

Meeting Executive
Portfolio Area All
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CORPORATE PERFORMANCE QUARTER ONE 2022/23

KEY DECISION

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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

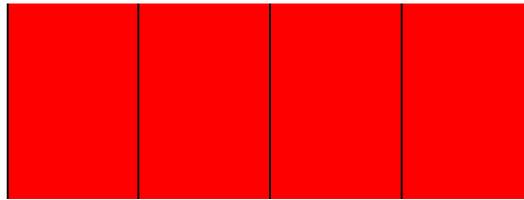


Fig. 5

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