



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

24 NOVEMBER 2021

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

PART I

3. PART I DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

To consider the Part 1 Decisions of the Executive taken on 17 November 2021.

*Notice of Decisions attached – Pages 3 - 10

**This report had not been circulated five clear days before the meeting (nor was it available for public inspection at that time). The Chair will therefore be required to formally accept the business as urgent given the short period of time left before the end of the call-in period on Friday, 26 November 2021.*

PLEASE BRING YOUR PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED EXECUTIVE AGENDA AND REPORTS TO THE MEETING

4. VOID LOSS PRESENTATION

To receive an officer presentation on void loss.

Pages 11 - 20

This page is intentionally left blank

NOTICE OF DECISIONS

Meeting:	Executive	
Date:	Wednesday, 17 November 2021	
Place:	Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage	
Members Present:	Councillors:	Sharon Taylor OBE CC (Chair), Lloyd Briscoe, Rob Broom, John Gardner, Richard Henry, Jackie Hollywell and Jeannette Thomas.

**THE DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN OF ANY OF THE DECISIONS BELOW IS FRIDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 2021.
SUBJECT TO THERE BEING NO CALL-IN THE ATTACHED DECISIONS MAY BE IMPLEMENTED WITH EFFECT FROM MONDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 2021.**

1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
	<p>Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs Joan Lloyd, Phil Bibby CC (observer) and Robin Parker CC (observer).</p> <p>The Executive asked for its best wishes to be conveyed to Councillor Mrs Lloyd for a full recovery from illness.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
2	MINUTES - 20 OCTOBER 2021	
	It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 20 October 2021 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.	
3	MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND SELECT COMMITTEES	
	It was RESOLVED that the following Minutes of the meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees be noted:	

	Environment & Economy Select Committee – 21 October 2021 Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 26 October 2021	
4	COVID-19 UPDATE	R. Protheroe x2938
	<p>The Executive considered an overarching verbal progress report from the Strategic Director (RP), assisted by the Senior Environmental Health & Licensing Manager, together with a short presentation from the Corporate Policy & Research Officer, providing an update on the latest epidemiology statistics relating to the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>In response to Members' questions, officers replied as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Vaccination Centre at Robertson House was administering Pfizer boosters on a daily basis, with Moderna boosters on Wednesdays and Fridays, with separate sessions for 12 to 15 year olds. Information could be obtained through the Healthy Futures website; and the number of complaints received by the Environmental Health Team about non-mask wearing by customers in retail outlets had been relatively low. <p>It was noted that the relatively low rate of vaccination rates amongst Care Home staff may be partly attributable to concerns relating to the possible side effects of the vaccine, which could result in some staff needing time off work due to sickness.</p> <p>The Chair was pleased to note that there was to be a mobile vaccination unit in the Bedwell Ward for two days in December, and asked Officers to advise Members and the Communications Team when precise dates were confirmed so that appropriate publicity could be given.</p> <p>The Executive was delighted to learn that Professor Jim McManus (Hertfordshire Director of Public Health) had been elected as President of the Association of Directors of Public Health. On behalf of the Council, the Chair agreed to write a letter of congratulations to Professor McManus on this achievement.</p>	

	It was RESOLVED that the Covid-19 update be noted.	
5	TOWNS FUND BUSINESS CASES - TRANCHE 1	C. Barnes x2292
	<p>The Executive considered a report seeking approval of the Tranche 1 Towns Fund Business Cases, namely the Gunnels Wood Road Infrastructure project and the Marshgate Biotech/Life Science Centre project.</p> <p>In reply to a question regarding the Gunnels Wood Road project, the Assistant Director (regeneration) clarified that the term “Hamburger” roundabout was another term for a gyratory type of roundabout. Members also considered that any works to the A1(M) Junction 7 area should be mindful of the need to secure improvements to pedestrian and cycleway links to Knebworth Park.</p> <p>In respect of the Marshgate project, the Chair pointed out that this and a number of the other Town Centre projects would result in a loss of surface level car parking, but that this should be balanced with the fact that the St. George’s Multi-Storey Car Park and other town centre car parks were currently operating with over 1,000 vacant spaces daily. In addition, plans were progressing for a new Multi-Storey Car Park in the Railway Station area, a report on which was scheduled for submission to the Executive in December 2021.</p> <p>Members were supportive of both schemes, and the Executive wished to record its thanks to the Assistant Director (Regeneration) and his Team, other supporting officers from areas including Finance, Planning and Legal. The Executive also wished to record its thanks to the Stevenage Development Board for their tireless work on the Town Fund projects.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the endorsement of the projects from the Stevenage Development Board be noted. 2. That the business case for Project 1, Gunnels Wood Road Infrastructure Works Stage 1 (design & enabling works), be approved, and that authority be delegated to the Strategic Director (TP) to submit the project summary to the Department 	

	<p>for Levelling Up, Communities and Housing Towns Fund team on behalf of the Council (acting as Accountable Body).</p> <p>3. That the business case for Project 2, Marshgate Biotech/Life Science Centre, be approved, and that authority be delegated to the Strategic Director (TP) to submit the project summary to the Department for Levelling Up, Communities and Housing Towns Fund team on behalf of the Council (acting as Accountable Body).</p> <p><i>Reason for Decision: As contained in the report.</i> <i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i></p>	
6	2021/22 MID YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW	C. Fletcher x2933
	<p>The Executive considered a report in respect of the Mid Year Treasury Management Review 2021/22.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Council be recommended to approve the 2021/22 Treasury Management Mid Year review. 2. That Council be recommended to approve the list of approved Countries (with approved counterparties) for investments, as set out in Appendix D to the report. 3. That the updated authorised and operational borrowing limits, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be approved. 4. That the impact of the outstanding decision set out in Paragraph 4.1.4 of the report be noted. <p><i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i> <i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i></p>	

7	2nd QUARTER GENERAL FUND AND HRA REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2021/22	C. Fletcher x2933
	<p>The Executive considered a report in respect of Second Quarter Revenue Budget Monitoring 2021/22 (General Fund and Housing Revenue Account).</p> <p>In relation to the situation regarding void properties, the Assistant Director (Stevenage Direct Services) was requested to provide a full update on this matter as part of the Quarter Two Corporate Performance report to be submitted to the December 20212 meeting of the Executive.</p> <p>The Chair undertook to enquire of Hertfordshire County Council as to their plans for allocation of the remaining hardship funding provided by the Government to upper tier local authorities.</p> <p>The Executive supported an additional recommendation proposed by the Chair that the Council write to the Secretary of State to point out the significant increasing budget pressures that local authorities are under due to the rise in levels of homelessness.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the 2021/22 Second Quarter projected net decrease in General Fund expenditure of £85,600 be approved. 2. That the use of the additional grant funding of £105,000 for vulnerable private renters, as set out in Paragraph 4.1.12 of the report, be noted, and that a corresponding increase in expenditure to reflect the use of the grant be approved. 3. That it be noted that the cumulative changes made to the General Fund net remains within the £400,000 increase variation limit delegated to the Executive, as set out in Paragraph 4.1.23 of the report. 4. That the 2021/22 Second Quarter projected net increase in HRA expenditure of £231,690 be approved. 5. That it be noted that the cumulative increases made to the HRA net budget remains within the £250,000 increase variation 	

	<p>limit delegated to the Executive.</p> <p>6. That the Council write to the Secretary of State to point out the significant increasing budget pressures that local authorities are under due to the rise in levels of homelessness.</p> <p><i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report; and 6. To make the Government aware of local authority budget pressures regarding homelessness.</i></p> <p><i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i></p>	
8	URGENT PART I BUSINESS	
	<p><u>Community Renewal Fund</u></p> <p>The Chair was delighted to report that, following a successful bid, Hertfordshire had been awarded £3.26M from the Community Renewal Fund, of which the sum secured with regards to Community Wealth Building was £715,000. The funding would be used to support residents who were out of work to develop skills to help them secure local jobs, and could also be used to support small businesses and social enterprises to grow and benefit from wider economic opportunities that were available in Stevenage and elsewhere across the County.</p> <p>The Chair added that the Community Renewal Fund had recognised Stevenage’s “STEM city”, science and technology companies, and the opportunities available in the town, including working with North Herts College and leading companies based in the Borough to support the creation of jobs and opportunities for local people to forge careers in a wide range of cutting edge businesses.</p> <p>The Chair thanked officers for their work in preparing the bid to the Community Renewal Fund.</p>	

9	EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC	
	<p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in Paragraphs 1 – 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006. 2. That the reasons for the following reports being in Part II were accepted, and that the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure. 	
10	LEISURE MANAGEMENT OPTIONS APPRAISAL	R. Gregory x2568
	<p>The Executive considered a Part II report which outlined a comprehensive appraisal of management options for the Council's leisure, cultural and health and wellbeing service delivery and which made a number of recommendations on proposed management arrangements from April 2023.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED that the Recommendations contained in the report be approved.</p> <p><i>Reason for Decision: As contained in report.</i></p> <p><i>Other Options considered: As contained in report.</i></p>	
11	URGENT PART II BUSINESS	
	None.	

This page is intentionally left blank

Overview and Scrutiny

Q2 Voids Loss Performance 2021/22

Repairs and Voids Housing and Investment

Page 11

Di Dharmasuriya – Service Mgr, Repairs & Voids
Hannah Morris – Operations Mgr, Providing Homes

What is Void Loss?

- A void is a property for which there is a current rent account but no current tenancy exists.
- While a property is void, there is a loss of income to the Council during the void period, known as 'void loss'.
- The focus therefore is to reduce income loss (void loss) for the Council.
- Historically, we have modelled our resources on having approximately 40 void properties in our pipeline per month.



Current Void Process

The void process is in 3 parts:

1. Pre-void and termination (Housing & Investment team)
2. Void works (Repairs & Voids team)
3. Inspection and letting (Housing & Investment team)

Before



After



Q2 Void Loss 21/22 vs Target

For the current year; the table below shows the value of the void loss for the first 6 months of 2021/22 compared to the target:

Column1	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
Target	£25,742.00	£56,446.00	£82,767.00	£116,820.00	£140,631.00	£164,594.00	£197,288.00	£221,477.00	£239,856.00	£269,459.00	£298,723.00	£319,245.00
Actual	£45,861.00	£91,541.00	£148,145.00	£200,393	£233,682	£279,964						

Page 14

- Void loss for Q2 2021/22 is £115,370 above target.
- This is an increase of £95,370 compared to Q2 in 20/21.
- The current forecast for the year-end is £190k above target.
- To note that there will always be an element of void loss e.g. due to people moving.

Voids Received; Actual vs Targeted 21/22

Total Voids	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
GN Standard Target	12	12	12	12	12	12
GN Standard	14	23	27	41	50	85
GN Major Target	6	6	6	6	6	6
GN Major	10	2	5	5	6	19
SH Standard Target	15	15	15	15	15	15
SH Standard	65	56	53	54	54	26
SH Major Target	7	7	7	7	7	7
SH Major	4	2	4	5	4	2
Other Voids	25	27	29	26	27	5
Total Target	40	40	40	40	40	40
Total	118	110	118	131	141	137
% of total rented stock Target	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49
% of total rented stock	1.49	1.39	1.49	1.65	1.78	1.77

- Number of voids in pipeline for Q2 2021/22; 97 above target.
- This is an increase of 58 compared to Q2 in 20/21.
- We anticipate this trend to follow into Q3 and Q4.

GN – General Needs

SH – Sheltered Housing (Independent Living)

Other voids – Temporary / Emergency Accommodation

Red – Higher than targeted number of voids

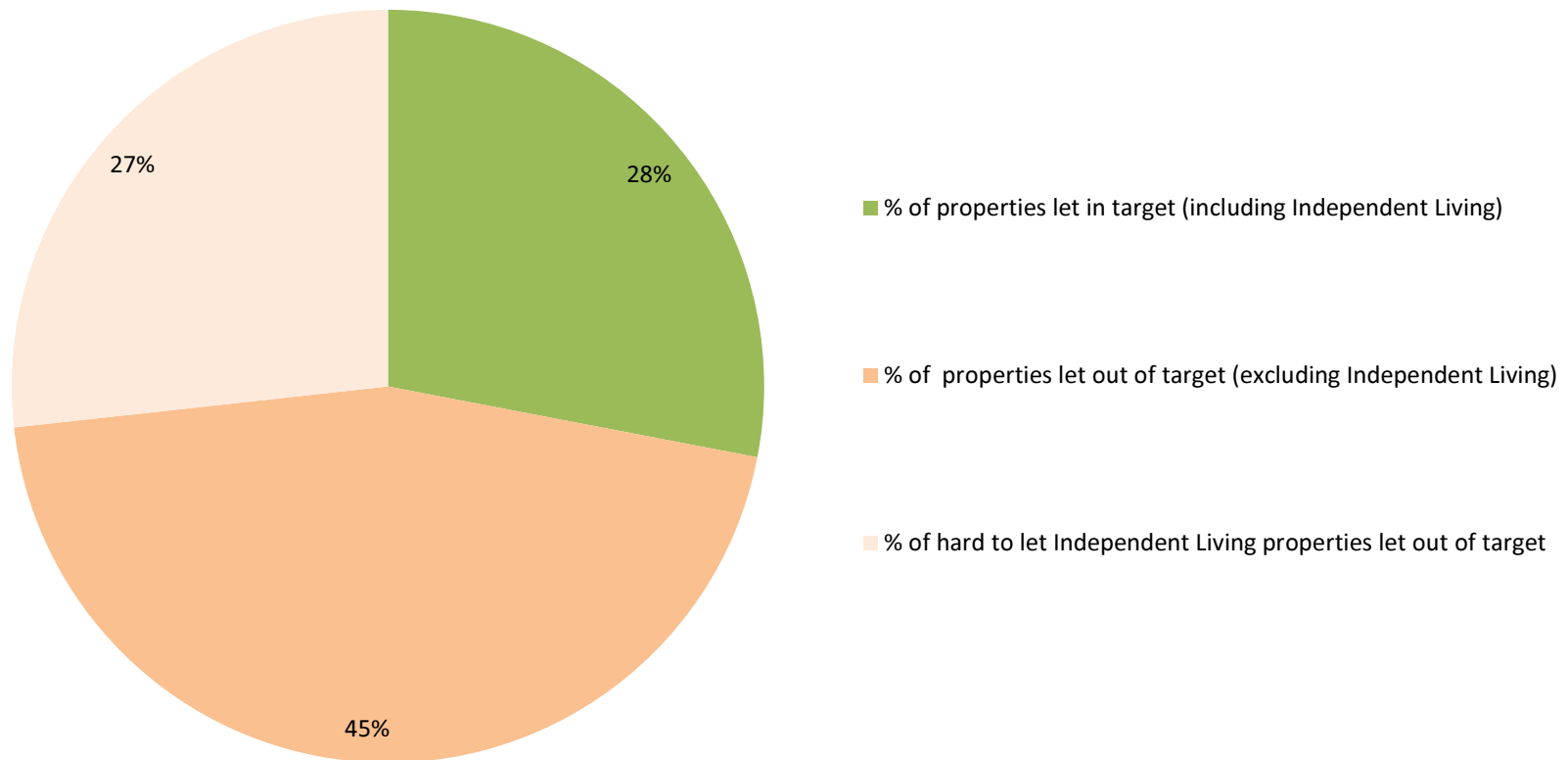
Green – On target / below target number of voids

Service Challenges

- The increase is not unique to SBC and is being experienced elsewhere, for example due to a latent demand following the pandemic, and materials shortages (e.g. kitchens; now 6 weeks compared to 1 to 2 weeks).
- Recruitment and retention.
- New electrical supplier on-boarding.
- Some hard to let properties being let (which has a negative impact on the KPI).
- Only essential lettings took place during the pandemic and so some latent demand properties are now being let.

Properties let in 21/22

Properties let 157 (including time taken to repair i.e. keys in to keys out)



Actions

- Repairs are recruiting a third (temporary) project officer and using contractors to supplement our workforce.
- Working closely with suppliers to seek to reduce materials delays.
- Lettings are looking to pool resources from other Housing services to support the additional demand where possible.
- Close monitoring of performance between the teams to ensure good collaboration and continuous improvement to synergise the end to end process.
- Voids end-to-end process under review to mitigate delays.
- Current trend of an increase in void loss being modelled, to understand the increase and associated void loss.
- Review the programme of tenancy audits to help ensure properties are kept in good condition, reducing repairs when void.

Summary

- Long term, hard-to-let 'Independent Living' voids have impacted on void loss.
- Pipeline voids are above historical average (x3 additional demand in September 2021).
- Some delays due to material shortage e.g. kitchens and doors.
- Recruitment challenges in Repairs and Voids.
- Trend analysis and re-modelling taking place.
- Improvement monitoring and management arrangements in place.

This page is intentionally left blank