during the Covid-19 pandemic and also to prepare the council for its planned move to the public sector hub.
- A renewed focus on branding of SBC as an employer through on-boarding and external recognition.
- Continuing to support areas of the organisation as they go through business unit reviews.
- Refresh of induction and introduction of on-boarding concepts
- Developing tools to enable staff self-service.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the Firstcare absence management system.

9. Performing at our Peak Programme

9.1. Programme Outcomes

- The provision of high quality performance management tools.
- Streamlined governance structures that ensure effective and timely decision making.
- A strong performance culture is embedded across the organisation.

9.2. Programme Overview

9.3. The Council aims to become an insightful Council with improved service performance and slimmed down decision-making processes. The programme will improve the organisation's insight, analysis and intelligence to help us to make better informed business decisions. This is being achieved through more timely coordination of data and the adoption of tools to support ongoing strategic and operational analysis.

9.4. During 2020/21 the programme will primarily focus on:

- Ongoing development of the use of the Inphase system.
- Reviewing the scheme of officer delegations in respect of Executive powers.