Outline of Planned Governance Enhancement Activity to take place in 2018/19

Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law

Governance for this principle is currently considered robust and no further activity pertaining to best practice is scheduled at this stage.

Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Governance for this principle is currently considered robust, however the following scheduled governance activity pertaining to best practice has been identified:

- To ensure the continuing effectiveness of the council's consultation and engagement arrangements, the council wide 'Consultation and Engagement Strategy' and council tenant and leaseholder related 'Resident Involvement Strategy' are being reviewed and merged.
- To enhance communication arrangements and implement recommendations made by the LGA during the recent Strategic Communications Peer Review, a new Communications and Marketing Plan has been developed for implementation in 2018/19.
- To ensure staff are optimally engaged and motivated in delivering the council's priorities, a staff survey will be carried out to gauge levels of staff satisfaction/engagement and their perception of organisation performance and delivery.
- An appraisal of further shared service options will be carried out that will allow for resources to be used more efficiently and outcomes achieved more effectively.

Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic and environmental benefits

Significant Governance activity (governance controls identified to facilitate delivery of agreed outcomes that are sustainable)

- **Housing Asset Management Strategy:** A new Housing Asset Management Strategy and Action Plan to be developed to set the framework for maintaining the Council's housing stock effectively over the next five years and support delivery of the Future Town Future Council Programme.
- **General Fund Asset Management Strategy:** The draft General Fund Asset Management Strategy was considered by Executive on 14 February 2018. Officers and Members will now enhance the strategy with the incorporation of the Council's Co-operative principles to ensure that the Council's fundamental principle of working with the community to manage the Council's assets is reflected.

In addition, ongoing monitoring is planned in mitigation of risks relating to the delivery of agreed outcomes that are sustainable:

- The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan, (agreed by Executive November 2016) is under ongoing review to ensure a balanced HRA financial plan for the next 30 years, and to ensure there are sufficient HRA funds to fund the council's Housebuilding and Acquisitions Programme. In light of a £27M deficit in the Business Plan's capital programme in future years, a package of financial security savings were considered by Members (Executive November 2017) with a further update provided to Special Council (January 2018). Future Council Business Unit Reviews will refocus on delivering Financial Security savings through improved processes and targeted commercialisation.
- The Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Programme are under ongoing review to ensure finances remain robust in the long term and ensure the council can deliver the ambitions set out in the Future Town Future Council Programme; deliver a once in a generation investment in the town, through town centre regeneration, housing development and investment in neighbourhoods and become financially self-sufficient.
- New Local Plan: Active engagement is currently being carried out with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Chief Planner - Briefing papers have been prepared and are with the Secretary of State for decision. Partnership support is being managed along with contingency planning for all scenarios.

Scheduled Governance enhancement activity (pertaining to best practice):

- A new Customer Focus Strategy is to be developed focused on enhancing customer satisfaction for residents interacting with key services
- A new website is to be developed to provide a portal for new customer online services.

Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

Significant Governance activity (governance controls identified to facilitate delivery of agreed outcomes that are sustainable)

- **Repairs and Voids Improvement Programme:** Implement and embed improved Repairs and Voids service delivery models to ensure that the new business unit management team have complete and informed ownership and accountability for enhanced service delivery that meets customer needs.

In addition, ongoing monitoring is planned in mitigation of risks relating to the delivery of agreed outcomes that are sustainable:

- Risks associated with the impact of Welfare Reform on the community and Council have been identified. The Council is continuing to assess potential impacts through business insight. The current advised 'go live' date for roll out of the remainder of claimants for Universal Credit for Stevenage is now October 2018.

Scheduled Governance enhancement activity (pertaining to best practice):

- A new Corporate Procurement Strategy to be approved and published and implementation of a new Contract Management Module to enhance procurement arrangements
- The design and delivery of a new Digital Transformation Programme to deliver transformative digital projects and support modernisation and improvements to the Council's customer services offer, customer insight and cross organisational customer focus.

Principle E: Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

Significant Governance activity (governance controls identified to facilitate delivery of agreed outcomes that are sustainable):

- **Corporate Capacity:** Continue to implement the restructure of services through Future Council – Business reviews to improve corporate capacity and deliver sustainable services that better meet the needs of customers.

Scheduled Governance enhancement activity (pertaining to best practice):

- Research and engagement has been carried out for a new corporate appraisal scheme resulting in high level strategic proposals being agreed with the aim of a new corporate appraisal process being available for 2019/20.
- The continued implementation and embedding of a suite of e-learning modules to provide training and development which matches individual and organisational requirements

Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

Significant Governance activity (governance controls identified to facilitate delivery of agreed outcomes that are sustainable):

- **Technology Shared Service Improvement Plan:** Continue to implement the Technology Shared Service Improvement Plan to deliver a wide range of IT enhancements, including enhancements to cyber security and increased resilience of the council's IT and telephone systems to ensure the Council continues to provide a secure and high performing IT environment.
- **Information Management**: Embed information management arrangements across the council to ensure that best practice records management across the council continues to be applied and customer data is appropriately managed.

Scheduled Governance enhancement activity (pertaining to best practice)

- The approval and publication of a revised Anti-Money Laundering policy to enhance counter fraud and anti-corruption arrangements.
- An e-learning risk identification/management training offer to be developed
- Business Unit business continuity plans to be reviewed to reflect changes as a result of the Future Council - Business Reviews and a business continuity desk top exercise to be developed and used by business units to validate their business continuity arrangements.
- IT procurement procedures to be reviewed to enhance the alignment of IT applications with service priorities to better support the delivery of council ambitions.
- Implement management and operational action to deliver effective financial management of the commercial property portfolio to meet the Council's Financial Security priority.

Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability

Governance for this principle is currently considered robust and no further activity pertaining to best practice is scheduled at this stage.