

Appendix 3: Future Town Future Council (FTFC) Summary Quarter 4 2021/22

1. Transforming Our Town Programme Delivery Update

- 1.1 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 is well underway.
- 1.2 Work is complete on the bus interchange main site and a preview event was held with Members, the Council's Senior Leadership Team and contractors Wilmott Dixon in early March. Public realm work and resurfacing works are near completion.
- 1.3 Consultation on the proposals for the current bus station site took place this quarter. An online survey was shared through social media, visual display boards in the town centre, the Visitor Centre, Co-Space, Junction 7, neighbourhood centres and by the Comet. Analysis of the feedback is now underway.
- 1.4 Approval for the remainder of the funding for the multi-storey car park (MSCP) was approved by the Executive in February, and it is anticipated that contractors Huber will start construction in Spring 2022.
- 1.5 Overall practical completion was achieved at the Queensway scheme this quarter. A new brochure and marketing campaign has been launched for the remaining office units that are vacant.
- 1.6 All of the projects that make up the Stevenage Town Investment Plan have been formally endorsed by the Stevenage Development Board and approved by Executive. The business case summaries have been submitted to Town's Fund team, as required by Central Government.

2. More Social and Affordable Housing Programme Delivery Update

- 2.1 The North Road (21 Homes) scheme has handed over and pre agreed sales are now progressing to completion. By the end of March over £2m of sales have completed, which is in line with the capital strategy for the scheme.
- 2.2 Work has progressed at the Symonds Green (29 Homes) site with roof work to Phase one of the scheme completed. Also, internal works including kitchen and bathrooms have commenced. The second phase is at a point whereby the final slab can be installed with work then continuing up to roof level.
- 2.3 Brick and block work continues at pace across both A1 and A2 of the Kenilworth Close site. The show home and marketing suite to facilitate sales on the main site launched with strong interest already in the units. The road to access the new properties off Stirling Close has now been laid.

- 2.4 A series of potential re-designs for the Shephall View scheme have been provided by the architect. These proposals will be discussed with key stake holders to determine the best option. Consultation on the re-design took place in June 2022 in preparation for a planning application.
- 2.5 Two open market acquisitions (OMA) properties within the Wholly Owned Company (WOC) completed in March and another two completed in April. All 10 OMA's within the WOC have now completed.
- 2.6 Contracts have been exchanged for the purchase of the Courtlands site, this completed at the end of May 2022.

3. Co-operative and Neighbourhoods Programme Delivery Update

- 3.1 Work to deliver the Digital Neighbourhood Newsletters continues alongside the contractor Granicus, and internal colleagues from Communications & Digital & Transformation. Draft form templates have been created and the website signup process is now live, allowing residents to sign up for the service.
- 3.2 A successful funding application was made to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Proptech Engagement Fund. The secured £125,000 funding will support a digital engagement offer as part of the Co-operative Neighbourhoods programme.
- 3.3 Phase three and four of the flatblock refurbishment programme has continued to progress. Delivery will continue into quarter one, 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.

4. Making Your Money Count Programme Delivery Update

- 4.1 The Council had approved MYMC savings for 2021/22 of £1.462Million and £242K for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) respectively. The majority of these savings were delivered, however options were impacted by COVID, such as the reduction in the leisure contract (£108K, one year only for 2021/22). A further £40K of savings were not achieved in year due to timing differences on full implementation, but will be realised fully for 2022/23.
- 4.2 The Council approved a 2022/23 MYMC savings package in January and February 2022 of £781K and 339K for the General Fund and HRA respectively, which meant that both the projected General Fund and HRA balances as at 31 March 2022 were projected to be above the minimum risk assessed level for 2022/23.
- 4.3 The Council's approach to commercial filming opportunities was approved by the Executive. A filming pricing structure and terms and conditions have been developed and supplier Fame Productions Ltd is providing filming software and promotional services.
- 4.4 A further five new customers have signed up to the Council's trade waste collection, providing an additional £6,000 of annual revenue. The current focus

is to support the collection of Aged Debt. From August 2021 to February 2022 £51,384k aged trade waste debt has been recovered.

- 4.5 Taking forward the first phase of the Council's transformation to improve customer journey's and experience of engaging and communicating with the Council has focused on reviewing the top priority services to identify initial improvements and the areas of focus. Targeted changes have been made to improve digital services, including the new online Polling Station Finder to support the May 2022 Elections. Customer Services opening hours have been reduced by an hour at the end of the day to improve efficiency, but we still offer the longest hours of any council in Hertfordshire

5. A Clean, Green, Safe and Thriving Town Programme Delivery Update

Clean and Green

- 5.1 Children's artwork to support the litter campaign 2022 has been installed to 2 freighters. The children who created the artwork were invited to an unveiling at the Council's waste and recycling centre, along with the Mayor and the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration.

Healthy Stevenage

- 5.2 Officers submitted an expression of interest for a Local Government Association (LGA) sector-led local suicide prevention support offer to help to tackle suicide prevention in Stevenage.
- 5.3 The offer of bespoke support will help address the increase in suicide incidences at Stevenage train station and associated development of partnership work and whilst supporting the Council's vision to support Stevenage residents to achieve good mental health and wellbeing contributing toward reducing incident rates.

Community Safety

- 5.4 Further funding has been secured to extend the Council's work around the County with domestic abuse perpetrators until July 2023. Funding has also been secured from Hertfordshire County Council to continue the SADA Navigator service County wide until March 2023.
- 5.5 The Council has increased the fines for fixed penalty notices from £200 to £300. The changes came into force from April 2022.

Stevenage Re-Imagined

- 5.6 The work to implement the borough's Arts & Heritage Strategy continues to deliver cultural growth for our communities. In the last quarter, projects including Out in Stevenage art installation, heritage Town Fund bid and heritage timeline hoarding on Swingate House took place. A programme of further events is being developed for 2022/23.

Community Wealth Building

- 5.7 Several presentations have been made to promote the Community Wealth Building Programme to interested stakeholders including to the Local Economic Partnership's Community Renewal Fund webinar, the Local Economic Partnership's Economic Development Officers Group, Supply Hertfordshire, the Hertfordshire Economic Development Officers Group and the Hertfordshire Apprenticeship Alliance.

Climate Change

- 5.8 The Hertfordshire Climate Change & Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP) have produced their four Action Plans – on Water, Transport, Biodiversity and Carbon. More information is available on the website: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/sustainable-hertfordshire/sustainable-hertfordshire.aspx#>

Sustainable Transport

- 5.9 Officers are working with Hertfordshire County Council to progress the Stevenage Sustainable Travel Town Implementation Plan. This will be presented to HCC's Highways & Transport Panel in January 2023. A work programme, governance structure, protocols, stakeholder engagement and communications plan are all progressing well.
- 5.10 The Town Deal Pedestrian and Cycling Connectivity project was approved by the Executive in Quarter 4. This hopes to include a variety of interventions that will support active travel and connectivity aligning with the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). This project will include a heritage trail, which will further enhance and encourage people to be active and utilise the cycleways and pedestrian routes. An internal officer working group has been set up to manage this project going forward.
- 5.11 Hertfordshire County Council has been working to develop an Electric Vehicle (EV) Strategy that seeks to ensure residents and businesses across Hertfordshire can safely and reliably access EV charging infrastructure in line with Local Transport Plan policies. Following workshops facilitated by consultancy WSP, an action plan and implementation plan are being progressed.

Biodiversity

- 5.12 Member approval was given for revised meadow managed grassland sites for 2022 and capital funding to support the development of Biodiversity Action Plan 2022 – 2027.
- 5.13 Butterfly Survey training was delivered by Herts & Middlesex branch of Butterfly Conservation to Green Space Volunteers (including four new volunteers) who will be undertaking surveys in Stevenage during 2022.