

Meeting Executive

Date March 2023

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

1. PURPOSE

1.1 This is a written update on progress on live projects in quarter three 2022/23 and forecasted plans for quarter four 2022/23.

1.2 To note the progress achieved by all programmes in quarter three 2022/23 and forecasted progress for quarter four 2022/23

2. PROGRAMME DELIVERY UPDATES

Transforming Our Town Programme

2.1 Event Island Stevenage, the former bus station, opened to the public in October 2022. Since its launch, the Regeneration team have received positive feedback both from internal and external stakeholders. vacant bus station site. The Regeneration team are working in collaboration with leisure, events and town centre management to scope an event programme for 2023, encompassing and building upon the current town centre events.

2.2 Contractors Huber for the multi-storey car park (MSCP) and cycle hub are on site and works are progressing well. The steel erection was completed in November and work began on concreting the floors and installing cladding. The contractors are working closely with the regeneration team on future community events and launch strategy for the site.

2.3 Work to explore the opportunities and aspirations of a new museum facility have continued. 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. Funding opportunities for future projects within the regeneration programme and the Museum workplan are being explored, as well as planning consultation events to engage with the public.

More Social and Affordable Housing Programme

2.4 Work has continued at the Symonds Green (29 Homes) site with final internal decorations and external landscaping being completed. Handover of the scheme has

experienced some delays due to Hertfordshire Highways work to access the site being delayed. It is anticipated the scheme will complete in quarter four providing this work has been done.

2.5 The affordable homes on Stirling Close have now handed over and have been shortlisted for lettings to take place.

2.6 On the main site, work continues on both the A1 (mixed tenure & retail) and A2 (independent living) sites. A1 is now wind and water tight and work on the internals continues at pace. Lifts have been installed following the completion of roof works and kitchen and bathroom installation has begun on the lower floors. A2 brick and blockwork is progressing well with the plant room now full commissioned which will serve both A1 and A2.

2.7 The planning application for the Shephall View & Brent Court sites was submitted in early October following extensive consultation with the public on the scheme. Following the Executive report in October where permission was granted to undertake the procurement exercise, the two schemes have now been put out to tender, with the process scheduled to be finalised by March 2023.

2.8 Work continued at the Dunn Close (27 Homes) scheme this quarter. Brick and block work has continued, and scaffolding will shortly be installed at the site to enable roof works to begin.

2.9 The first round of public consultation for The Oval scheme took place, with over 4700 responses to the online survey, as well as over 100 residents attending the in person events. Work has been underway to incorporate this feedback into design proposals, with a further round of consultation planned for February 2023. It is likely that a planning application will now be submitted in 2023/24 to ensure the scheme is able to benefit from the community led design in line with the Housing Development's five star principles.

2.10 The Courtlands scheme within the Wholly Owned Company (WOC) continued to progress on site with groundwork and foundations. Procurement documents for the Estate Agent have been drafted and the expectation is that these will be put out to tender early in 2023.

Co-operative Neighbourhoods Programme

2.11 The Co-operative Neighbourhoods programme has been allocated funding from Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) on the Council's Local Investment Plan for UK Shared Prosperity Funding. £39,000 has been allocated in the first two years, with a further £176,000 in year three (24/25). A memorandum of understanding (MOU) has been returned ahead of receipt of funding.

2.12 Work to deliver the Digital Neighbourhood Newsletters continues with over 3,600 residents signed up to the platform. Work is underway to produce and distribute the first set of newsletters for each neighbourhood area in quarter four.

2.13 Following a successful funding application to the DLUHC PropTech Engagement Fund, the preferred supplier (Novoville) have undertaken consultation throughout quarter three.

Over 1900 results are currently being analysed and further consultation will take place in quarter four to capture further responses.

2.14 Despite being unsuccessful for the DLUHC's PropTech Continuous Funding Model, discussions have taken place with the department to discuss the council's proposal. A further tranche of funding is being made available in January which the Co-operative Neighbourhoods team have been encouraged to bid for.

2.15 All of the Stevenage Equalities Commission (SEC) themed meetings have now taken place and the final report is being produced. Initial recommendations have been provided ahead of the sharing of the final report. The partnership delivered a Diversity showcase event alongside Stevenage Town Centre as part of the International Day celebrations on 15 October.

2.16 Phase four and five of the flatblock refurbishment programme has continued to progress. Delivery will continue into quarter four, 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.

2.17 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.

2.18 The garage improvement programme has made steady progress this quarter. To date, 697 garages have been refurbished to the end of December 2022 since the programme's inception.

2.19 Significant progress has been made with the installation of new build garages at three sites (23 garages), following some adjustments by the supplier, these garages will be made available to let in 2023.

2.20 Digital lettings for garages went live this quarter and there were 94 bids for 25 garages in the first week. The Garages team continue to monitor take-up and promote the service as part of the commercial agenda and transformational aspirations.

Making Your Money Count Programme

2.21 The quarter two monitoring has been completed for revenue and capital and work is progressing with the 2023/24 budget setting. 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. Further work was undertaken during the quarter and a report was presented to the Executive in December.

2.22 Fees and Charges proposals were approved as part of the December Executive following workshops during the previous quarter, with the implementation of increases happening during January to April 2023.

2.23 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 where the Government has now provided statutory accounting override for a further 2 years until 31 March 2025. It is hoped that the 2019/20 will be signed off before end of financial year and then 2020/21 audit can then be progressed thereafter.

2.24 The Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme for 2023/24 was presented to the Executive in October 2022 where the existing CTS scheme of 8.5% council tax liability for those working aged claimants on maximum benefit continued for financial year 2023/24. Council tax levels are based on the Council Tax base report and the increases for the year. These are included in the General Fund Council Tax and Budget report which was approved at Full Council in February 2023.

2.25 New income streams in Cemeteries and Planning were approved by the Executive in December. They are anticipated to yield additional income during the financial year 2023/24.

2.26 Between October and December 2022, another filming opportunity took place which generated £6,000 of income for the Council. As the winter months tend to be the quietest period for the filming industry, the key focus in Q4 will be on marketing and promoting Stevenage as a filming location. Enquiries continue to be made and opportunities explored by the Council's contractor Fame.

2.27 The review of the Council's skip hire and trade waste offers continued this quarter, with new pricing approved by the Executive in November. A marketing plan for both of these services is in development and a launch of the new offers is anticipated for quarter four.

2.28 The transformation programme Phase 1 (Customer Services) is concluding. 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 Q3 service improvements included:

- Digital garage lettings (as highlighted in para 2.20)
- Assisted Waste collections – enabling customers to arrange for the Council to assist with their household waste collection, with the ability to request the service the same day it is needed
- Complaints and feedback methods have been modernised, with new online feedback methods and consideration of vexatious complainants

2.29 A business case was considered and agreed by the Executive in October 2022, introducing a new Five Star customer service programme and the associated Customer Hub model working alongside specialist teams.

2.30 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). The three service development leads (for the Customer Hub, Advice & Support and Locality Services) are undertaking design work and working with colleagues across the council to establish the scope of these services and identify opportunities.

A Clean, Green, Safe and Thriving Town Programme

Clean and Green

2.31 Three new community orchards were created as part of the Urban Tree Challenge Fund. The new orchards at Bedwell Park, Peartree Park and Letchmore Road Open Space were planted with support from local schools.

2.32 In addition to annual programme of tree planting, five trees were planted to celebrate 50 years of Fairlands Valley Park and seven trees were planted, as part of the emerging community woodland, to commemorate the late Queen’s 70 year reign / Queen’s Green Canopy.

Healthy Stevenage

2.33 A successful funding bid was made to Hertfordshire’s Building Life Chances programme. The £15k funding will be used in partnership with Stevenage Football Club Foundation to provide 12–17-year-olds with drop in holiday camps over the school holidays. Trips and enrichment activities will be provided to young people and will include a free bus pass for the activities.

Community Safety

2.34 The Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) service has continued to grow and have secured two accommodation contracts for dispersed refuge. This funding which equates to around £150k will help to support more victims and survivors of domestic abuse.

2.35 The Women's and Girls Action Plan is regularly reviewed at Joint Action Group meetings with partners. To date, no "hotspot" areas of concern have been identified, although it is recognised that people do feel vulnerable in some areas of the town for various reasons. The group will continue to monitor activity and incorporate any intelligence into interventions where appropriate.

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Stevenage Re-Imagined

2.35 Development of a programme of activity for the newly launched Event Island Stevenage is underway. To mark the launch of the space an ice rink was installed in quarter three to coincide with other winter activities across the town centre, which received positive feedback from users.

2.36 Recruitment is underway for a new Museum and Cultural officer who will help make the arts and culture more visible in the town and develop and implement an action plan for the Stevenage Cultural Strategy to help deliver the Council's ambitions.

Community Wealth Building

2.37 The UK Community Renewal Fund programme has significantly exceeded all outputs and outcomes milestones. As a result of this, a further £60,000 in funding was made available throughout November and December to support ongoing delivery. This takes the full funding amount to £761,640. A breakdown of progress can be seen below:

Outputs	Target	Total Achieved	% of target achieved
People - Economically inactive - number of people supported to engage in job-searching	150	579	386%
People - unemployed - number of people supported to engage in life skills	350	798	228%
Business – Small - number of businesses receiving non-financial support	30	44	147%
Organisation - VCSE - number of organisations receiving non-financial support	30	51	170%
Grants - number of organisations receiving grants	40	88	220%
Outcomes	Target	Total Achieved	% of target achieved
People in education/training following support	50	256	512%
People engaged in life skills support following interventions	100	618	618%
People in employment, including self-employment, following support.	25	225	900%
Jobs safeguarded as a result of support.	20	92	460%
Investment attracted as a result of support.	£500,000	£517,099	103%
Decarbonisation plans developed as a result of support.	20	38	190%
Feasibility studies developed as a result of support	10	8	80%

2.38 The process to formally incorporate the Social Inclusion Partnership as a Multi-stakeholder Co-operative is underway. This work is being supported by Impactful Governance a local business support organisation who have been involved in the delivery of the Community Renewal Fund (CRF) programme.

2.39 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. Officers are currently undertaking plans to be ready for delivery of Year One before the end of this financial year.

Climate Change

2.40 The Hertfordshire Climate Change & Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP) have approved the fifth strategic action plan on Behaviour Change. It gives an overview of regional activity related to climate change and sustainability and aligns messages across the county. More information is available at their new website [Current priorities \(hccsp.org.uk\)](http://hccsp.org.uk).

2.41 The Council is piloting an online climate software platform – Kausal, to manage information related to all climate actions. The platform will improve communication of key climate projects and progress to internal and external stakeholders by enabling real-time

updates. The public can monitor the performance of the Council's climate change ambitions via visuals on the platform. It also allows project leads to prioritise and manage resources to ensure actions are on track.

2.42 A scrutiny review on the Council's response to the climate emergency has been completed by the Environment & Economy Select Committee. A draft report with recommendations has been presented to the Executive Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change and officers leading the delivery of climate actions. The final report will be published in the next quarter.

Sustainable Transport

2.43 Officers are progressing work on a Cycle Hire Scheme for Stevenage. Feasibility work is being undertaken as well as discussions with potential cycle hire operators, as part of early soft market testing and are working towards inviting tender submissions for potential suppliers of the scheme from Spring 2023.

2.44 Hertfordshire County Council has secured funding through the Department of Transport's Active Travel Fund (AFT) to deliver a new cycling and walking enhancement scheme along North Road in Stevenage. The scheme forms part of Stevenage Borough Council's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and is due to be constructed by 2023/24. The scheme will provide a new 2-way cycle route along the eastern side of North Road, between the A602 Lytton Way gyratory and Coreys Mill Lane, by reallocating existing road space.

2.45 Officers have been in regular contact with HCC to progress the Sustainable Travel Town Implementation Plan which will ultimately be presented to HCC's Highways & Transport Panel in Spring 2023. A wide programme of community engagement is planned through 2023 to increase awareness of Sustainable Travel Town plans and initiatives ahead.

Biodiversity

2.46 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, twelve schools have confirmed an interest in taking part which will be organised in quarter four.