

### Generation Stevenage: opportunities for young people

I welcome the work of the Stevenage Borough Council's Environment and Economy Select Committee, to review and understand the economic impact of Covid on the town and what this might mean for the future.

As the independent Chair of the Stevenage Development Board, it is my pleasure and privilege to work alongside deeply committed community leaders, businesses, investors and public sector partners such as Stevenage Borough Council, the Hertfordshire County Council and the Hertfordshire LEP to attract funding for the town and provide outstanding opportunities for businesses, residents and young people. This is always important but is brought into even sharper focus post Covid as you will see here,

[https://www.hopinto.co.uk/media/1769/impact-of-covid-19-on-young-people\\_report.pdf](https://www.hopinto.co.uk/media/1769/impact-of-covid-19-on-young-people_report.pdf)

My experience includes my post as Deputy Chair of the Herts LEP and for the past 6 years, Chair of the Skills and Employment Board of the Herts LEP.

The Stevenage Development Board was set up in 2020, meeting for the first time in March 2020, just days before the first national lockdown took effect. My appointment enabled the release of £19m in Growth Deal Funds. These times have been extraordinary and exceptional for us all to work collectively, but we have managed this task well. Since our formation, we have worked to inform a vision for the future, through the Stevenage Town Investment Plan, and we have secured the second highest national funding allocation, of all the Town Deals, at £37.5m. See a copy of our Plan for an Even Better Stevenage [here](#)

Within this, we support the work of the Council and many partners to regenerate the town centre, while also creating opportunity for local people a requirement of the Governments funding obligation. This includes, for example, funding that can help bring forward more jobs in the Gunnel Wood Road area, a new Science and Technology facility (SCITECH) and 8 other projects to revitalise the town and an intention to support local business by creating 500 learner spaces for STEM focused learners in the local area. This arrangement directly supports the Governments agenda for "Levelling Up" a specific requirement in Stevenage by comparison to the rest of Hertfordshire.

Furthermore, the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise and the Hertfordshire County Council have refreshed and updated the "Hertfordshire Skills Strategy" see <https://www.hertfordshirelep.com/media/maflpk3y/hertfordshire-local-skills-report-2021.pdf> to help tackle the barriers that exist to great skills and job opportunities, and to make the most of the careers that are available in Stevenage now and those that can be forged in Stevenage and beyond in the future, ensuring brighter life time opportunities for residents as Life Science, Advanced Engineering, Space Technology, Social, Nursing and Medical care and Construction job opportunities develop.

We have worked across the Stevenage Development Board and the various business representatives to make sure opportunities for young people is at the heart of our efforts, including support to the Generation Stevenage event.

On 1 December 2020, Generation Stevenage brought together Stevenage's world-class employers to showcase the exciting career opportunities available to young people across science, technology, engineering, math's (STEM) and healthcare. Several hundred young people from Stevenage and the nearby towns joined an online forum to hear directly from employers MBDA, GSK, Airbus, NHS, Cell

and Gene Therapy Catapult and Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst on what it is like to work within their sectors. The session gave the opportunity

- To listen to the work of these cutting-edge businesses
- To hear from graduate employees and apprentices on their experience of working at the above organisations and their own personal career pathways
- To learn more about the skills you need to succeed and how you can apply for local jobs and apprenticeships

In Stevenage we benefit greatly from a legacy of innovation and showing a way forward for the next generation, is paramount in our thinking for developing a Town and industry that can provide real opportunity to its residents.

Further support is also available thanks to Hertfordshire LEP's "Hertfordshire Opportunities Portal", HOP at [www.hopinto.co.uk](http://www.hopinto.co.uk), which signposts to all available opportunities. Powered by the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, students, employers, residents, wishing to upskill, are now able to HOP into all the resources they need to make informed career decisions, including:

- career path options
- employment opportunities
- apprenticeships and work experience
- skills development and professional qualification programmes
- how to start your own business

I look forward to continuing our working with the Borough Council and other partners as we embrace the opportunities ahead of us and make a real difference for the town, its residents, and all local employers.

Adrian Hawkins OBE  
Independent Chair  
Stevenage Development Board