

Meeting Executive
Portfolio Area All
Date 12 July 2022



CORPORATE PERFORMANCE QUARTER FOUR AND ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22, AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE SUITE FOR 2022/23

KEY DECISION

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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to highlight the council's performance across key priorities and themes for the past year through the Annual Report 2021/22, including a particular focus on quarter four performance.
- 1.2 This report also proposes the Future Town, Future Council Cooperative Corporate Plan Priorities and the Corporate Performance Suite for 2022/23.
- 1.3 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 resulting from the performance indicator information.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the draft Annual Report 2021/22 (Appendix 1) and summary action plan (Appendix 2) are 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.
- 2.2 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 four 2021/22, together with the latest achievements, be noted (see Appendix 3).
- 2.3 That the performance challenges in relation to housing voids, garages, homelessness services and customer service are noted, and the planned measures to improve performance are endorsed (see Appendix 4).
- 2.4 That the proposed Corporate Performance Suite 2022/23 (Appendix 6) is agreed.
- 2.5 That the Executive Action Tracker at Appendix 7 be noted.

3 CONTEXT

- 3.1 Each year, the council agrees its key outcomes and priorities for the town and the council during the coming 12 months. These are framed within the Future Town Future Council (FTFC) Cooperative Corporate Plan, with delivery driven through service areas and the FTFC programme as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 - Future Town Future Council Programme



- 3.2 Throughout 2021/22 the council has continued to make significant progress in delivering its ambitions under the Future Town Future Council programme. Overall performance this year has once again been very good with over half

our stretching indicators meeting or exceeding their targets. Continued effort is being applied to areas where improvements are needed, including re-focusing resources on specific action plans. This report sets out these achievements and areas of focus in more detail.

- 3.3 The achievements and challenges this year should be considered in the context of another particularly challenging year for Stevenage residents, businesses and the council. This has included:
- 3.3.1 The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, with case rates still on the rise nationally and continuing impacts on the availability and costs of materials and goods despite the move to recovery and the whole world learning to live with the disease.
 - 3.3.2 The significant increases in the cost of living, caused by rising prices for fuel, energy, utility, rent / mortgages, food and other household expenses.
 - 3.3.3 The impact of the war in Ukraine, impacting on the availability and cost of fuel, energy, utility, food and construction materials as well as increased risk of cyber threats and interruptions to the supply of goods, services and labour.
 - 3.3.4 The displacement of significant numbers of refugees, predominantly from Ukraine, Afghanistan and Syria, and the determination locally to meet the needs of any who arrive in the town under various government visa schemes.
 - 3.3.5 Continuing reductions in council funding from central government, exacerbated by difficult business environment impacting business rates and inflation now rising significantly.
- 3.4 It is highly likely that these issues will continue throughout 2022/23, and will continue to impact on the demand for and delivery of council services, and the achievement of priority programmes. These impacts will be closely monitored by Members and Officers, and reported to the Executive as appropriate.
- 3.5 With the aforementioned in mind, the Council should be rightly proud of its achievements in the past year. The need to address the General Fund budget gap was recognised when the budget for 2022/23 was approved earlier this year and work is being undertaken to develop options for Members to consider ahead of a related report being presented to the Executive in September 2022.

4 QUARTER 4 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE

- 4.1 A summary of progress against the FTFC Programme is attached at Appendix 3. The key highlights this quarter have also been included in the Annual Report 2021/22.

- 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 Results for the full set of current corporate performance measures are attached at Appendix 5. The overview of these results for April 2021 to March 2022 are outlined below:

Number of Measures Reported	Meeting or exceeding target	Amber Status (within a manageable tolerance)	Red Status (urgent improvement action required)	Missing Data
46	29	3	14	0

- 4.4 Three community safety partnership measures are also monitored through the Corporate Performance Suite. The data for these measures is provided by the Police and HCC.
- 4.5 Further to this 9 additional measures have been baselined in 2021/22 (see Appendix 5). These have now been introduced into the proposed Corporate Performance Suite 2022/23 (see Appendix 6).

Spotlights and Areas for Improvement

- 4.6 Council teams continue to be focused and engaged on delivery of the agreed priorities, from creating new social and affordable housing, to driving forward the transformation of the town centre and embedding the cooperative neighbourhoods approach.
- 4.7 Key performance highlights for Quarter 4 include:
- 4.7.1 There were 62 homelessness preventions against a target of 40
 - 4.7.2 36% of household waste was sent for reuse, recycling and composting
 - 4.7.3 Garage Voids achieved target for the first time in 10 quarters
 - 4.7.4 There were 11 new business start-ups in the Business Technology Centre against a target of 6
 - 4.7.5 It took on average 2.86 days to process new housing benefit claims and change events against a target of 10 days
- 4.8 The Council is also focusing on areas of challenging performance, and considering how to address them whilst continuing to provide services and support residents.
- 4.9 Four main areas of challenge were reported to be at red or amber status for Quarter 4, namely Temporary Accommodation, Housing Voids, Garages and Customer Services.

- 4.10 These are the same four main areas that have been a focus throughout the year, and officer Performance Clinics have been held over the last two quarters. Each performance clinic has included attendees from all relevant service areas. These sessions have considered performance data, related issues, actions planned and in place, and future forecasting. Each service area has developed an improvement plan, the implementation of which will be the responsibility of the relevant Assistant Director(s).
- 4.11 The improvement activities outlined in Appendix 4 have been identified for ongoing attention by the Senior Leadership Team to maintain a strong focus on performance improvement.
- 4.12 Appendix 4 sets out in more detail the impact of the challenges the Council faces and the proposed actions that are being implemented to address them. Whilst it will take time for the impact of some of these mitigations to materialise, there are already positive signs against some of the measures. The ongoing scrutiny from Members and officers should ensure that meaningful and sustained progress is achieved over the coming months.

5 ANNUAL REPORT

- 5.1 The Annual Report 2021/22 (see Appendix 1) is an external-facing document which sets out the council's progress in delivering excellent services and achieving key priorities for Stevenage.
- 5.2 Please note that a fully designed version of the Annual Report will be published as an addendum prior to the Executive meeting.
- 5.3 The content of the Annual Report 2021/22 has been structured around existing and current local considerations and pressures; service performance across the 8 business units; and the five FTFC themes of the Corporate Plan:

Local considerations

- Responding to COVID
- Cost of Living
- Delivering for Stevenage (Service performance across the 8 Business Units)

FTFC Themes

- Transforming Our Town
- More Social and Affordable Homes
- Working Co-operatively Within Our Neighbourhoods
- A Clean, Green, Safe and Thriving Town
- Making Your Money Count

- 5.4 Particular highlights this year include:

- 5.4.1 Successfully launching the Town Square regeneration (in partnership with Co-Space launch) and a re-opening of the Visitors Centre in September 2021.
- 5.4.2 Delivery of the Queensway mixed-use scheme and completed construction of the new bus interchange which opened in late spring 2022.
- 5.4.3 Reinvestment into more affordable and social homes through the private sale of properties at Ditchmore Lane, Symonds Green and DeHavilland House.
- 5.4.4 Successfully securing £715,000 of Community Renewal Funding to help deliver the council's Community Wealth Building ambitions. The funding will be used to redirect wealth back into the local economy.
- 5.4.5 Launching the Stevenage Equalities Commission to undertake a strategic assessment of the nature, extent, causes and impact of race inequality in Stevenage, and published a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy following public consultation.
- 5.4.6 Completing ward walkabouts in all Co-operative Neighbourhood areas with over 500 conversations collated as part of the pop up event activities – the findings will be used to inform community and neighbourhood priorities for 2022/23.
- 5.4.7 Completing 870 visits to businesses to provide advice on COVID controls in accordance with business restrictions.
- 5.4.8 Securing over £200,000 funding from the local Health Protection Board to support the local Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector to help manage the ongoing impact of community transmission of Covid-19, increase vaccine take up and to help build a response to emerging health inequalities.
- 5.4.9 Providing food bank stock to 14 voluntary groups and supporting 16 local schools to supply lunch, healthy snacks, shoes and clothing to children, as well as providing onsite food banks and supermarket vouchers to struggling families.
- 5.4.10 Providing secure tenancies to 232 new council tenants and temporary accommodation to 362 new tenants (including through our Housing First scheme).

- 5.4.11 Planting an additional acre of woodland in the north of Fairlands Valley Park, Managed around 33 ha of meadow grasslands for wildlife, and successfully retaining 5 Green Flag Awards confirming the high quality of local parks
- 5.4.12 Agreeing and publishing a Climate Change Strategy, and associated Action Plan.
- 5.4.13 Helping 594 residents receive crisis intervention and support through the No More Service (Adults and Youth) programme, and providing 23 safe spaces for families and supporting 53 families through the Stevenage Women's Refuge.
- 5.4.14 Re-opening our Play Centres following covid / lockdown-related closures and achieving 5,405 sessional visits since then.
- 5.4.15 Working with 105 young people across three outreach pop-up events during the summer period, and 106 young people at basketball roadshows during the summer half-term and school summer holiday as part of the Stevenage Young Person Health Hub.
- 5.4.16 Providing £12.4 million in business rate relief and £6.2 million in business grants to local business that have been adversely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 5.4.17 Awarding £6.1 million from the Council Tax Support Scheme to help eligible households reduce the cost of their council tax liability.
- 5.5 In addition to outlining achievements across the range of Council services and the FTFC programme, the Annual Report also summarises key priorities for 2022/23. These priorities were agreed by the Executive at its meeting in June, and will form the basis of quarterly reporting to the Executive on both FTFC programme delivery and corporate performance throughout the coming year.
- 5.6 To ensure effective communication of the Annual Report, a new approach has been taken which uses a mix of infographics and photographs. This helps to make the report more visually appealing, easier to digest and more engaging for the reader.
- 5.7 A benefit of the inclusion of infographics is that the Council can use these in other forms of media. Snapshots of information will work well when communicating messages via social media (for example) and so the infographics will be used across a variety of media in the coming year.

Focus into 2022/23

- 5.8 Delivery will continue in line with the priorities outlined in the Annual Report 2021/22 (Appendix 1), and resources will be allocated to ensuring new activity identified can commence alongside existing priorities and core services.
- 5.9 The full list of priorities for 2022/23 was agreed by the Executive at its meeting in June 2022, including a particular focus on:
- 5.9.1 Continuing to deliver against the pillars of the Future Town Future Council Programme: Transforming Our Town Centre; More Social and Affordable Housing; Cooperative Neighbourhoods; Making Your Money Count; Clean, Green, Safe and Thriving Town.
 - 5.9.2 Corporate and Business Unit Priorities, including completing the procurement of a new leisure management contract; meeting all new requirements of the Social Housing Regulator; embedding our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion; implementing our Workforce Strategy; reviewing and updating our Housing Revenue Account Business Plan; and producing a new Corporate Plan.
- 5.10 The Senior Leadership Team will continue to closely monitor the impact of the cost of living crisis on performance across all service areas during 2022/23, working with the Cost of Living Member Working Party. This will help to understand and mitigate where possible the level of impact on residents, business and the council and inform where activity and resources need to be allocated.
- 5.11 In addition, the development and implementation of the ICT Strategy will continue to be monitored by the IT Shared Service Partnership Board to ensure that services are delivered that meet customer needs and are fit for the future. This will also be informed by the recent review of the strategy that has been undertaken.
- 5.12 Subject to its agreement at this meeting, the proposed Corporate Performance Suite 2022/23 will form the basis of quarterly performance reports to Executive throughout 2022/23. The proposed measures and targets have been fully reviewed to ensure they remain relevant.
- 5.13 There are no significant changes to measures proposed for 2022/23, reflecting our continuing focus on the same priorities for Stevenage. Some targets have been amended to ensure they remain stretching but also realistic, reflecting current levels of performance, the anticipated impact of service improvement actions and pressures, and trajectories for improvement where necessary.
- 5.14 The Council's approach to performance management and monitoring allows the organisation to proactively identify issues and challenges and ensure prompt management intervention. The fluid nature of the framework enables the Senior Leadership Team to amend targets to ensure that they continue to reflect revisions to service delivery models where necessary and to support and drive forward additional improvements in services for the benefit of internal and external customers.

- 5.15 The performance management approach will also be reviewed in consultation with the new Portfolio Holder over the coming months.

6 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

- 6.1 The information presented in this report is collated from a wide variety of sources, including consultation and engagement activity with residents, partner organisations and with officers and members, and management information from the frequent monitoring of council performance and FTFC programme delivery.
- 6.2 This report aims to give Executive an overview of the achievements the Council has made during the last 12 months, with a particular focus on the previous quarter. It also identifies (through the Annual Report at Appendix 2) the priorities for 2022/23 as previously agreed by Executive at its meeting in June 2022, along with plans for continued improvements in some areas to ensure the Council is fit for the future.
- 6.3 The Senior Leadership Team and Service Managers have been consulted to determine the appropriate content and to identify the key achievements.

7 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Financial Implications

- 7.1.1 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.

7.2 Legal Implications

- 7.2.1 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.

7.3 Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 7.3.1 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.

7.4 Risk Implications

- 7.4.1 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.
- 7.4.2 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.

7.5 Other Corporate implications

- 7.5.1 Implementing the priorities and improvement activity outlined in this report may impact on the development of future policy or procedure.

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Draft Annual Report 2021/22, including priorities and FTFC programme focus for 2022/23 (NB a designed version of the Annual Report will be published as an Addendum prior to the meeting)
- Appendix 2: Plan on a Page / Summary Action Plan 2022/23
- Appendix 3: FTFC Summary Quarter 4 2021/22
- Appendix 4: Corporate Performance Summary Quarter 4 2021/22
- Appendix 5: Compendium of Performance Results
- Appendix 6: Proposed Corporate Performance Suite 2022/23
- Appendix 7: Executive Action Tracker