

Meeting Executive
Date October 2022

APPENDIX A: FTFC PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE FOR QUARTER TWO 2022/23

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This is a written update on progress on live projects in quarter two 2022/23 and forecasted plans for quarter three 2022/23.
- 1.2 To note the progress achieved by all programmes in quarter two 2022/23 and forecasted progress for quarter three 2022/23

2. PROGRAMME DELIVERY UPDATES

Transforming Our Town Programme

2.1 The project team are working closely with development partner Mace to progress Plot K (Former Police Station and Towers Garages) and Plot A (Swingate House) sites following their demolition. UK Power Network (UKPN) are currently on the Plot A site for work to a substation diversion and works are due to be complete in early quarter three.

2.2 The final stages of the hardscape and landscaping works are currently taking place at the vacant bus station site. There will be a soft launch event on 21 October with the public launch coinciding with town centre management's Halloween event on 28 October.

2.3 The school competition for young people to come up with a name and to design a matching logo for the bus station space completed and a winning entry was chosen. The name announcement has taken place – Event Island Stevenage. School visits to John Henry Newman and Woolenwick have taken place to announce the name to the competition winner and runners up. The announcement of the name was featured in The Comet newspaper.

2.4 Contractors Huber for the multi-storey car park (MSCP) and cycle hub are on site and works are progressing well. Hoarding for the site has been commissioned and is due to be installed imminently. The secure cycle parking facility design has been finalised and costs have been agreed.

2.5 Consultation work has been complete with external consultant support in to exploring the opportunities and aspirations of a new museum facility. A 12-month work plan is being established with colleagues in the Culture & Leisure team including an Audience Development Plan and Business Plan for the new facility. Officers are learning best

practice from several regional and national partners on creation of a new facility through a series of visits and also exploring funding opportunities for future projects.

More Social and Affordable Housing Programme

2.6 Work has continued at the Symonds Green (29 Homes) site with roof work now completed, internal works being progressed and the lift for the scheme is on site and being installed. The impact on the construction industry of Covid and the conflict in Ukraine has caused some delays on site, however the anticipation is that the scheme will complete in quarter three.

2.7 The affordable homes on Stirling Close are due for handover shortly. The internals of the units have now completed with flooring works completed throughout.

2.8 On the main site, work continues at pace, with extensive brick and block work approaching roof height. Lifts are currently on site and will be installed following the completion of roof works. Work is also underway to finalise materials for marketing the retail units.

2.9 The planning application for the Shephall View & Brent Court sites was submitted in early October following extensive consultation with the public on the scheme. The plans have now been finalised and will be submitted with a decision expected early in 2023.

2.10 Work continued at the Dunn Close (27 Homes) scheme this quarter. Brick and block work has commenced, and planning conditions have begun to be discharged. Engagement with the local schools to design the hoarding on the site, as well as enhancing the woodland walk in the nearby area is also ongoing.

2.11 The Oaks Cross scheme is now completed with residents occupying the properties from the last week of September. The scheme took a total of 6 months from start on site to completion and delivered 11 one-bedroom bungalows which represent a low carbon development and have minimal running costs for the final residents.

2.12 The Courtlands scheme within the Wholly Owned Company (WOC) completed demolition on site. The section 106 has been finalised and work is ongoing to discharge the relevant planning conditions at the site.

Co-operative and Neighbourhoods Programme

2.13 The next steps for the Cooperative Neighbourhood programme were shared with Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods & Co-operative Working, as well as the Leader of the Council and implementation will begin in quarter three.

2.14 A key area of work will be to conduct visioning workshops in each Neighbourhood area which will establish community led priorities for each area, which can then be built upon and delivered through Neighbourhood teams.

2.15 Work to deliver the Digital Neighbourhood Newsletters continues with over 2,800 residents signed up to the platform. Initial drafts of the newsletters have been created highlighting key projects in each neighbourhood area. Work is underway to produce and distribute the first set of newsletters for each neighbourhood area in quarter three.

2.16. Following a successful funding application to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) PropTech Engagement Fund, the preferred supplier (Novoville) have undertaken consultation throughout quarter two. This initial tranche of approximately 1,300 results is currently being analysed, and the consultation period has been extended into quarter three to capture more views.

2.17 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) have released an additional funding opportunity for successful Round 2 applicants from PropTech Engagement Fund. As a successful applicant, a further application has been submitted to continue plans for digital engagement through Cooperative Neighbourhoods.

2.18 All of the Stevenage Equalities Commission (SEC) themed meetings have now taken place and the final report is being produced. This is anticipated to be presented to the Executive in quarter three.

2.19 Phase four and five of the flatblock refurbishment programme has continued to progress. Delivery will continue into quarter three, alongside customer satisfaction activities and events. Officers are also looking beyond the current phases to phase six to address the blocks added to the programme since its original inception.

2.20 The impact of Brexit, the War in Ukraine and increases in costs of fuel and raw materials continues to be felt putting cost pressures on the MRC programme. Also, the additional blocks and those blocks which have had to be carried over to later phases due to the recent pandemic have meant a formal extension of the MRC contract term to enable the contractors to deliver the remainder of the project beyond August 2023.

2.21 The garage improvement programme has made steady progress this quarter. To date, 665 garages have been refurbished to the end of September 2022 since the programme's inception. Three disposal sites have completed - The Chace, Hendren Court and Shackledell generating £447k in income.

2.22 A business case for investment in repairs to garage stock with the aim of increasing income was presented and approved by the Executive in September. The business case outlined £234k of investment to yield £312k cumulative income by year five.

Making Your Money Count Programme

2.23 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. An informal Executive session on the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) took place which outlined

potential areas for savings and increases to fees and charges. A report was presented to the September Executive meeting and work has begun on a report outlining proposed saving options for quarter three.

2.24 Fees and Charges workshops continued through quarter two and a report was presented to the Commercial Insourcing Executive Committee on the likelihood of areas where fees and charges could be further increased or new charges created.

2.25 Progress on the closing of accounts continues. The 2021/22 accounts have been prepared and have been published on the Council's website. The 2019/20 accounts are with the auditors and the only outstanding issue being the work undertaken by CIPFA around Infrastructure Assets. The 2020/21 audit began testing, but due to the 2019/20 still to be signed off and the Council recently had a change of audit partner, it is unlikely that 2020/21 or 2021/22 will be progressed much more this calendar year.

2.26 A further six new customers have signed up to the Council's trade waste collection, providing an additional £13,600 of annual revenue.

2.27 Between July and September 2022, three filming opportunities took place in Stevenage generating £10,100 of income for the Council. Enquiries continue to be made and opportunities explored by the Council's contractor Fame.

2.28 The transformation programme Phase 1 (Customer Services) is in progress. In line with plans agreed as part of the 2022/23 budget setting process, key changes will be introduced this financial year with the goal of improving the customer experience and delivering a budget saving in Customer Services. In Q2:

- Messaging for new Digital First phone options went live
- The Digital First communications plan has been drafted and is currently being finalised
- Technical work has progressed on digital complaints and garage lettings – both projects are scheduled for delivery in quarter three.

2.29 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 quarter three.

A Clean, Green, Safe and Thriving Town Programme

Clean and Green

2.30 Five Green Flag Awards were awarded and retained this quarter for Fairlands Valley Park (14 years), Town Centre Gardens (12 years), Hampson Park (8 years), Shephalbury Park (4 years) and Weston Road Cemetery (2 years).

Healthy Stevenage

2.31 Since the Nightlight Crisis Café launched in quarter one, 264 visits have been recorded with a range of mental health outcomes, gathered following one to one (face to face) support intervention. The service continues to provide advice emotional and practical support and to signpost or refer to other local sources of therapy or advice.

2.32 As part of the ongoing delivery of This Girl Can initiative in partnership with Herts sports Partnership, 599 session attendances were completed by women and girls in Azonto Fitness, Walking Football and Walking Netball.

Community Safety

2.33 The No More service has continued to grow with funding secured until March 2023. Officers are working with probation regarding a possible County-wide service to support high risk offenders.

2.34 The Womens Centre is in use by local services including the probation service to meet with their vulnerable female clients. The formal launch of the centre has been delayed due to works required to the roof. The launch will now take place as part of the sixteen days of action for domestic abuse.

Stevenage Re-Imagined

2.35 The majority of elements of the “Out in Stevenage” public art installation are completed, with the final installation being implemented in the Event Island space in quarter three. A brief for an art installation at the bus interchange is in discussion and further details will be developed once agreed.

Community Wealth Building

2.36 The UK Community Renewal Fund programme has achieved if not exceeded all targets bar Feasibility Reports, however these are on target to achieve by programme end date of 31st December 2022:

Outputs	Total Project	Total Achieved	% of target achieved
People - Economically inactive - number of people supported to engage in job-searching	150	487	325%
People - unemployed - number of people supported to engage in life skills	350	706	202%

Business – Small - number of businesses receiving non-financial support	30	38	127%
Organisation - VCSE - number of organisations receiving non-financial support	30	51	170%
Grants - number of organisations receiving grants	40	88	220%
Outcomes	Total Project	Total Achieved	% of target achieved
People in education/training following support	50	214	428%
People engaged in life skills support following interventions	100	546	546%
People in employment, including self-employment, following support.	25	203	812%
Jobs safeguarded as a result of support.	20	92	460%
Investment attracted as a result of support.	£500,000	£497,099	99%
Decarbonisation plans developed as a result of support.	20	38	190%
Feasibility studies developed as a result of support	10	8	80%

2.37 Work will continue to deliver the remaining actions from individual programme workstreams and writing-up project closure reports.

2.38 The Social Inclusion Partnership, chaired by the Stevenage Citizens Advice Bureau have applied for funding as part of the Community Renewal Fund (CRF) grant allocation pot for Stevenage. This funding would be used to support partnership members to build their capacity, whilst also providing greater access to business support opportunities.

2.39 The Council's Community Wealth Building steering group has had three meetings so far, which have covered the ongoing progress of the Community Renewal Fund Project, including speakers from the Centre for Local Economic Studies CLES and Mission44 as well as ongoing development around the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). The next meeting is scheduled for quarter three and will cover the Evaluation and Feasibility Study elements of the CRF programme.

2.40 The Local Investment Plan (LIP) for the UKSPF was submitted at the start of August. It contains provision for the continuation of county-wide European Social Fund provision around business and skills as well as a local Community Wealth Building element. This equates to £185,000 investment over the next three years through to 2024/25. All Local Authorities are due to hear back from DLUHC in October 2022 around whether LIP documents have been approved. However, due to changes in central government, there may be a delay.

Climate Change

2.35 In September 2022, a Climate Change Programme Lead Officer was appointed. This role will take the lead in delivering the essential targets which have been set in the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan and to reflect the ambitions of the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Climate Change.

2.36 A Climate Change annual update paper was presented to Executive in October 2022. The Executive considered a report providing an update on the Council's Climate Change Strategy and initiatives.

Sustainable Transport

2.37 The Preferred Options report for the Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan was presented to the Executive in September and was approved to go out to public consultation.

2.38 Officers remain in regular contact with HCC officers, to progress the Stevenage Sustainable Travel Town Implementation Plan. A work programme, governance structure, protocols, stakeholder engagement and communications plan are all being progressed.

2.39 A "Learn and Share" event on Active Travel was held in Stevenage on 12 October 2022 and was a very successful event, raising awareness among key stakeholders to the Sustainable Travel Town programme.

Biodiversity

2.40 Funding from the Environment Agency of £10, 000 was received to support daylighting works to Stevenage Brook. It is envisaged this work will open up the area and restore it to a more natural condition encouraging ecological vegetation and wildlife.

2.41 All Stevenage schools have been contacted inviting expressions of interest in helping to plant the new Community Woodland for Fairland Valley Park South Field. To date, eight schools have confirmed an interest in taking part.