



EXECUTIVE

12 JULY 2022

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

PART I

7. APPROVAL TO RE-CONFIRM THE DELEGATED BUILDING CONTROL POWERS

To seek approval to re-confirm the delegation of certain Building Control approval powers, from SBC to other shareholder local authorities in the Hertfordshire Building Control (HBC) partnership.

Pages 3 - 8

8. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE QUARTER 4 2021/22: ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22; AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE SUITE FOR 2022/23

ADDENDUM – Updated Appendix 1 to the report (fully designed version of Annual Report 2021/22).

Pages 9 - 20

This page is intentionally left blank

Meeting Executive
Portfolio Area Environment and Climate Change
Date 12 July 2022



EXTENSION OF CONTRACT - HERTFORDSHIRE BUILDING CONTROL AND APPROVAL OF DELEGATED BUILDING CONTROL POWERS

KEY DECISION

Author Zayd Al-Jawad | 2257
Lead Officer Zayd Al-Jawad | 2257
Contact Officer Zayd Al-Jawad | 2257

1 PURPOSE

To seek Executive approval to confirm the delegation of certain Building Control approval powers from SBC to other shareholder local authorities in the Hertfordshire Building Control (HBC) partnership. To extend the current Services Agreement with Hertfordshire Building Control and to delegate approval of a revised contract in the months ahead.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To confirm, so far as is permitted by law, the functions carried out by the Council's Building Control team, which are not transferred to Hertfordshire Building Control (HBC), may be provided by one or more of the Member Authorities (of HBC) acting under powers contained in Section 101 of the Local Government Act.

- 2.2 To extend the current Services Agreement with Hertfordshire Building Control until 31st March 2023 and delegate authority to the Strategic Director (TP), in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change, and statutory officers, to agree future extensions.
- 2.3 To delegate authority to the Strategic Director (TP) to agree any final and outstanding legal, technical, financial and operational matters to be concluded in effecting the proposed extension of contract.
- 2.4 Continue the appointment of Three Rivers District Council to perform the LA1 contract management function and the audit and issue of statutory notices as per the current arrangements.
- 2.5 Appoint East Hertfordshire District Council to perform the statutory notice LA1 function until 31st March 2023.
- 2.6 Delegate authority to the Strategic Director (TP), following consultation with the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change, Monitoring Officer and Strategic Director (CF) to agree and finalise any future arrangements for statutory building control including the LA1 function beyond 31st March 2023.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Local Authorities (LAs) have a statutory duty to provide a Building Control service. This means that if a Building Regulations application is submitted to the authority, it has a duty to ensure that the proposed works comply with the Building Regulations. Local authorities charge statutory fees for this service and were originally the sole providers of the service. However, in 1997, the government gave powers that allowed private sector Approved Inspectors (AIs) to also act in this capacity (arguably with less onerous procedural requirements).
- 3.2 This competitive environment has meant that it is now more difficult for LAs to retain their market share and fee income which is, increasingly, being lost to AIs. Consequently, many LAs, including the Borough Council, have struggled to ensure that the Building Control service they provide is cost neutral. In order to sustain the service and prevent it becoming disproportionately expensive, new options for service delivery are in place.
- 3.3 In 2013, the Chief Executives of the District Councils in Hertfordshire began to explore the possibility of a wider arrangement across the County and seven Councils, including SBC, showed an interest in progressing this idea. The other six Councils are Welwyn Hatfield, North Hertfordshire, Three Rivers, East Hertfordshire, Hertsmere and Broxbourne. Agreements were concluded in 2015 to combine the building control functions and it went live in 2016.
- 3.4 Dacorum Council joined in 2019 bring the partnership up to 8 of the 10 LAs in Hertfordshire. Through subsidiaries the partnership can and does offer services across the country.
- 3.5 The role of LA1 is to act as the Delegated Authority and to issue certificates through a Contract Manager, audit HBC and monitor service levels. An

annual support sum is paid to LA1 by all the building control authorities. Currently LA1 is designated as Three Rivers Council. HBC performs the administration of the building control applications, site visits, inspections, and assessments then writes the report and recommendations.

3.6 The company has been able to deliver most of the key aspirations as set out in the initial Business Plan, over the first 5 years:

- Providing a resilient Building Control Service.
- Reducing the cost of the Building Control Service.
- Growing market share in Building Control in Hertfordshire.
- Providing profitable growth outside of Hertfordshire.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

Extension of Service Agreement with Hertfordshire Building Control Ltd

4.1 Building control services are contracted from the building control authorities to HBC through the Services Agreement which had a term of 5 years from 17th August 2016, with an extended term agreed through to 16 August 2022. It is proposed that a further deed of variation is entered into to extend the Services Agreement until a new longer-term contract is put in place. It is recommended that authority be delegated to the Strategic Director (TP) in consultation with the Leader, Portfolio Holder and statutory officers to agree the new building control arrangements going forward.

Delegation of Building Control duties

4.2 Since 2016/2017, Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) has acted as the host local authority for the partner's building control functions that could not be passed on to HDC. Most of these functions are the statutory sign off of building control applications and the associated checks.

4.3 Under the current arrangements, all the building control authorities have delegated their statutory building control functions to Three Rivers Council. However, as the current Services Agreement comes to an end, the future of this role is yet to be determined. Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) has offered to continue to deliver the LA1 functions in relation to contract management function and the audit and issue of statutory notices, but has requested that the statutory notices are signed by the authorised officer of the local authority to which the notice relates.

4.4 The current agreement with TRDC finishes on the 31st of July 2022, with any new arrangement following that.

4.5 Through negotiation with all 8 shareholding local authorities, It is proposed to continue with TRDC hosting the LA1 function, but with an interim sign off host authority, anticipated to be East Hertfordshire District Council. More formal arrangements are being made to have a long-term provision in place by the 1st of April 2023.

4.6 The Executive has previously confirmed 'so far as permitted by law, the functions carried out by the Council's Building Control team, which are not

transferred to HBC, may be provided by one or more of the Member Authorities acting under powers contained in Section 101 of the Local Government Act. This report reiterates the delegation of building control powers, previously agreed in 2015, to give the flexibility to alternate the host LA1 between different partner local authorities.

Options and alternatives considered

- 4.7 Three Rivers District Council has offered to continue to deliver the LA1 functions in relation to contract management function and the audit and issue of statutory notices, with each partner authority signing off its own statutory notices, however, this option is not recommended because it is a more complex process than is necessary and there would be a separation from the audit and signatory process, without the appropriate expertise within each authority to provide the assurance oversight function.
- 4.8 Should no action be taken, the current Services Agreement with HBC will expire on 16 August 2022 which would result in the Council taking back in-house building control functions. There are currently no staff members who could provide this service in-house so a new team would need to be developed and recruited which is likely to be a difficult and lengthy process in the current recruitment market and, as a result, Building Control Services would be detrimentally affected.

5 IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are expected to be increased costs in the both the new temporary and permanent options in hosting the LA1 function. The temporary cost of the proposed approval mechanisms are expected to be £36,400 to the end of March 2023. This will be part funded by HBC and equally divided by subscribing Local Authorities. The cost to Stevenage is expected to be £2,700 - £3,00 for this period of time. There is potential for some ongoing cost in future financial years.

Legal Implications

- 5.2 Pursuant to section 101 of the Local Government act 1972, any function of a local authority may be delegated to another local authority. Building control is a statutory function within which certain functions cannot be delegated to any external body (other than another local authority) even if the body itself is wholly owned by other local authorities.

Risk Implications

- 5.3 The most significant risk is that, without an alternative the host functions for building control sign off will no longer be provided by TRDC at the end of the month. Stevenage Borough Council, and most of the other partner authorities, do not have the in house provision for this. Without alternative arrangements there is a direct risk to SBC and HBC in being unable to agree building control applications.
- 5.4 Should no arrangements be in place, operation of the service will revert back to SBC as it is a statutory requirement. The Council no longer employs any

Building Control professionals, no administration staff to support this service and therefore currently has no capacity. It would have to rely on expensive agency staff adding costs to the Council. Furthermore as Building Control is a competitive service, it would have to build up new businesses from customer from a very low customer base with a large risk of under achievement of income necessary to support the service.

Policy, Environmental and Climate Change Implications

- 5.5 HBC, as a provider of building control services to SBC, is actively proposing to de-carbonise its service to both its local authority partners and customers. The proposed re-confirmation of powers would enable HBC to continue provide the service on SBC's behalf.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.6 There are no proposed changes to existing staff or the way the services are provided to customers.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.

This page is intentionally left blank

Stevenage Borough Council's Annual Report (2021-2022)





Introduction by the Leader and Chief Exec...



**Sharon Taylor –
Leader, Stevenage
Borough Council**

Reading this year’s Annual Report makes me so proud of what we as a council have managed to achieve in 2021-22. This year has been challenging for us all – the restrictions of COVID, the impact of the cost-of-living crisis, the horrors of the war in Ukraine – the difficulties we face now are very different to those we faced when I became leader of the council in 2006. I am very proud of the last 25 years I have spent serving Stevenage as a councillor, and never more so than during the past year where we have continued to deliver the priorities we know are important to residents. Through our Cooperative Neighbourhood programme activities, and the feedback provided through the residents and tenant surveys, we have listened to your views and will continue to act on these so that we can deliver the services that matter to you most.

We know from talking to local residents on the doorstep that the cost-of-living crisis is having

a significant impact on everyone, especially the poorest in the community. Through the Stevenage Together Partnership, we have worked tirelessly to provide food and clothing to those who need it most. We will continue to lobby government to make sure that more funding is provided so that no-one in our community must choose between feeding their families or heating their home.

The hard work of the council, the support for local people in the community and the dedication to delivering the services has been heartening to see and the spirit of our community has been evident through our support for the Homes for Ukraine scheme and our commitment to the wider Afghanistan and Syrian resettlement programmes. We will continue to work hard to ensure that the right support mechanisms are in place for every refugee who needs our help.

During 2022/23, we will continue to work hard to support our community and provide the day-to-day services that our residents rely on. We will continue to progress our town’s regeneration so that Stevenage can deliver social housing for residents, provide a wonderful home for residents, be a great place to do business and a fantastic place to visit.



**Matt Partridge –
Chief Executive,
Stevenage
Borough Council**

Welcome to our 2021/22 Annual Report, which sets out the past year’s achievements and outlines our priorities for 2022/23. We have made significant progress in our regeneration programme through the successful opening of the Town Square and the new Bus Interchange. Our work on climate change has been a huge achievement, ranging from

securing funding for vital de-carbonisation projects to our bio-diversity work such as planting six new orchards. There is so much to cover and I would urge you all to read the report in full.

The achievements in this report are only possible because of the hard work and dedication of our staff. I am constantly impressed with their commitment to getting the job done and keeping council services going despite the challenges.

During 2022/23, we will continue to deliver against our key priorities, listen to the views of our community and ensure that our residents remain at the heart of what we do.

Responding to COVID...

The challenges of the pandemic have remained throughout 2021/2022 with COVID restrictions in place for part of the year. The council has continued to work with our partners and communities to ensure that local resident safety and wellbeing drives our approach to living with COVID.

This year we have:

Contacted **2,100 COVID** contact tracing cases and visited **420** of these to carry out welfare checks



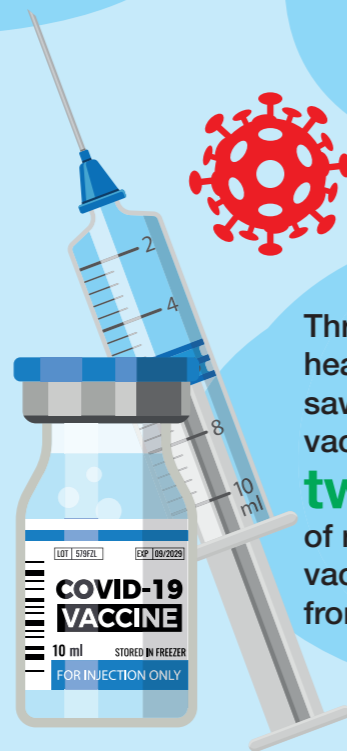
Assisted up to **360** taxi drivers to work safely with the Travel with Confidence scheme for COVID



Completed **870** visits to businesses to provide advice on COVID controls in accordance with business restrictions



Recruited a team of **six** Covid Marshalls/ Neighbourhood Wardens to patrol the town and provide advice on available support and education on restrictions



Through our work with public health and VCSE partners, we saw a significant uptake on vaccinations with almost **two thirds (64.3%)** of residents receiving a booster vaccination by March 2022, up from **62.7%** in January 2022

Secured over **£200,000** funding from the local Health Protection Board to support the local Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector to help manage the ongoing impact of community transmission, increase vaccine take up and to help build a response to emerging health inequalities

Cost of Living

The rising cost of living is an issue that impacts us all. As a council we have worked with our partners and local communities to help alleviate the impact on residents and help provide the support they need. We will continue to ensure that this support is provided throughout 2022/23.

This year we have:

Provided food bank stock to **14** voluntary groups



Supported **16** local schools to supply lunch, healthy snacks, shoes and clothing to children, as well as provide onsite food banks and supermarket vouchers to struggling families



Provided **two** charities with funding to help their vulnerable clients pay heating and fuel costs



Paid out **£172,000** in Discretionary Housing Payment to claimants who are unable to meet housing costs



Secured Community Renewal Funding to support the work of the Social Inclusion Partnership in 2022/23. This includes work to determine the impact of the increasing cost of living and breadline gap on Stevenage residents and raising awareness of services and support



Paid out **£65,000** of Exceptional Council Tax Hardship Relief for residents who are unable to meet the costs of their council tax



Paid out **£6.1 million** from the Council Tax Support Scheme to help eligible households reduce the cost of their council tax liability

Delivering for Stevenage

As a district council, we employ nearly 700 people to help deliver housing, leisure and recreation, environmental health, waste collection, planning applications and local taxation services. In 2021/22, we have worked tirelessly to ensure that council services operate effectively and local people continue to receive a high-quality service that provides value for money.

This year we have:

Collected **20,201 tonnes** (37,780 bins) equivalent to an average of 535kg per household



Provided **52 new homes** of which 24 have been allocated to council tenants

52



Prevented or relieved **225 cases** of homelessness and we have housed three Afghan families

Reused, recycled or composted **13,591 tonnes** That's the equivalent of filling the Stevenage Swimming Centre pool eight times!



Page 12

Removed **165 tonnes** of illegally dumped waste. That's the equivalent weight of 33 Stevenage polar bear sculptures!



Responded to **235 anti-social behaviour** cases and served 32 Community Protection Warnings and Community Protection Notices



Received **171,329** calls to Customer Services



Undertaken **315** food safety interventions at food businesses, registered **98** new premises and inspected **75** new businesses



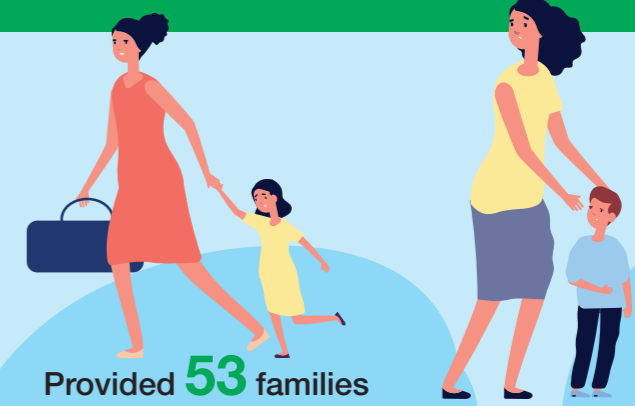
Carried out **166** mid-term Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licence inspections to check compliance with licence conditions, responded to 76 HMO enquiries and investigated 11 suspected HMOs

166

Followed-up **107** service requests regarding poor housing conditions and served **23** housing enforcement notices requiring works to remove serious hazards

107

Provided **53** families with support and safe space accommodation as part of Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) programme



Worked closely with our partners to ensure that **96** adult and children safeguarding cases have been investigated and appropriate support provided

96

Undertaken a taxi tariff review at the request of the drivers and revoked authority from two drivers for not meeting the terms of their taxi licences



Carried out over **400 vehicle** condition checks on taxi and private hire vehicles

Dealt with **eight** filthy and verminous premises and took enforcement action against **seven** under public health legislation



Investigated **53** complaints of accumulations of rubbish at residential properties, and successfully concluded eight enforcement notice requiring clearance

Investigated **444** noise complaints, served nine noise abatement notices and successfully concluded two noise prosecutions

444

Successfully resolved **93%** of the complaints we receive at the first stage

93%



A Cooperative Council

Co-operative councils are local authorities that are looking to deliver services in a radical way, giving more say and choice to local people.



Co-operative councils work with local organisations, residents and communities to change local services. They seek to move away from top-down imposed services and instead embrace the traditional values of the co-operative movement. Central to this approach is the principle of community wealth building which focuses on how much money is held and reinvested in an area for the benefit of local communities.

In 20/21 we successfully secured £715,000 Community Renewal Funding as part of our community wealth building ambitions. So far, through working collaboratively with partners, we have supported:

Page 13



35 people to engage in job searching and 62 people supported to engage in life skills



Six micro businesses supported on a one-to-one level with business support programmes



97 people have been supported face-to-face in total with 60 receiving 1-5 hours of support, 10 receiving 16-20 hours of support, and 27 receiving over 20 hours support.



Alongside Community Wealth Building and as a member of the Co-operative Councils Network, we want to reclaim the traditions of community action, community empowerment and civic engagement. This year we have worked with Burntwood Town Council, North Hertfordshire Council and Sunderland City Council on an exciting project to demonstrate how co-operative councils can embed neighbourhood working. Titled 'Cooperation at the Grass Roots', the informative guide includes four case studies which set out each council's approach to consultation - ensuring better outcomes and better value for money for residents. The report and accompanying videos can be viewed at www.councils.coop.



Future Town Future Council Achievements

Our Corporate Plan 'Future Town Future Council' sets out how we will reform and revitalising both the town and council for the 21st century. Our key aims and objectives are laid out across five programmes of work:



- Clean, Green, Safe and Thriving town
- Making Your Money Count
- Transforming our Town
- Cooperative Neighbourhoods
- More Social and Affordable Homes

The following pages set out the achievements under each programme for 2021/22.

Transforming our Town

We aim to create a vibrant town centre where people want to live, work and play

This year we have:



- Opened a new bus interchange. The interchange provides safe bicycle parking, a comfortable and modern waiting environment for passengers and capacity for electric bus charging, as well as a cafe and mobility store.

- Successfully launched the Town Square regeneration (in partnership with Co-Space launch) and a re-opening of the Visitors Centre in September 2021. The co-space deal signed represents the first phase of the Town Centre redevelopment and provides over 15,000 square feet of design led, in-demand workspace as well as a roof terrace, event space and break out areas for communal use.



- Marked the build of the European manufacturing headquarters of Autolus through a ground-breaking ceremony at the former Marshgate car park site. Autolus, a biopharmaceutical company, has decided to locate its manufacturing headquarters in the town creating over 400 jobs and committing its future to Stevenage.



● Delivered the Queensway mixed-use scheme. The site consists of 45,000 square feet of new retail and restaurant space, a gym, new offices, an innovation and technology centre including:

- 110 homes, 12 retail units and eight commercial/office units
- 24 affordable rented units
- Commercial units including Puregym, Cake Box, Châteaux Cafe and Card Factory



Next year we will:

- Progress regeneration work including:
 - Multi storey car park & cycle hub
 - Public sector hub
 - Garden square
 - Stevenage Innovation & Technology Centre (SITEC)
 - Cycling & Pedestrian Connectivity and Heritage Trail
 - New Towns Heritage Centre
 - Stevenage Sport and Leisure Hub
 - Station gateway

Page 14

More Social and Affordable Homes

We will increase the number of social and affordable homes in Stevenage and improve access to the housing market for a greater number of local residents.

This year we have:



● Reinvested into more affordable and social homes through the private sale of properties at Ditchmore Lane—including nine new properties at Addison House which have all been let as council tenant properties



● Provided 29 one, two and three bedroom apartments at Symonds Green for council rent which are due for handover to the new tenants in Summer 2022



● Provided 21 private sale properties at De Havilland House which are expected to generate an income of £6.7m, with the money to be re-invested in social housing schemes



● Used the income from the sale of seven units of accommodation at Malvern Close to help fund the 118 units of council accommodation and new retail and community spaces at Kenilworth Close

● Grant funded money to the Elliot Road scheme which will provide 13 new properties at affordable rent rates

Next year we will:

- Progress works at the Dunn Close scheme and Phase 2 of for Brent Court and Shephall View
- Progress Kenilworth Close site (150 units) and handover of Stirling Close
- Progress the Helstone (27 apartments) and Oaks cross (11 bungalows) schemes

Cooperative Neighbourhoods

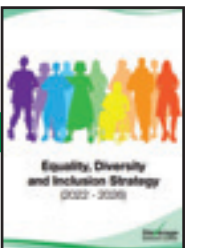
We will work with our communities to understand what matters to them, and we will lead on improving our neighbourhoods in partnership with residents.

This year we have:



● Launched the Stevenage Equalities Commission to undertake a strategic assessment of the nature, extent, causes and impact of race inequality in Stevenage. Five sessions have been held and a recommendation report will be published in July 2022

● Engaged with residents and local community groups to help develop the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Strategy (2022-2026) which sets out our commitment to advancing equality, diversity and inclusion across our workforce and the community





- Put up 13 Cooperative Neighbourhood Noticeboards throughout Stevenage which are updated on a monthly basis by Neighbourhood Wardens with awareness posters, planned local events and information

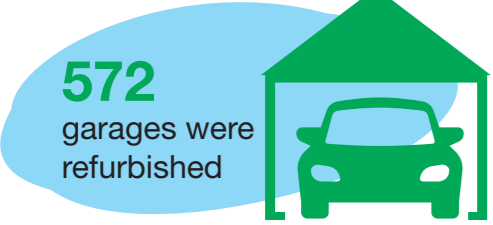
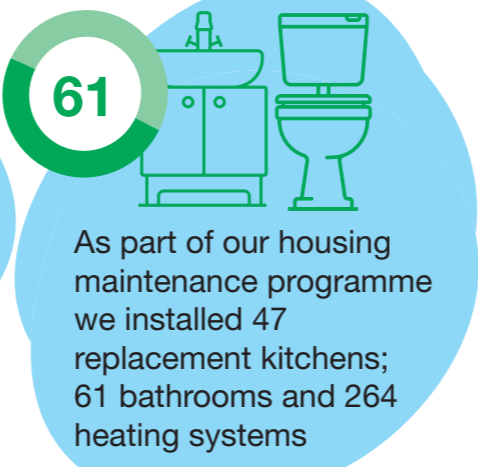
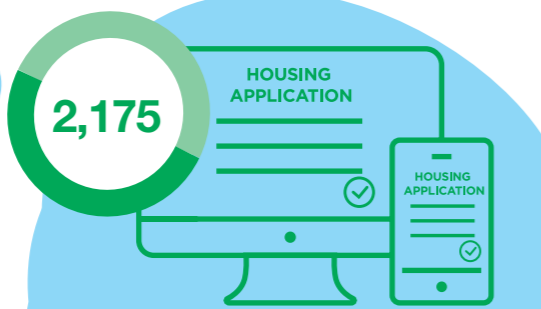


- Completed ward walkabouts in all Co operative Neighbourhood areas with over 500 conversations collated as part of the pop up event activities – the findings will be used to inform our community and neighbourhood priorities for 2022/23

- Obtained over 1100 responses as part of the residents and tenants survey, the responses provided valuable insight into residents' perceptions of their neighbourhood, the council, and priorities for the town and will be used to shape our plan, priorities and actions for the future



- Signed up over 1000 residents to receive digital neighbourhood newsletters which contain good news stories from their local area as well as information on local planned events
- Provided secure tenancies to 232 new council tenants
- Provided temporary accommodation to 362 new tenants (including through our Housing First scheme)



Next year we will:

- Continue the development of the Co-operative Neighbourhoods programme
- Continue to develop innovative ways of capturing and analysing resident feedback
- Ensure the successful delivery of Equalities Commission objectives & Community Renewal Funding priorities
- Deliver Phase 3 and 4 of the Housing Investment Major Refurbishment programme
- Deliver the Garage Improvement Programme including 80 new build garages
- Deliver the St Nicholas teen shelter project

Clean, Green, Safe and Thriving Town -

We aim to improve the quality of life for Stevenage residents and enhance the experience of visitors. This is achieved through our approach to tackling climate change, our focus on community safety, the vision for culture and leisure and our plans for a healthier Stevenage.

Climate Change & Biodiversity

In 2020 we launched our Climate Change Strategy which set out our ambition to achieve net zero emissions by 2030. Progress against our objectives has gone from strength to strength ranging from how we influence legislation to how we involve local people to really make a difference. For instance, we remain the first district or borough council in Hertfordshire to have a Biodiversity Action Plan.

This year we have:

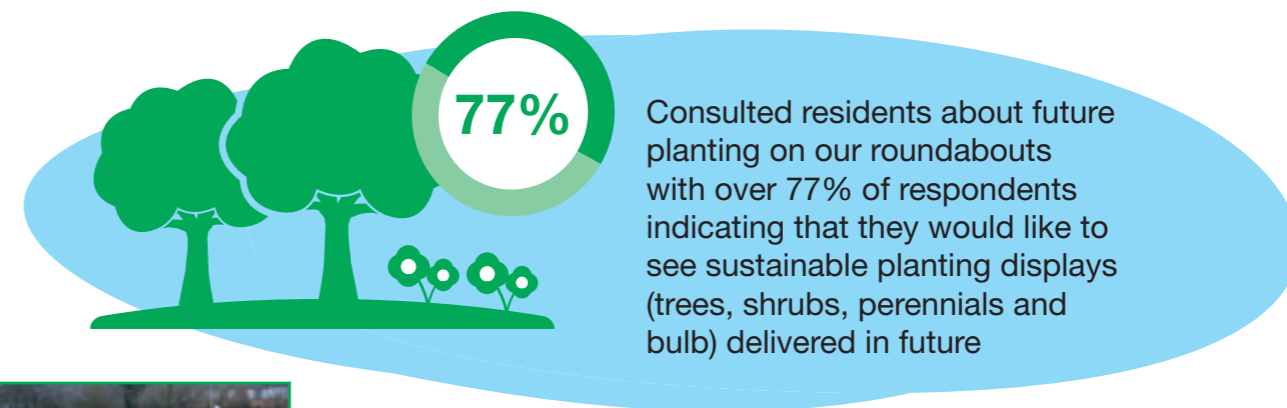
- Planted an additional acre of woodland in the north of Fairlands Valley Park which involved Green Space Volunteers planting around 400 new tree saplings to extend the existing Memorial Wood
- Coppiced 1 acre of Whomerley Wood to help increase habitats for wildlife



- Managed around 33 hectares of meadow grasslands for wildlife. This is an increase of 1500% over ten years



- Undertook scrub management to protect Shackledell grassland for crickets, grasshoppers, butterflies and other wildlife
- Took control of invasive species, such as laurel and holly, in some of our woodlands



- Successful in being awarded £30,000 from the Urban Tree Challenge Fund to support the planting of six new Community Orchards

- Helped schools and Green Space Volunteers to plant 36 fruit trees (apples, pears, plums and damsons) to create three new orchards at:

- Shephalbury Park – Shephalbury Park Primary School
- Raleigh Crescent – Green Space Volunteers
- St Nicholas Park – The Leys Primary School



- Been supported by our fantastic Green Space Volunteers who collectively gave around 800 hours helping out with over 70 tasks, including:

- Butterfly surveys to meadow grasslands 1
- Hampson Park: hedge and tree planting 2
- Lanterns Lane Woodland: felling dead pines 3
- Martins Wood: access improvements
- Shephalbury Park: installing bird boxes 4
- Town Centre Gardens: planting shrubs and pruning roses



Successfully retained five Green Flag Awards confirming the high quality of local parks:

- Fairlands Valley Park
- Town Centre Gardens
- Hampson Park
- Shephalbury Park
- Weston Road Cemetery



- Invited children attending the play centres to enter an artwork competition to support a Clean Green litter campaign. The four winners' work has already been used to create banners on the sides of two of our refuse freighters.

The art will also be used to produce posters and social media posts to help raise awareness of the problems with littering.



185

As part of the Keep Britain Tidy 'Great British Spring Clean' initiative, 185 volunteers collectively spent over 15 hours picking 94 bags of litter from six locations around the town



- Secured funding of £133,000 to convert tired shrub beds to grassed areas

- As part of our climate change strategy we established a Citizens Panel which provided the following recommendations for incorporation into the Climate Change Action Plan:

- Become a Zero Food Waste Town
- Establish a collaborative framework to achieve sustainable infrastructure to reduce pollution
- Improve communications and recycling awareness incentives to public and commerce
- Implement climate emergency education and create awareness for Stevenage residents, businesses, and visitors



(EPC)

400

Following a successful bid for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, Stevenage will see around 400 social homes with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of D or lower receive upgrades to improve their energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions

- Become a founding launch authority partner for the UK100 programme - a network for councils focused solely on climate, clean energy and clean air policy



- Signed up to the Race to Zero platform as part of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 26) campaign. The objective is to build momentum around the shift to a decarbonized economy by pledging to actively commit to climate action.

Community Safety

The wellbeing of residents is vital to a thriving town and in 2021/22 we worked closely with partners from the SoSafe Partnership to implement the Community Safety Action Plan and make a real difference locally.

This year we have:

- Helped 594 residents receive crisis intervention along with client led support through the No More Service (Adults and Youth) intervention programme - which offers holistic support to people, when drugs, alcohol or offending negatively affect their daily life, and the Evolve perpetrator programme - which provides support to explore perpetrator triggers, signals, and challenges perceptions. This is an increase of 364% from last year

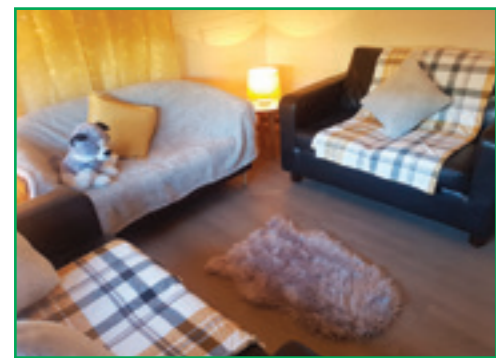


- Created the Together Project (fondly known as Art Club) in conjunction with Junction 7 Creatives to tackle social isolation for up to 191 No More Service clients. Sessions have been running weekly since November 2021

Page 17

189

Provided a number of essential items including 189 food parcels, 33 mobile phones and 21 hygiene parcels through the No More Service



- Provided 23 safe spaces for families and supported 53 families through the Stevenage Women's Refuge



1,369

Responded to 1369 referrals through the Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) service has, an increase of 74% on the previous year

134

Received 134 male referrals through the SADA programme - an increase of 120% since last year

17

Supported 17 clients with no recourse to public funds



4,733

Investigated 4,733 reports of anti-social behaviour and environmental crime and successfully obtained three prosecutions



166

Received 166 calls through the SADA out of hours service.

Culture, Leisure and a Healthy Stevenage

We have a vision of culture, leisure and health that will ensure we remain a lively town which is a great place to live for residents as well as a great destination for visitors.

This year we have:

- Re-opened our play centres following covid / lockdown-related closures and since then we have had 5,405 sessional visits



- In partnership with the Stevenage World Forum and Hertfordshire Community Foundation held five history reminiscence sessions called 'Stevenage Legacy and Resilience'. 60 people attended the events and oral history recordings and portraiture from the event will be displayed at the Stevenage Museum in 2022/23



- Worked with local artists to deliver the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning 'Out in Stevenage' exhibition - which explored LGBTQ+ experiences of cycling in Stevenage and was attended by 40 local residents on opening night

Successfully installed the Lytton Way Heritage Timeline along the hoarding for the Swingate House SG1 development - the timeline shows a brief history of Stevenage since it became the first New Town on 1 August 1946



- Worked with 105 young people across three outreach pop-up events during the summer period, and 106 young people at basketball roadshows during the summer half-term and school summer holiday as part of the Stevenage Young Person Health Hub.

5,967

Generated significant online interest in the Young Person Healthy Hub with 5,967 website views and 40,257 people reached through Instagram, resulting in 486 click-throughs to partner organisations





● Encouraged 149 children to receive training as part of the as part of the Health Stevenage Strategy Cycle Hub initiative, a further 28 children attended the Go-Ride Club and 34 adults took part in training courses ranging from bike repairs to absolute beginners

● Organised the eighth Stevenage Walking Festival with partners across Stevenage and North Herts – at least three daily walks of various difficulties were arranged every day for a week (from short sessions to 12 mile challenges!)



Next year we will:

- Deliver educational & behavioural change initiatives to help prevent littering and dog fouling
- Convert tired shrub beds to grassed areas
- Identify ways we can improve the appearance of the town
- Increase recycling rates and reduce the nuisance caused by fly-tipping
- Deliver a programme of cyclical work throughout the year (spring clean, grass-cutting, leaf clearance, tree planting etc.)
- Deliver biodiversity action plan activities including the development of community woodland and new meadow grassland sites
- Retain five Green Flag awards and extend the network of community orchards
- Promote the reporting of hate crime and further promote equality within the community
- Provide a whole housing approach to support victims of domestic abuse and their families
- Work with partners to further improve the safety of women and girls in the town
- Support the development of Junction 7 Creatives and the wider Arts & Heritage Forum partnership
- Develop further youth-centred activities that increases access to cultural activity
- Continue to contribute to the Stevenage Together Action Plan focussing on supporting the mental and physical health of the town

Making Your Money Count

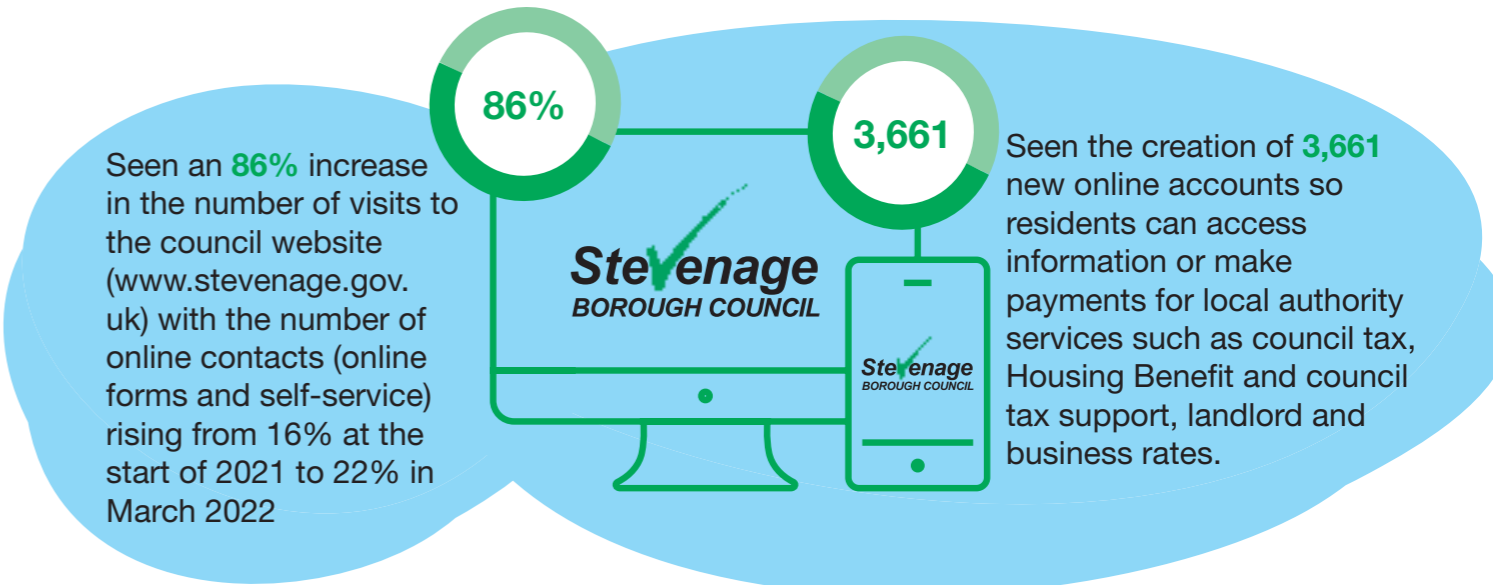
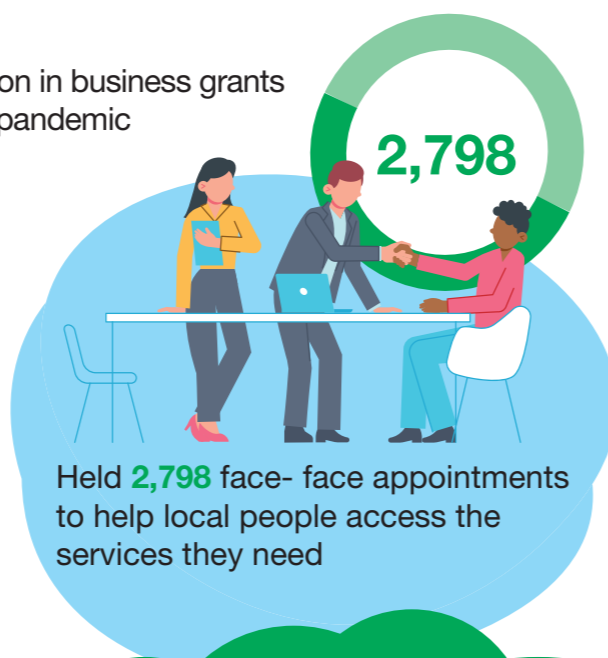
We aim to ensure sufficient resources are available to deliver on the council's priorities while remaining financially resilient to withstand the impact of COVID and our recovery.

This year we have:

● Provided £12.4 million in business rate relief and £6.2 million in business grants to local business that have been adversely impacted by the pandemic



● Collected £53.8m in council tax with a collection rate of 94.5%.



- Paid out £44.4m in Housing Benefit 2021/22
- We have hosted our first paid for production as part of our commercial filming opportunity ambition outlined in our Cultural Strategy. A six part BBC Drama called 'Gold'!
- Through insourcing services delivered combined savings of £53,000 by charging for meadow grass cutting, collection and disposal of waste and window cleaning for council housing
- We have launched a corporate SBC events brochure for 22/23 and secured income from roundabout sponsorship through the launch of the council's Advertising and Sponsorship Framework and new partnership arrangements with CP Media,



Next year we will:

- Implement digital solutions to improve customer outcomes as part of our Transformation programme
- Implement our co-operative commercial and insourcing strategy initiatives to maximise savings
- Enlarge the Shared Revenue and Benefits service to help us identify and pursue more available savings
- Complete the update of the General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan so that the impact of COVID losses and cost of living crisis are incorporated





Stevenage Borough Council's Annual Report

(2021-2022)

If you'd like this publication in another format
such as large print or braille please email:
equalities@stevenage.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank