

Public Document Pack



EXECUTIVE

Date: Tuesday, 13 March 2018

Time: 2.00 pm,

Location: Shimkent Room - Daneshill House, Danestrete

Contact: Jackie Cansick 242216

Members: Councillors: S Taylor OBE CC (Chair), J Gardner (Vice-Chair),
R Henry, J Hollywell, Mrs J Lloyd, R Raynor, S Speller and J Thomas

AGENDA

PART 1

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 14 FEBRUARY 2018

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of Executive held on 14 December 2017 for signature by the Chair.

Minutes attached (Pages 5 – 12)

3. MINUTES OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND SELECT COMMITTEES

To note the following Minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees –

- A. Community Select Committee – 7 February 2018
- B. Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 8 February 2018
- C. Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 19 February 2018

Minutes attached (Pages 13 – 24)

4. HERTFORDSHIRE HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY (HHIA)

To consider a report regarding whether the Council should join the Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency (HHIA).

Report & Appendices attached (Pages 25 – 192)

5. STEVENAGE CULTURAL STRATEGY (A 10 YEAR STRATEGY FOR ARTS & HERITAGE)

To consider a report that recommends the approval of a Cultural Strategy for the town. The report also summarises a number of cultural ambitions over the next 10 years in order for Stevenage to become a destination creative town.

Report & Appendices attached (Pages 193 – 246)

6. 3RD QUARTER MONITORING REPORT GENERAL FUND AND HOUSING REVENUE

To consider a report that details the outcome of a review of all revenue and associated budgets for 2017/2018 3rd quarter.

Report & Appendix attached (Pages 247 – 262)

7. 3RD QUARTER MONITORING CAPITAL PROGRAMME - GENERAL FUND AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

To consider a report that provides an update on the Council's 2017/18 and 2018/19 capital programme and that seeks approval for the revisions to the General Fund capital programme. The report also provides an update on capital resources available to fund the capital programmes.

Report attached (Pages 263 – 270)

8. DRAFT COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY 2018-21

To consider a report that sets out proposals for the draft Community Safety Strategy 2018-2021 which outlines the emerging priorities of the SoSafe partnership for the next three years and was considered by the Responsible Authorities Group (RAG) at its meeting on 5th February 2018.

Report & Appendix attached (Pages 271 – 304)

9. HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY REVIEW 2018

To consider a report that details the outcome of consultations and subsequent recommendations to amend the Allocations Policy.

Report & Appendices attached (Pages 305 – 374)

10. RETROFITTING FIRE SUPPRESSANT SPRINKLER SYSTEMS TO RESIDENTIAL TOWER BLOCKS - PROGRAMME PROPOSAL (SEE ALSO PART II REPORT)

To consider a report that seek approval to proposals to commence a programme of retrofitting Fire Suppressant Sprinkler Systems to all of the Council's 7 high rise

flat blocks, including 2 sheltered schemes. The financial details are set out in an accompanying Part II report on this agenda.

Report attached (Pages 375 – 382)

11. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE FOR QUARTER THREE 2017/18

To consider a report that highlights the Council's performance across key priorities and themes for quarter three 2017/18.

Report & Appendices attached (Pages 383 – 416)

12. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS

To consider any Part 1 business accepted by the Chair as urgent.

13. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

To consider the following motions –

1. That under Section 100(A) 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 Members consider the reasons for the following reports being in Part II and determine whether or not maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

14. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS - RETROFITTING FIRE SUPPRESSANT SPRINKLER SYSTEMS TO RESIDENTIAL TOWER BLOCKS - PROGRAMME PROPOSAL PART 2

To consider a Part II report that details the financial implications for the retrofitting of Fire Suppressant Sprinkler Systems to residential tower blocks proposals for which are set out in a report in the Part I Section of this agenda.

Part II report attached (From P.1)

15. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

To consider any Part II business accepted by the Chair as urgent.

NOTE: Links to Part 1 Background Documents are shown on the last page of the individual report, where this is not the case they may be viewed by using the following link to agendas for Executive meetings and then opening the agenda for Tuesday, 13 March 2018 –
<http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/have-your-say/council-meetings/161153/>

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STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, 14 February 2018

Time: 2.00 pm

Place: Shimkent Room - Daneshill House, Danestrete

Present: Councillors: S Taylor OBE CC (Chair), J Gardner (Vice-Chair), R Henry, J Hollywell, Mrs J Lloyd, R Raynor, S Speller and J Thomas.

Start / End Time: Start Time: 2.00 p.m.
End Time: 3.35 p.m.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no apologies for absence or declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 23 JANUARY 2018

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2018 are approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

3. MINUTES OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND SELECT COMMITTEES

A typographical error in item 3B was corrected as there was reference to Councillor J Lloyd as 'CC', when in fact, he had stood down at the last County Council Election.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the following meetings are noted –

- A. Community Select Committee – 8 January 2018
- B. Environment & Economy Select Committee – 16 January 2018
- C. Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 24 January 2018

4. FINAL GENERAL FUND AND COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2018/2019

The Executive considered a report for recommendation to Council concerning the Council's Final General Fund Budget for 2018/19 and projected 2017/18 General Fund Budget and Final proposals for the 2018/19 Council Tax.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources corrected a typographical error at recommendation 2.9 of the report. The figure quoted for Growth Options was £470,371 not '£430,371' as quoted.

It was reported that the final grant settlement had been published after this report was completed and there was an additional £5,160 of Section 31 grant payable in 2018/19, (due to an alteration in the compensation for changes in business rates).

The additional £5,160 would reduce the 2018/19 net budget and the contribution from balances by the same amount. This would be included in the report to Council on 28 February 2018 meeting.

The Executive was informed that whilst the HCC and Police & Crime Commissioner budgets had not been finalised it was understood that their increases would be in the region of 5.8% and 7.89% respectively.

The Executive was of the view that it was important that the Council's Budget leaflet made it clear that of the total Council Tax paid for a Band D property, only £198 went toward the funding of SBC's 120 services. It should also be noted that the budget had been drawn up based on extensive consultations and the residents' survey.

In response to a Member's question the Assistant Director (Finance & Estates) explained the difference between 'contingency' in recommendation 2.5 and 'reserves'. The contingency figure was recommended to be held by the Executive in order that if any spend arose that had not been included in the budget there was not a subsequent need to refer the matter to Council. There were two types of 'reserves'; allocated reserves that were ring-fenced and the reserves on General Fund balances calculated by risk assessments of the budget that were to be used to mitigate the likes of shortfall in income.

At this juncture the Executive recorded its disappointment that the Hertfordshire NNDR Pilot had not been approved by Government. Only five pilots, with one in London, were to proceed.

The Executive recorded its thanks to Councillor Mrs Lloyd, the Members of the Leader's Financial Security Group and the Assistant Director (Finance & Estates) who had worked on putting together the recommended budget for 2018/2019.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following proposals be recommended to Council on 28 February 2018:

1. That the 2017/18 revised net expenditure on the General Fund of £10,493,720 be approved.
2. That a Final General Fund Budget Requirement for 2018/19 of £8,288,919 be agreed, with a contribution from balances of £823,981 and a Band D Council Tax of £204.46 (assuming a 2.99% increase for inclusion in the draft council tax resolution).
3. That the Risk Assessments of General Fund Balances, as shown at Appendix B to this report, be approved.
4. That a minimum level of General Fund reserves of £2,760,570, in line with the 2018/19 risk assessment of balances, as shown at Appendix B to this report be approved.
5. That a contingency sum of £400,000 within which the Executive can approve supplementary estimates, be approved for 2018/19, (unchanged from 2017/18).
6. That the 2018/19 proposed Fees and Charges increase of £134,160 (Appendix C to this report) be approved for 2018/19.
7. That the 2018/19 proposed concessions (Appendix D to this report) be approved for 2018/19.
8. That the 2018/19 proposed new Financial Security Options of £342,399 (Appendix E to this report) be approved for 2018/19.

9. That the 2018/19 proposed Growth options of £470,371 (Appendix F to this report) be approved for 2018/19.
10. That the 2018/19 business rates gains of £356,610 above the baseline assessment be ring fenced for town centre regeneration (SG1), (paragraph 4.8.3 of the report refers) be approved for 2018/19.
11. That new capital receipts and unspent revenue balances (above the £350,000 transferred to the capital reserve) be earmarked for the Council's and resident's top priority, town centre regeneration be approved.
12. That the advice on of the Assistant Director (Finance and Estates) on the robustness of the draft budget and the adequacy of reserves (Appendix J) be noted.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report.

Other Options considered: As contained in the report.

5. HEALTHY STEVENAGE STRATEGY

The Executive considered a report that outlined the development of the Healthy Stevenage Strategy.

The Assistant Director (Communities & Neighbourhoods) informed the Executive that he had met with the Community Select Committee Members who had welcomed the strategy and had given positive feedback.

It was noted that SBC had secured a significant amount of funding since 2014 to support health initiatives in the Town. The Strategic Director (Matthew Partridge) undertook to circulate details of this funding to Members of the Executive.

Members were of the view that there was a synergy between this Strategy and recently approved Cultural Strategy. It was very positive that the two strategies were developing in tandem and that they could bring together all the relevant partner agencies.

It was noted that the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) played the key role in the health and wellbeing of the community. However, but it was considered that the CCG could do more to address issues of deprivation and inequality although it was accepted that other partners did recognise the impact of these issues on health. There was particular concern that the CCG was responsible for a budget much larger than a district authority but there was seemingly little accountability.

The Executive thanked the Assistant Director (Communities & Neighbourhoods) and his team for the work undertaken on the Strategy.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the Strategy accompanying the report is approved.
2. That it is noted that the Strategy and its implementation adopts a focus on primary prevention and health promotion given this approach has the greatest

potential to help address local health inequalities.

3. That it is noted that implementation of the Strategy will be achieved through co-operative working with our communities and key partners through the Healthy Stevenage Partnership overseen by Stevenage Together.

4. That the Strategy be launched at the Stevenage Together Forum on 6 March 2018.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report.

Other Options considered: As contained in the report.

6. GENERAL FUND DRAFT ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

The Executive considered a report that sought approval to the new General Fund Asset Management Strategy and Action Plan.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources introduced the report. The last such strategy had come forward in 2010/2011 and therefore the draft was very welcome. Members were of the view however, that it was important for the Council's Co-operative principles to be incorporated in the Strategy. Working with the community was fundamental to managing the Council's assets. A working group was to be established, chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Resources, with the Portfolio Holders for Environment & Regeneration and Neighbourhoods & Co-operative Council and relevant officers to help develop this further and report back to the Executive in June/July.

With reference to the draft Action Plan, the policy development activities quoted provided were an opportunity for the Council to work imaginatively and co-operatively with the community.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the draft Asset Management Strategy at Appendix A is noted.
2. That the draft Asset Management Action Plan, at Appendix B, is noted.
3. That the Asset Management Strategy adopts a cooperative approach to engagement with communities, in particular through reviews of assets in different localities.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report and 3. To include the Council's co-operative principles.

Other Options considered: As contained in the report.

7. FINAL CAPITAL STRATEGY 2017/18-2022/23

The Executive considered a report for recommendation to Council that sought approval to revisions to the 2017/18 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme and the draft Capital Programme for 2018/19. The report also provided an update on the Council's draft 5 Year Capital Strategy and the resources available to fund the Capital Strategy.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources introduced the report. She explained that the Capital Strategy included £200K in 2018/19 for work on the bus station solution. The Strategy assumed that the works were to be funded from the LEP (GD3 monies) however, to date, the governance for these funds not been signed off by the Government. She therefore added a further recommendation that would allow for capital reserves to be used pending the sign off of the GD3 monies.

With reference to the additional recommendation the Chief Executive stated that there was a risk that if the GD3 monies were not agreed it would be necessary to re-prioritise the works capital programme. However, the work on the bus station could not be delayed and if need be it would be funded directly by the Council.

The Assistant Director (Finance & Estates) stated that the report to Council would include detail of the mitigation in place for the Council's investment in commercial property making it clear that the investments made were of economic benefit to Stevenage and are prudent.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following proposals be recommended to Council on 28 February 2018:

1. That the revised General Fund and HRA 2017/18 capital programme, as detailed in Appendix A and Appendix B to the report be approved.
2. That the final 2018/19 General Fund Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix A to the report be approved.
3. That the final 2018/19 HRA Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix B to the report be approved.
4. That the updated forecast of resources as summarised in Appendix A (General Fund) and Appendix B (HRA) to the report be approved.
5. That the Government's potential changes to prudential borrowing and MRP as outlined in paragraph 3.21-3.26 of the report be noted.
6. That the approach to resourcing the General Fund capital programme as outlined in paragraph 4.3.6 and 4.3.11 of the report be approved.
7. That the growth bids identified for inclusion in the Capital Strategy (Appendix C to the report) be approved.
8. That the 2018/19 de-minimis expenditure limit (section 4.8 of the report) be approved.
9. That the 2018/19 contingency allowance (section 4.9 of the report) be approved.
10. That the work undertaken by LFSG on behalf of the Executive in reviewing and challenging the General Fund Capital Strategy be noted.

11. That in 2018/19 SBC capital reserves be used to fund £200,000 of the Regeneration capital bid assumed from GD3 monies, to allow the SG1 regeneration scheme to progress. This is required because the government has not signed off governance which would allow the release of GD3 monies.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report and 11. To ensure that there is no delay in undertaking this work.

Other Options considered: As contained in the report.

8. ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY INCLUDING PRUDENTIAL CODE INDICATORS 2018/19

The Executive considered a report for recommendation to Council concerning the approval of the Treasury Management Strategy 2018/19 including the Annual Investment Strategy and the prudential indicators.

The Executive was advised that this report had been fully debated by the Audit Committee on 5 February 2018 but no changes had been made.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following recommendations be made to Council -

1. That the Treasury Management Strategy be approved.
2. That the draft prudential indicators for 2018/19 be approved subject to any changes proposed by CIPFA to the Treasury Management Code and Prudential Code.
3. That the minimum revenue provision policy be approved and the proposed changes currently under consultation be noted.
4. That it be noted that no changes are being proposed to treasury limits contained within the Council's Treasury management policies.

Reason for Decision: As contained in the report.

Other Options considered: As contained in the report.

9. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS

Town Centre Regeneration – SG1

The Chief Executive provided the Executive with an update on the progress of the decision taken at the last meeting regarding the appointment of the preferred developer for the SG1 Scheme.

The Developer chosen was preparing a formal launch of the plans on 27 February and the Council was producing a dedicated edition of Chronicle.

The Executive recorded its thanks to all the Members, Officers and Partners who

had worked to get the initiative to this stage.

10. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That, under Section 100(A) 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 involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1 to 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by SI 2006 No. 88.

2. That having considered the reasons for the following item being in Part II, it be determined that maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighed the public interest in disclosure.

11. PART II MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 23 JANUARY 2018

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II section of the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 23 January 2018 are approved for signature by the Chair.

12. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.

CHAIR

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STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Agenda Item:

3A

Date: Wednesday 7 February 2018

Place: Shimkent Room, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

Present: Councillors: S Mead (Chair), M Notley (Vice-Chair), E Harrington, J Lloyd, J Mead, A Mitchell CC and G Snell

In Attendance: M Levi-Smythe (Graduate – HR & Organisational Development), D Panter (Mechanical and Electrical (M & E) Compliance Manager) and W Oglina (Empty Homes Manager)

Start and End Time: Start Time: 6:00 pm
End Time: 7:40 pm

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Brown, E Connolly and C Saunders.

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES – 8 JANUARY 2018

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Community Select Committee held on 8 January 2018 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. HOUSING ALLOCATIONS REVIEW – FINAL REPORT

The Scrutiny Officer informed Members that some of the papers for the meeting were being tabled, including responses to questions that Members had raised at the last meeting. Members expressed concern regarding the late submission of these papers and said that such a practice was not acceptable as it affected their preparations for meetings.

The Chair informed Members that the purpose of the review was to provide the Community Select Committee's input to the wider officer and Executive Portfolio Holder review of the Housing Allocations Policy.

With regard to Recommendation 5, Members sought clarification on the timescale for converting properties, living arrangements for families in properties earmarked for conversion and the design specifications of converted bedsits – particularly the position of windows - and requested a site visit to one of these schemes to see the before and after

transformation.

It was noted that there were myths about housing allocation and that these were not helped by a complicated policy and prospective bidders often not reading or understanding the available guidance. Members highlighted that future communication campaigns for the Housing Allocations Policy should be user-friendly and should include audio and visual methods.

With regard to Recommendation 7, it was confirmed that there were very few queries from bidders who wanted to find out their positions on respective bids. Members were informed that the majority of the queries were received from bidders who had been on the waiting list for a long period and who sought clarification on why their bids were not successful. The Empty Homes Manager stated that bidders were able to check their bid positions using the online self-service facility.

Members agreed that more needed to be done to manage the expectations of bidders. It was noted that there was no guidance on possible waiting times for each Band.

With regard to Recommendation 8, the Mechanical & Electrical (M.E.) Compliance Manager acknowledged that it was good practice to complete an up-to-date gas check on the property before a new tenant moves in and the gas to be approved and fully working prior to the tenant moving in. Members were informed that such a practice created a financial risk for the Council and provided few benefits for the new tenant. The M & E Compliance Manager outlined the council practice of capping gas supply as soon as a tenant moves out and supplies being restored within 24 hours of a new tenant contacting their preferred supplier. Members were informed that the main issue was having sufficient gas credit during the property transfer stage. This could have a financial cost to the Council if it were to adopt the Committee's recommendation.

Members agreed that circumstances of individual tenants should be taken into consideration and that new tenants should be given the option to have a fully working boiler at the point of their moving in and if this incurred a cost that the tenant be given the option to pay for this. Members expressed that their expectation is that boilers and heating be in fully working order on the first day of the tenancy particularly in view of the tenants either having children or wanting to decorate and fit carpets where a damp atmosphere is not suitable. Members also posed questions regarding timescales between a new tenant accepting the tenancy and the move in date. The Empty Homes Manager confirmed that under normal circumstances a tenancy started at the beginning of the week and it was highly unlikely that new tenants would be expected to start their tenancy on a Friday (or during the weekend).

Members highlighted a case that involved a tenant moving into a property that was in severe disrepair and had a faulty boiler. The M & E Compliance Manager confirmed that he was aware that the tenant had moved during

the weekend. The M & E Compliance Manager informed Members that this was a rare case given that it was one of just two incidents out of 800 properties that are capped annually.

Members sought clarification on audit arrangements for gas checks and the state of properties that still used solid fuel systems. In response to Members questions, the M & E Compliance Manager indicated that a third party was responsible for auditing gas safety checks. It was confirmed that information packs for new tenants included a recommendation that gas and electric cookers be fitted by qualified personnel. The M & E Compliance Manager brought to the attention of Members the arrangement by Nottingham City Homes to engage Energy Angels as a partner to advise tenants on energy price comparison.

Members noted that not all aspects of the review's scoping document had been addressed, such as the allocation of lead Member roles. However, the Chair stated that she was content that the key issues identified in the scoping document had been addressed within the review.

It was **RESOLVED** that the final report and recommendations be agreed with the following additions and amendments:

- Recommendation 3 be amended to "Priority should be given to under occupiers wishing to downsize their properties and to co-ordinate with over occupiers, with a review of the Bands to identify customers wishing to downsize and that when a move is possible, a realistic timeframe be established."
- Recommendation 5 be amended to "That officers make alternative and improved use of hard to let sheltered accommodation that will have a positive impact on the current voids situation whilst maintaining suitable living standards."
- Recommendation 7 be amended to include "That officers should stop the current practise of automatically informing bidders where their bid was within the top 50 bids, and that a narrative be used on the bidding website to explain the scenarios that are likely to result in multiple unsuccessful bids over a long period of time."
- Recommendation 8 be amended to "In all cases of a new tenancy, an up-to-date gas check be completed on the property before the new tenant moves in and the gas to be approved and fully working prior to the tenant moving in. In the instances that a 'one-off' exception occurs, the tenant should be offered a suitable reduction in rent for the duration of not having a working gas supply."
- An additional recommendation that officers publish an annual statement detailing allocations per band as a percentage of total allocations.
- An additional recommendation that officers to consider engaging a third party energy comparison partner such as Energy Angels to help tenants get the best energy deal.

4. URGENT PART I BUSINESS

None

5. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Not required

6. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.

CHAIR

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Agenda Item:

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

3B

Date: Thursday, 8 February 2018

Time: 6.00 pm

Place: Shimkent Room - Daneshill House, Danestrete

Present: Councillors: Lin Martin-Haugh (Chair) (Chair), Jim Brown, Michael Downing, Alex Farquharson, James Fraser, Michelle Gardner, Liz Harrington, Adam Mitchell CC and Robin Parker CC

Start / End Time: Start Time: 6.00 pm
End Time: 8.30 pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Bibby, J Lloyd and Mead.

There were no declarations of interest received from Members.

2 LGA COMMUNICATIONS PEER REVIEW FEEDBACK

The Committee considered a report, which recalled the timeline around the scrutiny of the Council's media and communications to date following its selection for review by the then Committee at its meeting held on 16 March 2015.

It was noted that, subsequent to this, a scoping document had been prepared and considered by the then Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 19 October 2015 then, at a further meeting of the then Committee held on 16 November 2015, Members received a presentation, following which it was agreed that the Local Government Association (LGA) be approached to carry out an independent peer review of the Council's Communications. Members had agreed that their review be kept on hold pending the outcome of the peer review.

The Committee welcomed to the meeting, Mr David Holdstock, Director of Communications at the LGA, who delivered the findings of the peer review. In his presentation, Mr Holdstock addressed:

- The make-up of the Peer Team
- Introduction
 - Part of bespoke sector led improvement
 - "Critical friend" support and challenge
 - Acknowledgement of support received by those who took part in the review
 - Acknowledgement of the openness and honesty of those who took part in the review

- Review Team's feedback was based upon what it had heard, seen and read
- An opportunity to discuss the Review Team's findings and consider the next steps and any other further support required
- The agreed focus of the Review
 - Structure, Capacity and Capability
 - Internal Communications
 - Place Branding
- Why are good communications important?
- Achieving good communications
- Context
- Corporate Communications
- Place Branding – Strengths
- Place Branding – Issues
- Internal Communications – Strengths
- Internal Communications – Issues
- Structure, Capacity and Capability – Strengths
- Structure, Capacity and Capability – Issues
- Key issues to address
- Strategic Recommendations
- Further Recommendations
- Operational Recommendations

Responses were given to a number of issues and questions raised by Members, which included:

- The Council's good reputation of producing standard news releases
- Making better use of resident insight to inform communications activity (operational recommendation 6)
- Do residents' surveys collect the right information
- Was the regeneration of the Town Centre being dealt with in a more sensible way?
- Establishment of residents' meetings and neighbourhood engagement
- Encouraging younger people to respond
- Improving website search options
- Inclusion of Members and external contributors on editorial boards
- Involving all Members in communications
- Lack of local daily newspaper provision
- Inviting the Youth Parliament to own a strand of the place brand and to promote this amongst the Town's young people
- What do other organisations do in terms of communications and could the

Council learn from these?

In order to fully consider the recommendations put forward by the Peer Team, as detailed in the presentation and which is attached as an appendix to these minutes, the Committee agreed that Members be given time to assess the outcomes of the Review and the recommendations put forward for further consideration at a future meeting of the Committee.

Accordingly, it was **RESOLVED** that, in addition to those recommendations put forward by the Peer Team:

1. That the Council explores how best to better engage residents in developing its communications;
2. That the Stevenage Youth Council be invited to own a strand of the place brand and to promote this amongst the Town's young people; and
3. That the matter be brought back before the Committee at its meeting to be held on Thursday 8 March 2018.

3 **POLICY DEVELOPMENT ITEM - ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

The Committee considered the Council's Draft Asset Management Strategy 2018 to 2023 and welcomed to the meeting, Councillor Mrs Joan Lloyd, Executive Member for Resources, who introduced the item and provided the background to the Draft Strategy.

Members confirmed with the Executive Member for Resources and the Council's Property Development Manager that the Draft Strategy was a positive step forward to meet the challenges of the Council's Asset Management Portfolio, taking it into the next decade, and would be keen to be kept involved in the decision-making process regarding the changes to the governance arrangements described in the Strategy and with the development of its related plans.

Accordingly, it was **RESOLVED** that the Draft Asset Management Strategy 2018 to 2023, be noted.

4 **URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

None.

5 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

RESOLVED:

1. That, under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in Paragraphs 1 to 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006; and
2. That, Members consider the reasons for the following report being in Part II and determine whether or not maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein, outweighed the public interest in disclosure.

6 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Agenda Item:

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES

3C

Date: Monday, 19 February 2018

Time: 6.00 pm

Place: Shimkent Room - Daneshill House, Danestrete

Present: Councillors: Lin Martin-Haugh (Chair) (Chair), Jim Brown, Michael Downing, Alex Farquharson, Michelle Gardner, Carol Latif, John Lloyd, Sarah Mead, Adam Mitchell CC and Robin Parker CC

Start / End Time: Start Time: 6.00 p.m.
End Time: 7.20 p.m.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Liz Harrington. There were no declarations of interest received from Members.

2 MINUTES - 24 JANUARY 2018

The minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, held on 24 January 2018, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

NOTE: The version which had been published did not contain details of those Members who had attended, nor did they reflect the start and finish time of the meeting. A revised version, showing all of these details had been produced, published and made available at the meeting for Members.

3 PART 1 DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

This report had not been circulated to Members five clear days before the meeting nor had it been made available for public inspection. The Chair determined, however, that, given the short time left before the end of the call-in period on 22 February 2018, it could be considered on this occasion.

(i) Healthy Stevenage Strategy

The Council's Assistant Director (RG) introduced the report, which outlined the development of the Healthy Stevenage Strategy, the rationale that underpinned it and provided a summary of strategic outcomes. The report also highlighted and considered the wider implications.

The proposed priorities within, and the rationale for the Strategy, were considered by the Council's Community Select Committee on 31 January 2018, at which, there had been clear support for the Council's leadership in this area, with strong recognition that the involvement of health organisations such as the

Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) would be key to delivering a genuinely strategic approach for Stevenage. The Select Committee also discussed the importance of developing the right approach to working with communities and the impact of schemes such as tea dances and social and community-based activities, which were not necessarily branded as “health promotion activities” but were clearly beneficial to health and well-being.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part 1 Decisions taken by the Executive at its meeting on 14 February 2018 be noted.

(ii) Budget and Policy Framework Item – Final General Fund and Council Tax-Setting 2018/2019

The Council’s Assistant Director (CF) introduced the report, which considered the Council’s Final General Fund Budget for 2018/2019 and projected 2017/2018 General Fund Budget and final proposals for the 2018/2019 Council Tax. She referred Members to the draft report, which the Committee had considered in January 2018, and said that this was now the final version of the report, which would be presented to Council at its meeting to be held on 28 February 2018. The Assistant Director (CF) corrected a typographical error at Recommendation 2.9 to the report to the effect that the figure quoted for Growth Options was £470,371 and not “£430,371” as listed in the report. In conclusion, she said that the Executive had recorded its disappointment in having not been included within the Business Rates Pilot, where those included, kept all gains received from business rates.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part 1 Decisions taken by the Executive at its meeting on 14 February 2018 be noted.

(iii) Budget and Policy Framework Item – General Fund Draft Asset Management Strategy and Action Plan

The Council’s Assistant Director (CF) introduced the report, which sought approval to the new draft General Fund Asset Management Strategy and Action Plan. She drew Members’ attention to a third recommendation agreed by the Executive that, the Asset Management Strategy adopts a cooperative approach to engagement with communities, in particular through reviews of assets in different localities.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part 1 Decisions taken by the Executive at its meeting on 14 February 2018 be noted.

(iv) Budget and Policy Framework Item – Final Capital Strategy 2017/18 to 2022/23

The Council’s Assistant Director (CF) introduced the report, which sought approval to revisions to the 2017/18 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme and approve the draft Capital Programme for 2018/19 for recommendation to Council. The report also set out the Council’s approach to funding its key Future Council priorities and updated Members on (i) the Council’s draft five-year Capital Strategy and the resources available to

fund the Capital Strategy; (ii) the recent government consultation on prudential borrowing and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP); and (iii) the work of the Leader's Financial Security Group (LFSG) in reviewing all General Fund capital bids prior to inclusion in the Capital Strategy.

She referred Members to the draft report, which the Committee had considered in January 2018, and said that this was now the final version of the report, which would be presented to Council at its meeting to be held on 28 February 2018.

She drew Members' attention to an 11th recommendation agreed by the Executive that, in 2018/19, SBC capital reserves be used to fund £200,000 of the Regeneration Capital Bid assumed from GD3 monies, to allow the SG1 Regeneration Scheme to progress. This was required because the Government had not signed-off governance, which would allow the release of GD3 monies.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part 1 Decisions taken by the Executive at its meeting on 14 February 2018 be noted.

(v) Budget and Policy Framework Item – Annual Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators 2018/19

The Council's Assistant Director (CF) introduced the report, which recommended to Council the approval of the Treasury Management Strategy 2018/19, including its Annual Investment Strategy and the prudential indicators following considerations from the Audit Committee and the Executive. She said the report had been updated and the use of balances had been discussed by the Audit Committee. She said that this was a planned use of the Council's balances in line with its strategies.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part 1 Decisions taken by the Executive at its meeting on 14 February 2018 be noted.

(vi) URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS – Town Centre Regeneration (SG1)

The Council's Strategic Director (TP) reaffirmed the Chief Executive's update given at the Executive on the progress of the decision taken at the last meeting regarding the appointment of the preferred developer for the SG1 Scheme. The developer chosen was preparing a formal launch of the plans on 27 February and the Council was producing a dedicated edition of Chronicle.

Strategic Director (TP) made reference to a national press release issued earlier in the day (Monday 19 February 2018), which confirmed that the appointed development partner was Mace, the international development and construction company behind some of the world's landmark developments would be undertaking the first phase of regeneration, called SG1. This ambitious scheme would bring £350million of private investment into the town centre and would see the area covering the Council's offices here at Daneshill House, the Plaza, bus station and some of the adjacent car parks redeveloped with new shops, bars and restaurants, homes, new public spaces, and a central public sector hub accommodating the Council's offices, a library,

exhibition space, and health services.

Over coming days and weeks, more details of the scheme and the timeline would be shared. The Council was also talking to local businesses and organisations, who are enthusiastic and supportive of the plans, as well as with the media. The Council is hopeful that, following the planning process, construction work will start during next year, and it will then take several years to complete.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part 1 Decisions taken by the Executive at its meeting on 14 February 2018 be noted.

4 **URGENT PART 1 DECISIONS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

None.

5 **URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

None.

6 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1-7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by SI 2006 No. 88.
2. That having considered the reasons for the following item being in Part II it be determined that maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

7 **PART II DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE (IF ANY)**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II section of the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 23 January 2018 be noted.

8 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR

Meeting: **EXECUTIVE**

Portfolio Area: Housing, Health & Older people



Date: **13 MARCH 2018**

HERTFORDSHIRE HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY (HHIA)

KEY DECISION

Author:	Zayd Al-Jawad	Ext. No. 2257
Lead Officer:	Zayd Al-Jawad	Ext. No. 2257
Contact Officer:	Zayd Al-Jawad	Ext. No. 2257

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider whether to join the Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency (HHIA).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Stevenage Borough Council joins the Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency in April 2018.
- 2.2 That SBC delegates to Hertfordshire County Council its functions under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and any other functions relating to the delivery of the services provided by the Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency.
- 2.3 That the Strategic Director (MP) be authorised to execute all documents required for the Council to join the Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency.
- 2.4 That the Assistant Director (Planning & Regulation) be nominated, and in his absence his nominated deputy, as the Council's representative on the Board of the Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency with authority to take appropriate decisions on behalf of the Council
- 2.5 That SBC reviews the performance of the HHIA 12 months post joining to determine whether the Council should remain a member authority and consider the potential for the Repairs & Voids team to bid for HHIA.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 18 October 2016, the Council's Executive agreed that:

- Stevenage Borough Council join the shared home improvement agency, in principle, in April 2018
 - A further report be brought back to the Executive with detailed proposals
- 3.2 The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 requires Local Housing Authorities (LHAs) to provide financial assistance to people with disabilities who require adaptations to their home to enable them to live independently. This assistance is provided by way of a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG).
- 3.3 Delivery of the grant in Stevenage has not changed since the Act came into force. Upon receipt of a request from a resident, the County Council's occupational therapist carries out an assessment and recommends the adaptations that the client requires. The housing authority receives the referral, undertakes a means test to determine whether the client is required to make a contribution, approves the grant and makes payment on satisfactory completion of the works. Currently, only around 40% of enquiries progress to approval of a Disabled Facilities Grant.
- 3.4 In 2013, capital grant contribution from central Government became part of the Better Care Fund, a pooled funding stream that supports the integration of health and social care services; with the aim of improving services for residents and also to promote the more efficient use of collective State resources. In Hertfordshire, the Better Care Fund is administered by Hertfordshire County Council. The Government has significantly increased funding to LHAs, via the Better Care Fund, to support home adaptations and other services to support independent living.
- 3.5 In 2014, the Care Act was enacted, which sought to further change the way care and support is delivered for vulnerable people. The Act sought to radically modernise how care and support is delivered by promoting individual wellbeing, focussing on prevention and wellbeing with the aim that people should be enabled to live in their own homes as long as they are able, retaining their independence and control over their own lives as far as possible. All authorities have a duty to co-operate, for example by promoting the integration of care and support with health services, in order to improve services to residents.
- 3.6 Beyond the introduction of the Care Act's duty to cooperate, there are a number of significant drivers for the fundamental reform of LHA home adaptations services in Hertfordshire, outlined as follows:
- 3.6.1 The County has an ageing population; residents have an overwhelming wish to live as independently as possible in their own homes. Their support needs are multi-faceted and are not necessarily reliant on financial support – many just want guidance on how best they can maintain their independence in their own particular circumstances.
- 3.6.2 Demand for DFGs in Stevenage is reliant on the number of referrals received from the County Council. Whilst this has remained fairly constant, Government funding, through the Better Care fund has increased significantly (from £305,000 in 2015/16 to £634,000 in 2017/18). Without the ability to influence demand and, therefore expenditure, it has not been possible to fully utilise this funding. Indeed, in December 2017, the DCLG offered additional funding of £65,000 which SBC was unable to accept.

- 3.6.3 From the applicant's point of view, the DFG process is complex and this, together with the current two-tier working arrangements, with multiple points of access and professional involvement, inevitably leads to confusion, inconsistency and delays. By integration, the services can become more efficient in two ways:
- the processing of applications can become more streamlined, involving only one agency, thereby reducing costs and the likelihood of error or inconsistency, and
 - communication regarding the existence of DFGs (and allied services such as housing advice) can be improved - this will expedite the provision of services to those in need and help overcome the current need for them to navigate complex administrative systems.
- 3.6.4 Feedback indicates that customers find poor communication between parts of the service (even where individual professionals are seen as being helpful), a lack of understanding of the whole household's needs, unreasonable delays, and an adversarial approach to agreeing what is able to be done. They also feel that they are not sufficiently advised of what they are eligible for, there is a lack of choice and involvement during the process, and that the application process itself is not clear. The new service has been designed to establish a new way of working, designed to address these concerns. Evidence from other areas of the country, which have adopted an integrated approach, report considerable improvement in customer feedback.
- 3.6.5 Many LHAs have found it difficult to provide DFGs services consistently as their scale of operation make them vulnerable to staff absences and dependent on niche skill sets. A combined service is more resilient to these challenges and would provide an opportunity for career progression, informed staff succession management, skill refinement, and dependable workflow management. This is particularly important in the light of the significant increases in capital investment signalled by the Government and demographic pressures in Hertfordshire.
- 3.6.6 There is a growing evidence base that confirms the value of DFGs, in reducing the incidence of hospital admissions and, where they have been provided, in the sustainability of patient discharge. A county-wide integrated service that provides timely and targeted support to residents so that they can stay safely in their homes is therefore an investment opportunity for the Clinical Commissioning Groups operating in Hertfordshire. The previous arrangement of 11 providers with different service standards is less likely to attract such investment.
- 3.6.7 The role of housing in the promotion of health and wellbeing has not always been well recognised either nationally or locally. Collaboration, through a shared H.I.A., could go some way to rebalance this, illustrating that public health and the wellbeing of Hertfordshire residents is not the exclusive function of the NHS or Hertfordshire County Council, but also a collective ambition of Hertfordshire District and Borough councils too.

Development of the Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency

- 3.7 In response to the changing legislative and financial climate and to address service delivery issues across the County, a partnership review was undertaken between the District and Borough Councils and the County Council. The review looked at the current delivery of services across all authorities, considered examples of alternative delivery models in other parts of the country and the future needs of residents across the County.

- 3.8 The outcome of the review was the proposal for a shared home improvement agency service. The vision for the proposal was to establish a cost effective service that would not only deliver statutory services such as disabled facilities grants, but would also be able to provide a service to those who are not, currently, eligible for grant assistance. The service also aims to promote independent living more generally by offering residents housing related services, such as a handyperson service and home improvements.
- 3.9 The proposal was for a shared service rather than an outsourced service, hosted by the County Council. Case officers would act as a single point of contact for the client with other professionals such as the occupational therapists and technical staff drawn in as required. This will reduce stress and multiple handoffs, where mistakes and misunderstandings can occur. Having occupational therapists and technical staff in the same team will significantly shorten the process of commissioning adaptation works compared to the current arrangements.
- 3.10 Four Authorities (Broxbourne, East Herts, North Herts and Watford), together with the County Council, agreed to establish and participate in a shared service for the purposes of providing home adaptations and associated services, including the discharge of duties relating to the provision and administration of Disabled Facilities Grants under the 1996 Act, the Care Act 2014 and the Better Care Fund. The service, known as the Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency, went live in October 2017.
- 3.11 The Partnership Agreement (Appendix 1) details the arrangements for the discharge of functions, duration of agreement etc. Strategic direction and governance of the H.I.A. will be undertaken by a group (the H.I.A. Board) made up of a nominated representative from each authority. The Assistant Director (Planning & Regulation) will represent Stevenage Borough Council on the Board.
- 3.12 Appendices 2 – 7 detail the operational arrangements, including structure, policy and process maps.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

- 4.1 The H.I.A. provides the following advantages and opportunities over the current delivery mechanism:
- 4.1.1 **A better service for the client by:**
- Making the service available to all, not just those eligible for a Disabled Facilities Grant (the client would pay a fee for the service)
 - Offer much greater assistance throughout the complex DFG application process e.g. with:
 - Completion of application forms
 - Obtaining estimates on behalf of clients
 - Supervision of work
 - Dispute resolution
 - Offering a single point of contact (clients will no longer be passed from County to District or vice versa)

- 4.1.2 **Improved publicity and communication** with the public leading to greater awareness of the availability of DFGs and enhanced take-up of funding
- 4.1.3 **Procurement opportunities** – the H.I.A. intends to have a contractor framework in place by 1st April for the most common adaptations (stairlifts, level access and over bath showers, modular ramping and door widening). This is expected to bring about a saving as well as speeding up the process.
- 4.1.4 **Greater resilience** in the workforce across the five authorities.
- 4.1.5 **The ability to charge fee income** which will, in part, cover the cost of the service. It is important to note that the fee charged to the client is eligible for grant assistance.
- 4.1.6 **Improved service and links with RSLs.** Currently a number of RSLs have substantial delays in delivering adaptations and it is envisaged that the agency will be able to deliver some adaptations on behalf of RSLs
- 4.1.7 **Improved integration with the occupational therapists.** The H.I.A. is already able to provide a 'one stop shop,' through its trusted assessors for stairlifts, overbath showers and level access showers where there is no ongoing medical or social care need. This takes the client through the whole process from initial assessment through the design, grant application and contractor procurement to delivery of the adaptation. This helps to eliminate delays and bottlenecks experienced by clients with the two-tier County/District approach. The H.I.A. is co-located with the occupational therapists thereby allowing for the development of close working relationships, again helping to reduce delays. Going forward, it is the intention that the occupational therapists will be incorporated into the H.I.A. itself.
- 4.1.8 Whilst the initial focus of the H.I.A. is on the efficient delivery of DFGs, it is intended that, as it develops, the scope of the service will be expanded to include, for example, some or all of the following:
- A handyperson scheme
 - Fast-tracked services for specific groups or those with specific conditions
 - An agency service for home owners undertaking improvement works
 - Access to subsidised assistive technology e.g. Telecare
- 4.2 Due to the caveat given by districts that the shared service would only be a feasible option if costs were maintained at current levels, it is necessary to charge an agency fee to clients. The fee, which has been set, initially, at 15%, is eligible for grant assistance. Applicants for DFGs are, however, free to use their own agent or apply direct to the H.I.A. themselves.
- 4.3 The Council would need to continue to include an annual capital contribution of £350,000 in the capital programme for provision of disabled facilities grants to residents in the district. The Council will continue to deal with house renovation grants although there may be an opportunity to deliver them through the Agency in the future.
- 4.4 It is also believed that the proposed service has the potential to generate income by offering other housing services, for example to people wanting adaptations who do not qualify for a disabled facilities grant, because of the expertise that the service will have in this area. It is intended that the service will contribute to other health and

social care integration projects, perhaps by being able to arrange certain adaptations that improve hospital discharges, thus reducing costs in other areas.

- 4.5 Although still in its infancy, the H.I.A. has been operational for over 4 months and is already starting to deliver on its objectives.
- 4.6 To avoid any delay and/or confusion to current clients, officers would, if a decision is taken to join the H.I.A., continue to process existing enquiries and applications to completion of works. These works would be funded from existing, unallocated, grant funding.

4. Other Options

- 4.7.1 The Council could continue to deliver DFGs through existing arrangements. The current service works well and continuing to provide the service in-house would retain control over delivery and quality of service. However, residents would not benefit from the quicker and more efficient service that the Agency is expected to provide. Furthermore, the opportunity to improve resilience, reduce costs and provide additional services would also be lost.
- 4.7.2 The decision on joining could be deferred for a further period of time to allow the H.I.A. to continue to develop. This would enable the new arrangements to settle and ensure that the expected beneficial outcomes are being delivered. This would, however, mean that SBC would lose the opportunity to shape the agency as it develops and would result in additional costs to the Council should it decide to join in the future.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

- 5.1.1 The business case assumes that the Council will continue to pay an annual contribution of £350,000 per year for Disabled Aids and Adaptations which is the budget included within the Capital Strategy. However, DFG grant is ring fenced for that purpose and the Council could make a contribution up to the amount of grant funding available.
- 5.1.2 In addition the business case assumes that the Council will make a revenue contribution no more than the current cashable revenue costs spent on providing the service in-house, including 0.8FTE of a staff post. These costs total £39,250, however there is budgeted, within the establishment, vacancies equivalent to 0.8 FTE and, therefore, there will be no staff TUPE required.
- 5.1.3 The business case is cost neutral to the Council but does require clients to be charged an admin fee of 15% of the cost of the works. This fee is eligible for grant assistance.
- 5.1.4 For applications already received before April 2018, SBC will continue with these applications using previous years underspent funding.

5.2 Legal Implications

- 5.2.1 The Council has statutory functions under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 ("the 1996 Act") to provide financial assistance by

way of Disabled Facilities Grants to people with disabilities who require adaptations to their home to enable them to live independently.

5.2.2 Under the Partnership Agreement establishing the Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency, Hertfordshire County Council is responsible for the delivery of the Shared Service. This requires it to exercise the functions under the 1996 Act and any other functions relating to the delivery of the services provided by the Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency.

5.2.3 In order for Hertfordshire County Council to exercise these functions on behalf of the Council, and for the Council to become a Partner in the Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency, the Council must delegate the functions referred to in 5.2.2 to Hertfordshire County Council. It is permitted to do so under the Local Government 2000 and the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions)(England) Regulations 2012.

5.3 Equalities and Diversity Implications

5.3.1 The proposed Home Improvement Agency will provide an improved service to vulnerable and elderly residents.

5.3 Staffing Implications

5.3.1 Disabled Facilities Grants are currently administered by the Environmental Health Unit's Residential Team. As DFGs do not form a significant part of any individual officer's role, there are no TUPE implications from the proposal.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

BD1 - Housing Grants, Construction & Regeneration Act 1996

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/53/contents>

BD2 - The Care Act 2014

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted>

BD3 - Integration & Better Care Fund Policy Framework 2017-19 (DoH, DCLG)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/integration-and-better-care-fund-policy-framework-2017-to-2019>

APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Partnership agreement
Appendix 2	Policy
Appendix 3	HHIA Budget -
Appendix 4	Current HHIA Board Members
Appendix 5	Current (interim) structure chart
Appendix 6	Process maps
Appendix 7	Key Performance Indicators

Dated

2017

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

between

Broxbourne Borough Council

East Hertfordshire District Council

Hertfordshire County Council

North Hertfordshire District Council

Watford Borough Council

for a

**Shared Service to be known as the Hertfordshire Home
Improvement Agency**

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Schedules

Schedule 1 – Shared Service

Schedule 2 – Functions Requirements

Schedule 3 – HHIA Board

Schedule 4 – Business Case

Schedule 5 – Data Sharing Agreement (to be agreed)

THIS AGREEMENT is made on the 2017

BETWEEN:

(1) **BROXBOURNE BOROUGH COUNCIL** of Bishops College, Churchgate, Cheshunt EN8 9XG;

(2) **EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL** of Wallfields, Pegs Lane, Hertford SG13 8EQ;

(3) **HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL** of County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford SG13 8DQ ("HCC");

(4) **NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL** of Council Offices, Gernon Rd, Letchworth Garden City SG6 3JF;

and

(5) **WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL** of Town Hall, Hempstead Rd, Watford WD17 3EX.

WHEREAS:

- (i) The parties to this Agreement ("the Original Partner Authorities") have agreed to establish and participate in a Shared Service for the purposes of providing home adaptations and associated services, including the discharge of duties relating to the provision and administration of Disabled Facilities Grants under the 1996 Act, the Care Act 2014, and the Better Care Fund requirements to disabled and vulnerable people residing within the districts of East Hertfordshire and North Hertfordshire, and the boroughs of Broxbourne and Watford;
- (ii) It has been agreed by the Original Partner Authorities that the Shared Service should be known as the Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency ("the HHIA") and be provided by HCC in accordance with the terms of this Agreement and, in the case of any functions which HCC would not otherwise have the statutory power to exercise, in accordance with arrangements made by each of the District Partner Authorities with HCC under the provisions of the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012;
- (iii) It has also been agreed and acknowledged by the Original Partner Authorities that the HHIA shall be delivered on a not for profit basis;
- (iv) It is acknowledged and agreed that the Original Partner Authorities will wish to keep this Agreement under review and in the future may wish to develop the Service further or make changes to the way the HHIA is operated and/or governed;

- (v) The HHIA is established under this Agreement for the purpose of creating a streamlined and efficient service across the areas of the District Partner Authorities for the benefit of users of the Service;
- (vi) Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed as creating a legal partnership within the meaning of the Partnership Act 1890 or otherwise between HCC and the District Partner Authorities or any of them or between the individual District Partner Authorities; and
- (vii) It is agreed that the Original Partners Authorities shall work individually and collectively in the spirit of partnership, trust and fairness to establish and operate the HHIA.

IT IS HEREBY AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

1. Definitions and Interpretation

- 1.1. In this Agreement where the context so permits the following words and phrases shall have the following meanings:

1996 Act	shall mean the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996;
Absent Partner Authority	shall have the meaning given to it in Clause 7.10.2;
Activity Statement	shall mean the statement under Clause 10.7;
Agreement	shall mean this agreement between the Original Partner Authorities entered into on the date given above;
Basic Disclosure	means a Basic Disclosure check carried out through DBS or Disclosure Scotland, which is required where a service is engaged in a position of trust but is not eligible for a Standard Disclosure check, Enhanced with Barred List Check or Enhanced without Barred List Check;
Better Care Fund	means the national programme aimed at transforming the integration of health and social care using a local single pooled budget to incentivise local government partners and the NHS to work more closely together;
Budget	shall mean the estimated costs and income in delivering the HHIA for the next Financial Year and shall include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) any sums payable in accordance with clause 10 in respect of the last complete Financial Year; (b) any surplus or deficit shown in the most recent Statement of Account approved by the HHIA Board; (c) any estimated surplus or deficit in respect of any period subsequent to the most recent Statement of Account approved by

	the HHIA Board;
Business Case	shall mean the final business case attached in Schedule 4;
Cabinet Office Statement of Practice	means the 'Cabinet Office Staff Transfers in the Public Sector Statement of Practice – January 2000 (Revised 2013)';
Charges	means the charges which shall become due and payable by a District Partner Authority to HCC in respect of the Shared Service in accordance with the provisions of this Agreement or as otherwise agreed between the District Partner Authorities and HCC;
Chief Finance Officer	shall mean the officer who has been appointed by each of the Partner Authorities to act as their designated officer under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972;
Commencement Date	shall be the date first appearing on this Agreement;
Criminal Records Checks	means one of the following checks carried out (as appropriate) through the DBS or Disclosure Scotland, namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Enhanced Disclosure with a Barred List Check; (b) Enhanced Disclosure without a Barred List Check; (c) Standard Disclosure; and (d) Basic Disclosure;
Data Protection Legislation	shall mean the Data Protection Act 1998, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679) and all applicable laws and regulations relating to the processing of personal data and privacy, including where applicable the guidance and codes of practice issued by the Information Commissioner;
DBS	shall mean the Disclosure and Barring Service set up under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012;
DFG	shall mean Disability Facilities Grant, being monies awarded through the 1996 Act to an eligible individual to assist them in making required adaptations to their home in order to allow them access to, and use of, the facilities in their home as they are intended to be used and includes both Mandatory DFG and Discretionary DFG;
Disclosure Scotland	shall mean the executive agency of the Scottish Government set up under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 (an Act of the Scottish Parliament).
Discretionary DFG	shall mean a payment other than Mandatory DFG which is made on an application for assistance under the 1996 Act in the exercise of a discretion to award alternative or additional funding;
Dispute Resolution Procedure	shall mean the procedure as set out in clause 19;

Appendix 1

District Partner Authority	shall mean a Partner Authority other than HCC;
EIR	shall mean the Environment Information Regulations 2004 (as amended or modified from time to time);
Enhanced Disclosure With Barred List Check	means a type of Criminal Records Check, which includes a check of the DBS barred list and any additional information held by the police that is reasonably considered relevant to the role being applied for and includes roles that do not work with children or vulnerable adults specifically but potentially both and should be used for jobs that involve caring for, supervising or being in sole charge of children and/or vulnerable adults;
Enhanced Disclosure without Barred List Check	means a type of Criminal Records Check, which includes an enhanced disclosure check without a barred list check that is required where a Provider is engaged in a role that meets the previous definition of Regulated Activity as defined by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975, and in Police Act Regulations;
EU Instrument	means any Regulation, Directive or binding provision of the EU which applies to the Shared Service or to any provision of this Agreement including any provision that is directly applicable without the necessity for United Kingdom legislation;
Exempt Information	shall mean information which is exempt information by virtue of any provision of Part II of FOIA;
Fee Levels	shall mean percentage of costs of works at which the agency fee will be set;
Financial Year	shall begin on 1 st April in any year and end on the following 31 st March;
FOIA	shall mean the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as amended;
Force Majeure Event	means any circumstance not within HHIA's or a Partner Authority's reasonable control including, without limitation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) acts of God, flood, drought, earthquake or other natural disaster; (b) epidemic or pandemic; (c) terrorist attack, civil war, civil commotion or riots, war, threat of or preparation for war, armed conflict, imposition of sanctions, embargo, or breaking off of diplomatic relations; (d) nuclear, chemical or biological contamination or sonic boom; (e) any change in law or other action taken by government or a public authority (other than a Partner Authority) which impacts

	<p>upon the HHIA or Partnership or the performance of the Shared Service;</p> <p>(f) collapse of buildings, fire, explosion or accident;</p> <p>(g) any labour or trade dispute, strikes, industrial action or lockouts;</p> <p>(h) non-performance by suppliers or sub-contractors; and</p> <p>(i) interruption or failure of utility service.</p>
Functions Regulations	shall mean the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions)(England) Regulations 2012 made under Sections 9EA, 9EB and 105 of the Local Government Act 2000;
Functions Requirements	shall mean the Requirements relating to arrangements under the Functions Regulations for the discharge of the Relevant Functions as set out in Schedule 2;
Further Meeting	shall have the meaning given to it in clause 7.10.2;
Head of Paid Service	shall mean the person designated by each of the Partner Authorities as their Head of Paid Service under Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 howsoever that post is titled;
Head of Service	shall mean an officer appointed by HCC to be the manager of the HHIA and responsible to the HHIA Board howsoever that post is titled;
HCC	shall mean Hertfordshire County Council;
HHIA	shall mean the Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency established by and under this Agreement;
HHIA Board	shall have the meaning given to it in clause 7.1;
Initial Set Up Costs	<p>shall include:</p> <p>(a) all one-off costs, claims, liabilities, expenses and payments (including payments made to terminate a Relevant Employee's employment for a reason solely or principally connected with a Relevant Transfer that is an economic, technical or organisational reason entailing changes in the workforce) referred to in the Business Case; and</p> <p>(b) such other costs, claims, liabilities, expenses and payments which have been approved by the HHIA Board;</p> <p>which have been in either case reasonably incurred by HCC in the establishment of the HHIA;</p>
Intellectual Property Rights	shall mean any and all patents, trademarks, service marks, copyright, database rights, moral rights, rights in a design, know-how, confidential information and all or any other intellectual or industrial property rights whether or not registered or capable of registration and whether subsisting in the United Kingdom or any other part of the world together with all or any goodwill relating or

	attached to such rights;
Law	shall mean any Act of Parliament or subordinate legislation within the meaning of section 21(1) of the Interpretation Act 1978, any exercise of the Royal Prerogative, Common Law, any rule of law and any enforceable community right within the meaning of section 2 of the European Communities Act 1972, in each case in England;
Local Government Ombudsman	means a local commissioner (known as the Local Government Ombudsman) who is responsible for conducting investigations for the Commission for Local Administration in England (CLAE), which is a body of commissioners established under the Local Government Act 1974 and which, has the power to investigate complaints about councils (and certain other bodies) in England;
Mandatory DFG	shall mean a payment which is required to be made under the 1996 Act in relation to approved works where an application is correctly completed and submitted to the relevant authority;
Monitoring Officer	shall mean the officer designated by each of the Partner Authorities to act as their Monitoring Officer under Sections 5 and 5A of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989;
New Partner Authority	shall mean a local authority which becomes or has become a party to this Agreement or any novation, variation or amendment to this Agreement after the Commencement Date;
Nominated Representative	shall have the meaning given to it in clause 7.1;
Nominated Substitute	shall have the meaning given to it in clause 7.2;
Original District Partner Authority	shall mean an Original Partner Authority other than HCC;
Original Meeting	shall have the meaning given to it in clause 7.10.1;
Original Partner Authority	shall mean an Authority which is a party to this Agreement on the Commencement Date;
Operational Start Date	shall mean 1 st September 2017 or such other date which the Original Partner Authorities may agree and the Original Partner Authorities may agree that there be a different Operational Start Date for any particular Original Partner Authority;
Partner Authority	means an Original Partner Authority and any New Partner Authority;
Partnership	shall mean the arrangements for the Shared Service as set out in and under this Agreement;
Personal Data	shall have the meaning given to it in section 1 of the Data Protection Act 1998;
Proposal	shall have the meaning given to it in clause 7.10.1;
Relevant Employee	shall mean an employee that is the subject of a Relevant Transfer;
Relevant Functions	shall mean: (1) the functions of the District Partner Authorities under the 1996 Act; and

	(2) any other functions relating to the delivery of the Shared Service which HCC would not have the power to exercise unless arrangements were made under the Functions Regulations for their exercise by HCC;
Relevant Transfer	shall mean a relevant transfer for the purposes of TUPE;
Represented Partner Authorities	shall have the meaning given to it in clause 7.10.1;
Request for Information	shall have the meaning set out in FOIA or, as the case may be, EIR;
Reserved Matters	shall mean all of those matters listed as reserved matters in Schedule 3;
Schedule	shall mean a schedule to this Agreement;
Scheduled Meetings	shall have the meaning given to it in clause 7.6;
Scrutiny	shall mean the function of overview and scrutiny made in accordance with section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000;
Service Plan	shall mean a plan which sets out the costs and income of the HHIA along with the objectives for delivery of the Shared Service;
Shared Service	shall mean the services provided by the HHIA as set out in clause 8 and Schedule 1 to this Agreement;
Standard Disclosure	means a type of Criminal Records Check for spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings, which is required where the role is included in the list of eligible roles detailed in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 and the role does not required an Enhanced Disclosure Check;
Statement of Account	shall mean the income and expenditure statement for the HHIA to be presented to the HHIA Board in accordance with clause 10.5;
TUPE	shall mean the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 and/or any other regulations enacted for the purpose of implementing the EC Acquired Rights Directive 77/187 as amended or any replacement or amendment thereof;
VAT	shall mean value added tax charged under the Value Added Tax Act 1994 or any similar tax from time to time replacing it or performing a similar fiscal function;
Withdrawing Partner Authority	shall have the meaning given to it in clause 16;
Working Day	Monday to Friday excluding public and bank holidays in England; and
Year One	means the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018, being the first Financial Year.

1.2 References to any statute or statutory provision (including any EU Instrument) shall, unless the context otherwise requires, be construed as

including references to any earlier statute or the corresponding provisions of any earlier statute, whether repealed or not, directly or indirectly amended, consolidated, extended or replaced by such statute or provision, or re-enacted in any such statute or provision, and to any subsequent statute or the corresponding provisions of any subsequent statute directly or indirectly amending, consolidating, extending, replacing or re-enacting the same, and will include any orders, regulations, instruments or other subordinate legislation made under the relevant statute or statutory provision.

- 1.3 The headings are inserted for convenience only and shall not affect the construction of this Agreement.
- 1.4 Words importing the masculine gender include the feminine gender and vice versa and words importing the singular shall include the plural and vice versa, unless, in either case, the context otherwise requires.
- 1.5 A reference in this Agreement to any clause, paragraph or Schedule is, except where it is expressly stated to the contrary, a reference to a clause or paragraph of or Schedule to this Agreement.
- 1.6 Any reference to this Agreement or to any other document unless otherwise specified shall include any variation, amendment or supplements to such document expressly permitted by this Agreement or otherwise agreed in writing between the Partner Authorities.
- 1.7 Words preceding "include", "includes", "including" and "included" shall be construed without limitation by the words which follow those words unless inconsistent with the context, and the rule of interpretation known as ejusdem generis shall not apply.
- 1.8 The Schedules form part of this Agreement and will have the same force and effect as if expressly set out in the body of this Agreement and any reference to this Agreement shall include the Schedules.

2. Collaboration

- 2.1 With effect from the Commencement Date the Original Partner Authorities shall collaborate in the establishment and subsequent operation of the HHIA and the HHIA Board.
- 2.2 From the Operational Start Date HCC shall provide the Shared Service through the HHIA in accordance with the provisions of this Agreement.
- 2.3 Nothing in this Agreement shall have the effect of requiring any Partner Authority to act in breach of their statutory functions or duties.

3. Statutory Powers and Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions

- 3.1 Each Original District Partner Authority, being a local authority operating executive arrangements within the meaning of Part 1A of the Local Government Act 2000, and HCC agree that HCC shall exercise the Relevant Functions in order to deliver the Shared Service.
- 3.2 Each Original District Partner Authority shall, before the Operational Start Date in relation to that Original District Partner Authority, comply with its responsibility under the Functions Requirements set out in Part 1 of Schedule 2.
- 3.3 HCC shall, before the Operational Start Date, comply with its responsibility under the Functions Requirements set out in Part 2 of Schedule 2.

4. Commencement and Duration

- 4.1 This Agreement shall come into force on the Commencement Date and the Shared Service shall be delivered from the Operational Start Date and continue unless otherwise terminated in accordance with clause 17.

5. Initial Set Up Costs

- 5.1 Initial Set Up Costs will be split between the Original Partner Authorities in an equal share proportion.
- 5.2 Each District Partner Authority shall in equal proportion reimburse HCC for its share of the Initial Set Up Costs in accordance with clause 5.1 above as and when they arise during the course of the Agreement.
- 5.3 The Initial Set Up Costs shall include but not be limited to the types of expenditure listed in the Business Case.
- 5.4 In the absence of any other agreement between the Partner Authorities in respect of specified Initial Set Up Costs on a particular occasion, HCC shall claim any Initial Set Up Costs by invoicing the Partners.
- 5.5 If a District Partner Authority wishes to dispute any Initial Set Up Costs claimed by HCC, it shall adhere to the procedure set out in clause 19.

6. New Partner Authorities

- 6.1 Any local authority may join the Partnership as a New Partner Authority subject to:
 - 6.1.1 the written agreement of all of the Partner Authorities;
 - 6.1.2 the prospective New Partner Authority executing and entering into a Data Sharing Agreement with HCC in line with the pro forma set out in Schedule 5;

- 6.1.3 the prospective New Partner Authority complying with its responsibility under the Functions Requirements set out in Part 3 of Schedule 2;
 - 6.1.4 the prospective New Partner Authority being responsible for any redundancy costs it incurs or HCC or the HHIA incurs as a result of that prospective New Partner Authority joining the Partnership;
 - 6.1.5 the prospective New Partner Authority entering into an agreement which shall oblige them to comply with the terms of this Agreement; and
 - 6.1.6 the prospective New Partner Authority paying to HCC the aggregate of:
 - (a) the marginal costs identified by the Partner Authorities as being incurred by the Partnership as a result of the New Partner Authority joining; and
 - (b) any additional costs agreed by the HHIA Board at the time.
 - 6.2 The date of commencement of membership of the Partnership for the New Partner Authority shall be the date on which the Partner Authorities agree that all of the requirements set out in in a clauses 6.1.1 to 6.1.6 have been complied with.
- 7. The HHIA Board**
- 7.1 There shall be a group (to be known as “the HHIA Board”) made up of an officer nominated by each Partner Authority (“the Nominated Representative”) and each Nominated Representative shall be authorised by the Partner Authority who nominated him/her to take appropriate decisions on behalf of that Partner Authority.
 - 7.2 Each Partner Authority may, in addition to nominating a Nominated Representative under clause 7.1, nominate an officer as a substitute (“the Nominated Substitute”) to act in the absence of the Nominated Representative and, when acting in the absence of the Nominated Representative, the Nominated Substitute shall be deemed to be a member of the HHIA Board.
 - 7.3 The HHIA Board shall be responsible for the strategic direction of the HHIA.
 - 7.4 The activities of the HHIA Board shall include but shall not be limited to those listed in Schedule 3.
 - 7.5 The HHIA Board may address any poor performance of the HHIA and may serve notice of the extent of any improvement required on the Head of Service.
 - 7.6 The HHIA Board shall meet at least four times a year (“Scheduled Meetings”) and the Partner Authorities shall be given not less than fourteen

- (14) clear calendar days' written notice of each meeting. Any Partner Authority may call an additional meeting on not less than fourteen (14) clear calendar days' written notice addressed to the Head of Service and copied to each other Partner Authority.
- 7.7 The number and dates of Scheduled Meetings for each Financial Year shall be agreed at a meeting of the HHIA Board in the third quarter preceding the start of the next Financial Year.
- 7.8 The HHIA Board shall have a quorum of two thirds of its full membership and no business shall be transacted at a meeting of the HHIA Board in the absence of a quorum.
- 7.9 Subject to clause 7.10, the HHIA Board may decide matters relating to the performance, management, strategic direction or development of the HHIA by majority vote of those attending a meeting.
- 7.10 The HHIA Board shall take a decision in respect of any Reserved Matter only by unanimous vote at a meeting at which all Partner Authorities are represented provided that:
- 7.10.1 where a Partner Authority is not represented at a meeting ("the Original Meeting") at which a proposal relating to a Reserved Matter ("the Proposal") is supported by all of the Partner Authorities represented at the Original Meeting ("the Represented Partner Authorities") the Represented Partner Authorities may agree unanimously to proceed under Clause 7.10.2 below;
 - 7.10.2 the Represented Partner Authorities may unanimously resolve to serve notice on the Partner Authority not represented at the Original Meeting ("the Absent Partner Authority") that the Proposal will be considered again at a meeting of the HHIA Board to be held on a date and at a time specified in the notice ("the Further Meeting") and that, if the Absent Partner Authority is not represented at the Further Meeting, a decision on the proposal may be taken by unanimous vote of the Represented Partner Authorities;
 - 7.10.3 If the Absent Partner Authority is not represented at the Further Meeting, a decision on the proposal may be taken by unanimous vote of the Represented Partner Authorities provided that they are all represented at the Further Meeting.
- 7.11 The venue of the Scheduled Meetings shall rotate between the Partner Authorities. The Chair of the HHIA Board shall rotate annually in an order as determined by the HHIA Board.
- 7.12 The role of the Chair of the HHIA Board in relation to a Scheduled Meeting or additional meeting shall be:
- 7.12.1 to discuss the agenda with the Head of Service before the relevant meeting; and

7.12.2 to lead the discussion and manage the agenda at the meeting.

- 7.13 The Head of Service shall arrange for the giving of all notices relating to and for keeping minutes of meetings of the HHIA Board.
- 7.14 The Head of Service shall attend or be represented at all meetings of the HHIA Board and may invite other officers to attend for individual agenda items.
- 7.15 A Partner Authority may invite an observer (internal or external to their organisations) to attend a meeting of the HHIA Board subject to notifying the Head of Service and the other Partner Authorities of their intention to do so not less than seven (7) clear calendar days' in advance of the meeting and shall take into account any reasonable requests or objections.

8. The Shared Service

- 8.1 Subject to HCC recovering its costs in accordance with clauses 10 and 13, HCC shall provide the Shared Service as set out in Schedule 1.
- 8.2 Following representations, if any, from the Partner Authorities (collectively or individually) and / or the HHIA Board, each year the Head of Service shall prepare a draft rolling three (3) year Service Plan for presentation to the HHIA Board by October each year for approval.
- 8.3 The Service Plan shall include the Financial Year's commitment (which will be based on a three year expenditure and income forecast with the balance predicted on the Statement of Account).
- 8.4 Approval of the Service Plan shall be a Reserved Matter.
- 8.5 Any dispute over the draft Service Plan shall be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of clause 19.
- 8.6 The Head of Service shall provide the following reports/plans to the HHIA Board:
 - 8.6.1 a quarterly and half yearly update against the work in the Service Plan, identifying significant changes; and
 - 8.6.2 an Annual Report to the Scheduled Meeting in the summer each year on the outcomes against the Service Plan for the preceding year identifying significant changes.
- 8.7 The Shared Service shall be delivered in accordance with the following key controls:
 - 8.7.1 the Head of Service shall have direct access to each Partner Authority's officers and any information that is considered to be relevant for the delivery of the Shared Service;

- 8.7.2 the Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer of each Partner Authority shall have direct access to the Head of Service and any information held by the HHIA relating to their Partner Authority; and
- 8.7.3 compliance with any applicable regulations and codes of practice including but not limited to Better Care Fund guidance.

9. Obligations of the Partner Authorities

- 9.1 Each Partner Authority shall:
 - 9.1.1 retain and administer capital and revenue budgets in connection with the Shared Service as provided in their respective areas; and
 - 9.1.2 arrange for attendance at meetings as reasonably required.

10. Budget and Financial Arrangements

- 10.1 The DFG allocation from central government to the District Partner Authorities shall be transferred to the HHIA annually instead of being paid over to the District Partner Authorities by HCC. For Year One only, as the HHIA will only be operating fully for half of Year One, half of the allocation shall be transferred to the District Partner Authorities as normal, and the other half shall be retained within the HHIA. The District Partner Authorities hereby individually and jointly consent to HCC annually transferring their financial allocations for the DFG within the Better Care Fund award made by central government each year to the HHIA.
- 10.2 The Head of Service shall take into account the Budget for the following Financial Year when proposing the Fee Level to be presented to the HHIA Board in accordance with clause 10.3.3.
- 10.3 At the Scheduled Meeting in September of each Financial Year the Head of Service shall present for the HHIA Board's approval:
 - 10.3.1 the Budget for HHIA together with such supporting information as is considered reasonable to enable the HHIA Board to effectively analyse what is being presented;
 - 10.3.2 a three year expenditure and income forecast with the balance predicted on the Statement of Account; and
 - 10.3.3 the Fee Level that shall apply in the following Financial Year taking into account the three year financial forecast.
- 10.4 In the first year of operation, fee income generated by the HHIA will be distributed among the Partner Authorities until each Partner Authority has reached a revenue neutral position as described in the Business Case. This

entails each District Partner Authority being asked to contribute no more than their 2016/17 revenue budget for DFG. Any other surpluses will then be retained for joint investment in the service. This arrangement will be reviewed by the HHIA Board in Year One, and a decision taken on the approach going forward.

- 10.5 The Head of Service shall ensure that a Statement of Account shall be circulated to the Partner Authorities by 30 April following the end of the Financial Year to which the Statement of Account relates and the Statement of Account shall be discussed at the following Scheduled Meeting.
- 10.6 If the Statement of Account for a Financial Year shows a deficit, and financial forecasts show that this is not able to be remedied over a three year period, the District Partner Authorities shall indemnify HCC in accordance with clause 15. The HHIA Board shall have oversight and agreement of any such charges requested. Alternatively if the Statement of Account for a Financial Year is showing a surplus, a decision shall be taken at HHIA Board, which shall be a Reserved Matter, whether to reimburse the Partner Authorities or whether to invest this surplus jointly either in the Shared Service or in another project.
- 10.7 HCC shall provide a statement of activity carried out every quarter ("Activity Statement") for each District Partner Authority which shall include information to show that each District Partner Authority's allocation has been 'ring-fenced' to that District Partner Authority's residents/ geographical area.
- 10.8 Where a District Partner Authority disputes any aspect of the Activity Statement then that District Partner Authority must raise such dispute with the Head of Service as quickly as possible and that dispute shall be determined in accordance with clause 19.
- 10.9 The Charges that shall be paid by a New Partner Authority and any variation in the Fee Level that shall be paid by a New Partner Authority shall be discussed by and approved by the HHIA Board prior to membership of that New Partner Authority being accepted.
- 10.10 The HHIA will seek to spend the entire grant allocation in the Financial Year to which it relates. If any unspent grant remains at the end of the Financial Year, this should be used as soon as possible in the next Financial Year before any new Financial Year grant allocations are used.

11. Monitoring and Review

- 11.1 The Shared Service shall carry out quarterly and annual reviews of the operation of this Agreement and the provision of the Shared Service and shall promptly report the findings of these reviews to the HHIA Board.

- 11.2 The annual and quarterly reviews of the Shared Service shall include the identification of performance measures and outputs to the HHIA Board which show:
- 11.2.1 how far the aims of the Partnership are being achieved in delivering the Shared Service;
 - 11.2.2 the extent to which outputs including timescales and milestones for the Shared Service are being met; and
 - 11.2.3 the extent to which agreed outcomes for the Shared Service are being fulfilled and targets met.
- 11.3 On request by the HHIA Board (but such requests shall not be more frequent than once per year) the Head of Service shall carry out a review of how the provision of the Shared Service through this Agreement compares with other possible methods of delivery of the Shared Service, both in general and with specific regard to value for money and efficiencies.

12. Staff

- 12.1 The Partner Authorities each agree to provide human, financial and other resources as required and sufficient to deliver the Shared Service for the duration of this Agreement. HCC shall be responsible for paying the occupational therapy staffing costs.
- 12.2 The Partner Authorities acknowledge that transfers between public administrative functions are not technically covered by TUPE; however, the Cabinet Office Statement of Practice provides, in these cases, that staff should be offered terms which are no less favourable than if TUPE applied.
- 12.3 In relation to redundancy costs:
- 12.3.1 any redundancy costs incurred by a local authority joining the Partnership as a New Partner Authority shall be incurred by that local authority alone;
 - 12.3.2 if any Partner Authority withdraws from this Agreement and that withdrawal directly results in a redundancy from across the HHIA then the Withdrawing Partner Authority shall meet the costs of the redundancy; and
 - 12.3.3 in all other cases such costs shall be shared by the Partner Authorities.

13. Support Services

- 13.1 HCC shall provide support services to the HHIA on the same basis as HCC provides such support services to other in-house services. The support services provided shall include but not be limited to those set out in

Schedule 1 and be recovered by HCC via the budget and financial arrangements in clause 10.

- 13.2. Subject to clause 13.3, HCC shall treat the costs of such support as referred to in clause 13.1 as part of the costs of the Shared Service, along with the costs of appropriate IT hardware and software.
- 13.3 Each Partner Authority shall provide appropriate accommodation and facilities for the provision of occasional hot-desking to be made available for the use by the Partnership for mobile working free of charge.
- 13.4 The Head of Service shall be entitled to procure in accordance with the Budget such support services or other resources as they consider may be necessary to deliver the Service Plan, the costs of which shall be treated as costs of the Shared Service. Procurement shall be in line with HCC's constitution.
- 13.5 For the avoidance of doubt, where the effect would be to increase the financial contribution payable by any Partner Authority in the Service Plan for any year, clause 13.4 shall not authorise the Head of Service to procure additional support services without the prior consent of the HHIA Board.

14. Insurance

- 14.1 HCC shall ensure that insurance cover of at least the following minimum amounts is effected and maintained and notified annually to the HHIA Board in respect of:
 - 14.1.1 £50 million public liability insurance;
 - 14.1.2 £50 million employer's liability;
 - 14.1.3 £5 million professional indemnity insurance; and
 - 14.1.4 £10 million medical malpractice insurance.

15. Liabilities & Indemnities

- 15.1 All losses, claims, expenses, actions, demands, costs and liability incurred in relation to this Agreement shall be shared by the Partner Authorities on such terms as may be agreed from time to time between the Partner Authorities. In the absence of any such agreement, such amounts shall be shared equally between the Partner Authorities.
- 15.2 Each and every Partner Authority shall (and hereby undertakes with every other Partner Authority to) indemnify HCC against and/or contribute to and pay a share of all or any liabilities claims costs and/or expenses of or incurred by HCC arising out of or in connection with or in the course of or as

a result of it fulfilling its obligations under this Agreement with the intent that the Partner Authorities shall be jointly liable to indemnify HCC in respect of all such liability claims costs and/or expenses.

PROVIDED THAT such indemnity on the part of the Partner Authorities shall not extend to liabilities or claims arising or costs and/or expenses incurred by reason or in consequence of any of the following by HCC:

15.2.1 breach by HCC of its obligations under this Agreement;

15.2.2 negligence, misconduct, or

15.2.3 breach of Law.

15.3 For the avoidance of doubt the reference to Partner Authorities in clause 15.1 includes HCC and as such any amounts claimed under the indemnity referred to in clause 15.2 given by the District Partner Authorities to HCC shall be assessed on the basis that HCC shall bear its share of the amounts referred to in clause 15.1.

15.4 The amount due from each District Partner Authority under clause 15.2 in respect of any quarter in a Financial Year shall be deducted by HCC at the end of that quarter and reported via the Activity Statement referred to in clause 10.7.

15.5 The Partner Authorities reserve the right to recover from a Partner Authority the cost of any liabilities which have been caused by that Partner Authority and which are discovered after that Partner Authority withdraws from this Agreement or this Agreement has ended.

15.6 Any changes to funding regimes and/or costs arising as a result of legislative change shall be discussed at the HHIA Board and shared between the Partner Authorities on such terms as may be agreed by the Partner Authorities. In the absence of any such agreement, such amounts shall be shared equally between the Partner Authorities.

15.7 Each Partner Authority shall at all times take all reasonable steps within its powers to minimise and mitigate any loss for which it is seeking reimbursement from any of the other Partner Authorities.

15.8 This clause 15 shall survive the determination of this Agreement.

16. Withdrawal from Partnership

16.1 Any Partner Authority may withdraw from this Agreement in accordance with the following procedure.

- 16.2 Any Partner Authority that wishes to withdraw from this Agreement ("the Withdrawing Partner Authority") shall give not less than twelve (12) months' notice to the each of the other Partner Authorities of its intention to do so.
- 16.3 In the event that any Partner Authority gives notice of its intention to withdraw from this Agreement in accordance with clause 16.2 and the intended withdrawal date is within three (3) years of the Operational Start Date then HCC (or the Partner Authority nominated by the remaining Partner Authorities in the event that HCC is the Withdrawing Partner Authority) shall consult all the other Partner Authorities upon which such notice has been served giving due consideration to ensuring that the HHIA is left in no better nor no worse position as a result of the Withdrawing Partner Authority exercising its right to withdrawal than if the Withdrawing Partner Authority had not withdrawn until the third anniversary of the Operational Start Date. The consultation shall include but not be limited to consideration of:
- 16.3.1 any loss of funding which may arise from such withdrawal to include any non-payment, clawback or repayment of such funding;
 - 16.3.2 any increased costs to the remaining Partner Authorities in operating this Agreement or otherwise;
 - 16.3.3 any redundancy costs to be paid in accordance with clause 12.3.2 or other employment or staffing costs;
 - 16.3.4 any other loss, liability, damage, claim or expense which would be incurred by the other Partner Authorities by reason of such withdrawal from this Agreement; and
 - 16.3.5 whether as a result of the withdrawal the HHIA should cease to operate or whether any revision would be required to the governance arrangements under which the HHIA operates.
- 16.4 Any Withdrawing Partner Authority wishing to withdraw from this Agreement in accordance with clause 16.3 undertakes as a condition of such withdrawal to make, prior to withdrawal, such reasonable payment or payments as shall be determined in accordance with clause 16.3 and approved by the HHIA Board and no notice of withdrawal under clause 16.3 shall take effect unless and until such payment has been made.
- 16.5 Any Withdrawing Partner Authority (whether or not this is within three (3) years of the Operational Start Date) hereby acknowledges and confirms that it will remain liable for and will make any payments that are due in respect of its membership of the HHIA under this Agreement whether or not such sums are claimed before or after the date on which the Withdrawing Partner Authority's twelve (12) months' notice expires.
- 16.6 The Head of Service shall carry out a review of the Fee Level immediately after notice is given of any withdrawal of a Withdrawing Partner Authority in accordance with this clause 16 and shall bring the outcome of any such review and any proposals to a meeting of the HHIA Board.

- 16.7 A Partner Authority which withdraws from the Partnership (whether or not this is within three (3) years of the Operational Start Date) shall indemnify and shall be liable to the remaining Partner Authorities for any costs, losses or damages suffered by the remaining Partner Authorities by reason of the withdrawal arising out of or relating to:
- 16.7.1 any act, omission, negligence or default by the Withdrawing Partner Authority or its employees, agents and subcontractors in the provision of the Shared Service;
 - 16.7.2 any claim or action made or commenced by an employee, agent or sub-contractor of the Withdrawing Partner Authority against any one or more remaining Partner Authorities;
 - 16.7.3 any legal proceedings including without limitation arbitration and tribunal proceedings that commenced prior to the withdrawal of the Withdrawing Partner Authority that affect the remaining Partner Authorities; and
 - 16.7.4 any material breach by the Withdrawing Partner Authority of the terms of this Agreement.

17. Termination of Partnership

- 17.1 The HHIA Board may terminate this Agreement in accordance with clause 16.3.5 or Schedule 3 upon terms agreed by it.
- 17.2 Upon termination of this Agreement in accordance with clause 16.3.5 or Schedule 3 or the withdrawal of any District Partner Authority from this Agreement in accordance with clause 16 all Intellectual Property Rights in any works created in advance of the provision of the Shared Service shall revert in the relevant Partner Authority and HCC shall cooperate in the prompt transfer thereof including but not limited to the physical transfer of any data held by HCC and passwords required to access any electronic files. The Partner Authorities shall reach agreement with regard to any Intellectual Property Rights that have vested in HCC in accordance with clause 20.1. The presumption shall be that the Partnership shall retain ownership of Intellectual Property Rights and grant appropriate licences to any Withdrawing Partner Authority in order to enable the Withdrawing Partner Authority to reasonably resume service provision outside of the Partnership.
- 17.3 It shall be the duty of all of the Partner Authorities to try to minimise any losses arising from the termination of this Agreement and all Partner Authorities shall use their best endeavours to offer priority redeployment to any staff employed by HCC in the provision of the Shared Service and by helping to seek alternative employment for them.
- 17.4 All costs arising directly as a result of termination of this Agreement and the cessation of the operation of the HHIA shall be borne equally by the Partner

Authorities (which shall, for the avoidance of doubt, include any Partner Authority or Authorities withdrawing from the Partnership in accordance with clause 16).

18. Variation

- 18.1 This Agreement may only be varied by written agreement of all the Partner Authorities.

19. Dispute Resolution

- 19.1 In the event of any dispute arising in relation to this Agreement or the HHIA, this should be referred initially to the Head of Service.
- 19.2 If the Head of Service and the Partner Authority in dispute are unable to resolve the matter within one (1) month, they shall refer the dispute to the HHIA Board.
- 19.3 If the HHIA Board is unable to resolve the matter within two (2) months of it being referred to it, they shall refer the dispute to the Head of Paid Service (or equivalent) of each Partner Authority in dispute.
- 19.4 If the Heads of Paid Service (or equivalent) of the relevant Partner Authorities are unable to resolve the matter within two (2) months of it being referred to them, they shall agree any further dispute resolution procedure that they deem is appropriate. This may include a reference of the dispute to the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution (CEDR).
- 19.5 The Head of Service shall bring to the attention of the Partner Authorities without undue delay any circumstances of which he/she becomes aware that do or may give rise to any conflict of interest or dispute between the Partner Authorities in relation to the HHIA and/or this Agreement.

20. Intellectual Property

- 20.1 Any Intellectual Property Rights created through the establishment and running of the HHIA shall vest in HCC and be held on behalf of the Partner Authorities. This shall include but is not limited to processes, procedures, methodology and manuals.
- 20.2 For the avoidance of doubt, any Intellectual Property Rights in reports and documents produced for a Partner Authority as a result of the delivery of the Shared Service shall vest in the relevant Partner Authority.

- 20.3 Nothing in this clause 20 shall operate to prevent or make difficult the sharing of good practice between the Partner Authorities.

21. Notices

- 21.1 Any demand, notice or other communication given in connection with or required by this Agreement shall be made in writing and shall be delivered to, or sent by pre-paid first class post to, the Nominated Representative of the relevant Partner Authority at the address stated at the beginning of this Agreement (or such other address as may be notified in writing from time to time).

- 21.2 Any such demand, notice or communication shall be deemed to have been duly served:

21.2.1 if delivered by hand, when left at the proper address for service; or

21.2.2 if given or made by pre-paid first class post, two (2) Working Days after being posted;

provided in each case that if the time of such deemed service is either after 4.00 pm on a Working Day or on a day other than a Working Day service shall be deemed to occur instead at 10.00 am on the next following Working Day.

22. Data Protection

- 22.1 The Partner Authorities shall at all times:

22.1.1 comply with Data Protection Legislation, including maintaining a valid and up to date registration or notification under Data Protection Legislation, including but not restricted to any data processing to be performed in connection with this Agreement; and

22.1.2 comply with the data sharing agreement(s) entered into, the pro forma of which is set out in Schedule 5.

- 22.2 In the event of any potential or actual conflict between the Data Protection Legislation and a data sharing agreement then the relevant Partner Authorities and or the HHIA shall consult with HCC's Information Governance Unit in order to agree the most appropriate action.

- 22.3 HCC shall only undertake processing of Personal Data reasonably required in connection with the operation of this Agreement.

- 22.4 HCC shall not disclose Personal Data to any third parties other than:

22.4.1 to employees and contractors to whom such disclosure is necessary in order for HCC to comply with its obligations under this Agreement; or

22.4.2 to the extent required to comply with a legal obligation.

23. Freedom of Information

23.1 The Partner Authorities are public authorities as defined within the FOIA and the EIR and therefore recognise that information relating to this Agreement may be the subject of a Request for Information.

23.2 The HHIA and each Partner Authority shall assist any of the other Partner Authorities in complying with their obligations under FOIA and EIR, including but not limited to assistance without charge in gathering information to respond to a Request for Information.

23.3 Any Partner Authority shall be entitled to disclose any information relating to this Agreement and the Shared Service in response to a Request for Information, save that in respect of any Request for Information which is in whole or part a request for Exempt Information:

23.3.1 the Partner Authority which receives the Request for Information shall circulate the Request for Information and shall respond to any queries raised by any other Partner Authority; and

23.3.2 the Partner Authority which receives the Request for Information shall in good faith consider any representations raised by other Partner Authorities when deciding whether to disclose Exempt Information SAVE THAT the Partner Authority which receives the Request for Information shall retain the right to determine at their absolute discretion how to respond to the Request for Information.

23.4 A Partner Authority (or the HHIA) will not be liable to any other Partner Authority (or the HHIA) for any loss, damage, harm or detrimental effect arising from or in connection with the disclosure of information in response to a Request for Information.

24. Safeguarding

24.1 The HHIA shall comply at all times with HCC's Adult and Child Safeguarding policies and procedures (as may be amended from time to time) in the provision of the Shared Service.

24.2 The HHIA shall have in place comprehensive procedures for reporting of and managing allegations against staff which demonstrates the promotion of the safety and welfare of children and/or adults at risk and are compliant with statutory requirements.

- 24.3 The HHIA shall fulfil its legal obligations in relation to carrying out and repeating Criminal Records Checks and checking staff through the DBS or Disclosure Scotland (as appropriate) and the relevant national or local safeguarding authority.

25. Information and Confidentiality

- 25.1 The Partner Authorities shall keep confidential all matters relating to this Agreement unless it is already in the public domain or the HHIA Board agrees that it may be disclosed and shall use all reasonable endeavours to prevent their employees and agents from making any disclosure to any person of any matter relating to this Agreement.

- 25.2 Clause 25.1 shall not apply to:

25.2.1 any disclosure of information that is reasonably required by persons engaged in the performance of their obligations under this Agreement;

25.2.2 any matter which a party can demonstrate is already generally available and in the public domain otherwise than as a result of a breach of this clause;

25.2.3 any disclosure to enable a dispute to be resolved under clause 19;

25.2.4 any disclosure which is required by any Law (including any order of a court of competent jurisdiction), any Parliamentary obligation or the rules of any stock exchange or governmental or regulatory authority having the force of Law, or by the Local Government Ombudsman;

25.2.5 any disclosure of information which is already lawfully in the possession of the receiving party prior to its disclosure by the HHIA or a Partner Authority;

25.2.6 any disclosure by a party to this Agreement to a department, office or agency of the Government;

25.2.7 any disclosure for the purpose of the examination and certification of the accounts of a Partner Authority.

- 25.3 Where disclosure is permitted under clause 25.2, the recipient of the information shall be subject to the same obligation of confidentiality as that contained in this Agreement.

26. Scrutiny and Audit Committees

- 26.1 Scrutiny remains the responsibility of each Partner Authority.

- 26.2 The relevant committee of each Partner Authority charged with audit shall have the right to inspect any documents relating to this Agreement and to require the Head of Service to answer any questions raised by them.

27. Audit

- 27.1 HCC shall keep separate accounts with respect to the HHIA and these shall be open to inspection by the Partner Authorities.
- 27.2 HCC shall undertake an internal audit review of the HHIA and the Shared Service by 31st August 2018. A decision shall be made by the HHIA Board in respect of the timing of subsequent audits.

28. VAT

- 28.1 Under the terms of this Agreement, where HCC acts under the statutory power conferred upon it by each District Partner Authority under the Functions Regulations, or otherwise agrees to deliver activities on behalf of the Partnership that are outside the ambit of the Functions Regulations but are within other regulations which constitute a special legal regime, it is considered that any sums that may arise (in particular but not limited to clause 15), are not consideration for a supply of goods or services and are outside for the scope of VAT.
- 28.2 Without prejudice to clause 28.1, where a District Partner Authority or HM Revenue and Customs believes that this Agreement gives rise to a taxable supply to one or more of the other District Partner Authorities, the recipients of the supplies will on the production of valid Value Added Tax invoices, pay to the supplying District Partner Authority, a sum equal to the Value Added Tax in addition to any other consideration.
- 28.3 All sums identified within this Agreement are exclusive of VAT or any tax replacing it.
- 28.4 Where the Partnership levies an agency fee to a client awarded a Disabled Facilities Grant under the 1996 Act, HCC will treat this as a supply of services to the client and account for output tax to HM Revenue and Customs in accordance with their current policy as to the treatment of such payments. However, the Partner Authorities acknowledge that taxable treatment of agency payments is at the time of the Commencement Date subject to litigation and in the event that these fees are found to be non-taxable, with retrospective application, HCC will take appropriate steps to seek to recoup overpaid output tax back to Partnership funds and the District Partner Authorities and the HHIA shall provide reasonable assistance to the HCC in this regard if required.

29. Force Majeure

- 29.1 On the occurrence of a Force Majeure Event which impacts upon the Shared Service, the HHIA and/or the Partner Authority affected shall notify the Head of Service (if it is a District Partner Authority impacted) and the other Partner Authorities within 48 hours or as soon as otherwise reasonably practicable. The Partner Authorities shall meet as soon as reasonably practicable to consult with each other in good faith and use all reasonable endeavours to agree appropriate terms to mitigate the effects of the Force Majeure Event and facilitate the continued performance of the Shared Service.
- 29.2 The Partner Authorities shall be released from their respective obligations in the event that a Force Majeure Event renders the performance of this Agreement not reasonably practicable for a continuous period of 42 days whereupon all money due to HCC under this Agreement shall become due immediately and clause 17 shall apply.

30. Severance

- 30.1 If at any time any clause or part of a clause or Schedule or part of a Schedule to this Agreement is found by any court, tribunal or administrative body of competent jurisdiction to be wholly or partly illegal, invalid or unenforceable in any respect:
- 30.1.1 the Partner Authorities shall in good faith amend this Agreement to reflect as nearly as possible the spirit and intention behind that illegal, invalid or unenforceable provision to the extent that such spirit and intention is consistent with the Laws of that jurisdiction and so that the amended clause complies with the Laws of that jurisdiction; and
- 30.1.2 if the Partner Authorities cannot agree upon the terms of any amendment within one (1) month of the date upon which a clause was determined to be wholly or partly illegal, invalid or unenforceable by any court, tribunal or administrative body of competent jurisdiction, the dispute will be determined in accordance with the clause 19.

31. Complaints and the Local Government Ombudsman

- 31.1 Any complaints in respect of the Shared Service or the HHIA shall be dealt with in accordance with the principle that it will be handled by the Partner Authority that was responsible for the administration of the task, act or omission complained about. In the event that the HHIA was responsible then the complaint shall be dealt with by the Head of Service.
- 31.2 HCC shall ensure that a complaints procedure is in place from the Operational Start Date in respect of complaints about the HHIA. The Partner

Authorities shall be responsible for complaints which relate to their own services through their usual corporate complaints procedure.

- 31.3 In the event of a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman involving activities in respect of the HHIA or the Shared Service, the Partner Authorities shall give HCC and the Local Government Ombudsman every assistance in the investigation of the complaint, including co-operating fully and promptly in every way required by the Local Government Ombudsman during the course of that investigation.

32. Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999

The Partner Authorities do not intend that any of the terms of this Agreement will be enforceable by virtue of the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999 by any person not a party to it.

33. Entire Agreement

This Agreement contains the whole agreement between the Partner Authorities relating to the subject matter hereof and supersede all prior agreements, arrangements and understandings between the Parties relating to the governance of the HHIA.

34. Governing Law

This Agreement shall be governed by the Laws of England and the parties submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of England.

This Agreement has been entered into on the date stated at the beginning of it.

Signed on behalf of:

BROXBOURNE BOROUGH COUNCIL

by

Signature:

Name (Block Capitals)

Title

Signature:

Name (Block Capitals)

Title

Signed on behalf of:
EAST HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

by

Signature:

Name (Block Capitals)

Title

Signature:

Name (Block Capitals)

Title

Signed on behalf of:
HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

by

Signature:

Name (Block Capitals)

Title

Signature:

Name (Block Capitals)

Title

Signed on behalf of:
NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

by

Signature:

Name (Block Capitals)

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Title

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Signature:

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Name (Block Capitals)

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Title

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Signed on behalf of:
WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL
by

Signature:

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Name (Block Capitals)

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Title

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Signature:

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Name (Block Capitals)

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Title

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SCHEDULE 1

SHARED SERVICE

1. Purpose of the Schedule

- 1.1. This Schedule describes the services to be provided by the Home Improvement Agency (HHIA).

2. Summary of the Service provided

- 2.1. The HHIA will provide a single end to end service for vulnerable and disabled people who need adaptations in their homes to allow them to live independent and healthy lives.
- 2.2. The HHIA is primarily, but not exclusively, geared to assist people who are applying for the mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). It will also be able to assist people with other forms of discretionary and charitable funding, expertise, advice and information to reduce health hazards in the home.
- 2.3. The HHIA will operate in line with the principles of the Care Act 2014 and the Better Care Fund, and in accordance with the statutory duties contained within the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.
- 2.4. It will consist of a team of Caseworkers, Technical Officers and support staff who will be co-located and work directly with HCC's Occupational Therapists. The Service will guide and support applicants through the assessment and application processes, contract with suitable builders to carry out the works, and ensure that work is carried out to an appropriate standard.
- 2.5. By working in this way across several district areas, the HHIA will bring together the separate elements of the DFG application process, providing a more streamlined and efficient service to the partner authorities, and a clearer and swifter service to customers. The HHIA will also help customers access other funding streams, services or schemes which support independent living.
- 2.6. The HHIA will charge a fee for undertaking this work, which will be calculated based on a percentage of the cost of the works provided. This may be met through the DFG grant, or be charged to the applicant.
- 2.7. The work of the HHIA will be demand led, but will be appropriately promoted to the public, social care and health colleagues and other professionals to encourage take-up of the Service. Emerging research is showing that having adaptations completed can significantly improve outcomes for people with disabilities or frailty, delaying entry into residential care for an average of four years. Promotion of the Service

may be through digital channels (i.e. district and county websites, or through electronic newsletters), through press or other media releases, attendance at events or forums, or through leaflets, posters and other informational material.

3. Specification detail

3.1. Core service

3.1.1. The core DFG service consist of:

- 3.1.1.1. first contact / referral;
- 3.1.1.2. triage;
- 3.1.1.3. assessment of environmental barriers for daily living;
- 3.1.1.4. technical home assessment;
- 3.1.1.5. approval of works required;
- 3.1.1.6. calculation of client contribution and eligibility for grant funding;
- 3.1.1.7. contracting and completion of works;
- 3.1.1.8. customer feedback

Process	Responsibility of	Description
First contact	Hertfordshire County Council, contact team	Advice and information gathering from customer or their representative about what may be required, and what the key issues for them are. Initial screening process for needs, and investigation into what service would be most appropriate.
Professional referral	HHIA Caseworker / Trusted Assessor	Customers are referred from other services directly into the HHIA This may include a full or partial assessment of need, and information on the applicant which will inform the next stage of the process.
Triage	HHIA Caseworker / Trusted Assessor	Deeper level information gathering about the customer, what their health needs are, financial circumstances, housing tenure and condition, other people in the household, and other information relevant to the application and needs assessment.

Appendix 1

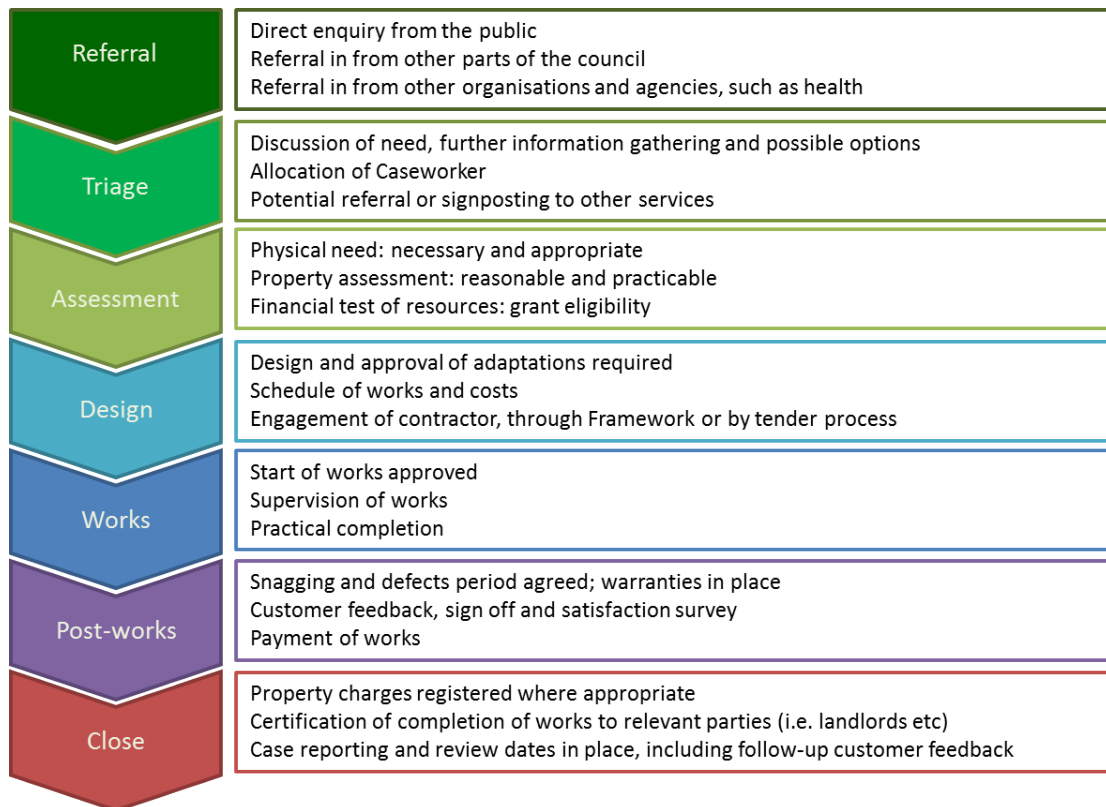
		<p>Decision about course of action to take.</p> <p>Allocation to Caseworker / Trusted Assessor and identification of Occupational Therapist / Technical Officer / Trusted Assessor as appropriate.</p> <p>Arrangements for first visit if appropriate.</p>
Visit	Caseworker / Trusted Assessor	<p>First visit to the customer to assess needs and eligibility, and start paperwork process / preliminary test of resources.</p> <p>Discussion with customer on what will happen next and options</p> <p>Trusted Assessor assessment if appropriate</p>
OT visit (if appropriate)	Occupational Therapist	<p>Assessment of an individual's needs that could be met or reduced through an adaptation. This may also include an assessment of other needs and referral for other council and professional services.</p>
Technical officer visit (if appropriate)	Technical Officer	<p>Assessment of the home for suitability for adaptation.</p> <p>Identification of other hazards in the home, for example through the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)</p> <p>Drawing of plans and writing schedule of works</p> <p>Assessing whether external expertise (such as architects or surveyors) is required</p>
Test of Resources	Caseworker	<p>Assessment of financial contribution by client.</p> <p>Sourcing of additional funding if required.</p> <p>If no grant is payable, then options discussed with the client, including benefits of 'nil grant' assessment.</p>
Approval of works	Technical Team	Approval of schedule of works

Appendix 1

required	Leader HHIA Head of Service	Authorisation to proceed to tendering or Framework processes for the engagement of contractors to carry out the works.
Grant approval	Technical Caseworker Team Leader HHIA Head of Service	Review of the whole case; ensure application is valid and complete; approval of works required, contribution, and calculation of grant to be awarded. Confirmation of client eligibility for grant assistance. Approval to commit Capital Grant and any discretionary funding if appropriate. Approval to apply for external funding if required.
Engagement of contractor	Technical Officer / Trusted Assessor / Caseworker	Standard work allocated through Contractor Framework Complex work tendered on behalf of the client
Supervision of work	Technical Officer / Trusted Assessor	Site visits and liaison with contractor where required. Signing off finished work as complete Ensuring snagging or outstanding defects are rectified
Financial requirements	Caseworker / Trusted Assessor Casework Team Leader / Technical Team Leader HHIA Head of Service	Receipt, appraisal and payment of contractor invoice Register financial interest as a land charge if appropriate Register warranties etc as appropriate
Close case	Caseworker	Follow up visits / survey Ensure all logs and records are complete Ensure onward referrals are enacted Close case

3.2. Additional Services

- 3.2.1. The HHIA may also carry out the following services in addition to the Core Service:
 - 3.2.1.1. Benefit eligibility and advice;
 - 3.2.1.2. Sourcing and applying for charitable funding for necessary works but where grant funding is not available;
 - 3.2.1.3. Handyperson services;
 - 3.2.1.4. Assistance, advice and information in relation to housing options where a current home is not suitable or cannot be adapted;
 - 3.2.1.5. Assistance and advice with moving home where adaptations are not suitable;
 - 3.2.1.6. Identifying potential energy efficiency measures to reduce excess cold in an individual's home, and to recommend or refer to suitable schemes where appropriate;
 - 3.2.1.7. Assistive Technology solutions which assist with living independently at home;
 - 3.2.1.8. Identifying other hazards in the home in line with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, and referring to other agencies where necessary to ensure essential repairs are completed;
 - 3.2.1.9. Information, advice, signposting or onward referrals to other statutory and third sector services that may benefit the client or their family and carers;
- 3.2.2. This list is neither exhaustive nor exclusive, and the HHIA will seek and develop other opportunities to provide other related services which will benefit the Partners' residents.



3.3. Roles and responsibilities

3.3.1. The HHIA will directly employ the following staff:

3.3.2. Head of Service:

- 3.3.2.1. To oversee the day to day operation of the HHIA;
- 3.3.2.2. To develop and publish the HHIA Service Plan;
- 3.3.2.3. To report to, advise and receive direction from the HHIA Board;
- 3.3.2.4. To create and maintain strategic relationships between the HHIA and other statutory and third sector organisations, such as county and district councils, support organisations and local and national charities;
- 3.3.2.5. To create and maintain relationships between the HHIA and commercial and private organisations, such as housing providers and contractors, to include procuring, monitoring and updating any framework agreements that facilitate the delivery of the HHIA's services;
- 3.3.2.6. Management of the HHIA budget, including providing financial reports to the HHIA Board and Hertfordshire Chief Finance Officers group;
- 3.3.2.7. To recommend to the HHIA Board service improvement and opportunities for new services;
- 3.3.2.8. To make decisions as specified within the HHIA scheme of delegation, in relation to grant and discretionary funding;
- 3.3.2.9. To evaluate and sign off contract variations, including extensions of time, on complex adaptations in line with the HHIA scheme of delegation;
- 3.3.2.10. To determine on matters of dispute relating to quality of goods or services provided to the HHIA or customer, and to instigate an appropriate response (i.e. non-payment of invoice, claim against insurers, escalation etc);
- 3.3.2.11. To manage complaints received by the HHIA, and implement appropriate measures to rectify;
- 3.3.2.12. To contribute to strategic care, health and housing decision making as required to help meet local targets and objectives;
- 3.3.2.13. To prepare and maintain policies and procedures relating to the delivery of services and, where necessary, seeking approval/adoption of these;
- 3.3.2.14. Overseeing the marketing and promotion of the HHIA;
- 3.3.2.15. Identification of and implementation of measures to increase income into the service;

3.3.2.16. Other duties commensurate with the role, and as directed by the HHIA Board.

3.3.3. Business Development Manager

- 3.3.3.1. To investigate and develop opportunities for new services through innovative use of Disabled Facilities Grant Capital Funding, through short or long term local or national funding schemes, or through working with others to improve or enhance existing services;
- 3.3.3.2. To maintain data reporting systems, and analyse trends to inform strategic decisions and drive continuous service improvement;
- 3.3.3.3. To keep informed of and analyse national and local policy, and new or amended legislation to ensure the HHIA is meeting all its statutory and regulatory duties, is working to expected service standards, and is meeting or contributing to relevant local and national targets;
- 3.3.3.4. To liaise with Foundations, the national body for HHIA's, Care and Repair England, the College of OT and other HHIA's across the country to gather and consider best practice and new initiatives that could be translated into services in Hertfordshire;
- 3.3.3.5. Be responsible for co-ordinating customer satisfaction surveys;
- 3.3.3.6. Manage and prepare reports on key performance indicators and other metrics required by the Board and the Head of Service
- 3.3.3.7. Prepare and submit any statutory returns and similar performance reports;

3.3.4. Technical Team Leader

- 3.3.5. To manage, supervise and allocate work to Technical Officers, and provide advice in the event of a query;
- 3.3.6. To work with the Head of Service, Business Development Manager, and Casework Team Leader to investigate and develop new initiatives and best practice;
- 3.3.7. To advise on service improvement;
- 3.3.8. To undertake the technical aspects of extremely complex or contentious adaptations as required;

- 3.3.9. To evaluate and sign off contract variations, including extensions of time, on low level adaptations in line with the HHIA scheme of delegation;
 - 3.3.10. To advise the Head of Service where there is a matter of dispute relating to goods or services provided by a contractor;
 - 3.3.11. To sign off completed work, certified as complete by Technical Officers and Trusted Assessors;
 - 3.3.12. To authorise low level grant applications in line with the HHIA scheme of delegation;
 - 3.3.13. To oversee and manage the Contractor Framework, and advise on Specification amendments, quality standards and contract issues;
 - 3.3.14. To ensure that all data input is accurate and timely, and to run reports as required for monitoring and performance review;
 - 3.3.15. To liaise with Foundations, the national body for HHIA's, Care and Repair England, the College of OT and other HHIA's across the country to gather and consider best practice and new initiatives that could be translated into services in Hertfordshire;
- 3.4. Casework Team Leader
- 3.4.1. To manage, supervise and allocate work to Caseworkers and Trusted Assessors, and provide advice in the event of a query;
 - 3.4.2. To work with the Head of Service, Business Development Manager, and Technical Team Leader to investigate and develop new initiatives and best practice;
 - 3.4.3. To advise on service improvement;
 - 3.4.4. To undertake the casework aspects of extremely complex or contentious adaptations as required;
 - 3.4.5. To oversee the Triage activities, and advise on improvements and best practice;
 - 3.4.6. To ensure that all data input is accurate and timely, and to run reports as required for monitoring and performance review;
 - 3.4.7. To liaise with Foundations, the national body for HHIA's, Care and Repair England, the College of OT and other HHIA's across the country to gather and consider best practice and new initiatives that could be translated into services in Hertfordshire;

3.5. Caseworker

- 3.5.1. To act as the single point of contact for the customer, their family and carers as appropriate, and to act as the liaison between the customer and other parts of the adaptation service;
- 3.5.2. To manage the case from end to end, ensuring all steps are carried out, recorded and progressed as required;
- 3.5.3. To assist the customer with completing any application forms and other documentation required in relation to an application through the HHIA, and providing impartial advice as required;
- 3.5.4. To undertake appropriate checks to ensure previous applications (including nil grant determinations), property charges, or outstanding issues are acknowledged, linked to the new application and dealt with appropriately;
- 3.5.5. To undertake any test of resources or other financial assessments, required for grant or other assistance in relation to the work being carried out, where it is appropriate for them to do so;
- 3.5.6. To provide assistance where necessary in gathering evidence and permissions in relation to the case;
- 3.5.7. To undertake benefit checks, and to refer to appropriate support organisations where benefits are not being claimed but may be due;
- 3.5.8. To work with the customer to find charitable or other sources of funding for work that is not eligible for funding from the HHIA or where a contribution to the work is required, but where paying it would result in hardship;

3.6. Technical Officer

- 3.6.1. To work with the individual, caseworker and occupational therapist to design suitable adaptations to the home;
- 3.6.2. To draft the schedule of works for the adaptations, ensuring technical and legal requirements such as planning or building control conditions are met;
- 3.6.3. To ensure that requirements under the Construction and Design Management regulations (CDM) are fully complied with;
- 3.6.4. To work with contractors to ensure works are met to a high standard and are completed satisfactorily;
- 3.6.5. To evaluate any contract variations or unforeseen works, and recommend extensions to the cost or expected completion date if required;

- 3.6.6. To refer to the appropriate authority where action is required in respect of an assessment under the HHSRS, or other statutory duty;
- 3.7. Trusted Assessor
 - 3.7.1. To undertake non-complex functional assessments of an individual's ability to undertake day-to-day activities in the home;
 - 3.7.2. To undertake a low-level non-complex assessments for adaptations within the home, to meet an individual's needs;
 - 3.7.3. To work with the individual to complete any necessary forms or applications to get work done;
 - 3.7.4. To assist the individual to engage a contractor to undertake work, and to supervise and sign off the work during the construction period;
 - 3.7.5. To undertake a low level assessment of other hazards in the home, and make referral to another service if required
- 3.8. Administrative Officer
 - 3.8.1. To assist with monitoring, reporting, and data collection;
 - 3.8.2. To maintain data and case management systems, and implement, report or advise on upgrades, changes or faults within the systems;
 - 3.8.3. To assist with marketing, promotion and advertising activities;
 - 3.8.4. To undertake general administrative duties;
 - 3.8.5. To provide general advice to professionals and other officers of the councils, or to the general public as required;
- 3.9. Occupational Therapists will not be employed by the HHIA, but will work with the HHIA to deliver adaptations in a more streamlined way.
 - 3.9.1.1. To conduct an assessment in the customer's home, to establish whether and what adaptations, equipment or advice may be appropriate for them;
 - 3.9.1.2. To undertake any related assessment for other health and care needs which may be present, and undertake appropriate activities required to ensure those needs are

recorded and met, which may require referral or handover to an alternative or related service;

- 3.9.1.3. Where the customer lives in a district which is part of the HHIA, to work with the Technical Officers and Caseworkers to develop a suitable scheme of work to meet the adaptation needs of the customer, and work with the Technical Officer and Caseworker as necessary during the course of the adaptation;
- 3.9.1.4. To provide advice to staff in the HHIA where there is a functional or care enquiry;
- 3.9.1.5. Where the customer lives within a district which is not part of the HHIA, to complete the relevant activities required to make a recommendation for an adaptation or DFG application;

4. Referrals

- 4.1. Referral into the HHIA may come direct from the public, from other services or agencies, or directly from Health or Social Care professionals.
- 4.2. Calls into the HHIA will come through the Hertfordshire Adult Social Care Access Service (SCAS) which will then forward requests to the HHIA.
- 4.3. Some referrals will come from Occupational Therapist working in other parts of the Social Care system, for example the Extended Involvement Team. In these cases, referral may come directly to the Casework Team Leader for allocation to a Caseworker or Trusted Assessor for progression (to be agreed).
- 4.4. The HHIA will accept recommendations for adaptations from external Occupational Therapists (such as those employed by the NHS or privately engaged by the customer) where the assessment has been carried out by a qualified Occupational Therapist who is registered with Health Care Professions Council. (to be agreed).
- 4.5. A referral on behalf of a customer may come from a professional, friend or neighbour, family member or any other person. However, acceptance of a referral from someone other than the customer does not allow the HHIA to discuss the details or progress of the case with them, without the written permission of the customer, unless there is an appropriate Power of Attorney or other legal provision in place which requires them to do so.
- 4.6. The HHIA will, from time to time, make referrals to other organisations, including the county and districts councils, if further needs are identified. These could be, for example, identification of hazards in the home which will require Environmental Health

support, further health or social care needs, or support needs which could be met through the third sector.

5. Contractor Management

- 5.1. Building Contractors will be managed on behalf of the individual by the HHIA, including the obtaining of quotes, supervision of works, contract variations, and signing off the work as satisfactory.
- 5.2. The HHIA will engage contractors through either:
 - 5.2.1. The HHIA Contractor Framework, for non-complex, standardised works; or
 - 5.2.2. Through a tender process for complex, non-standard work.
- 5.3. Non-complex works will generally include (but is not exclusively restricted to) level access showers, stair-lifts, and ramps.
- 5.4. The Contractor Framework will be reviewed every [four] years, in accordance with the Framework specification.
- 5.5. Queries and issues arising during the course of the building work will be referred to the Technical Officers and Caseworkers for resolution. Works outside the DFG application, or in addition to the application will be considered, but must be approved by the HHIA.
- 5.6. Any variations to the contract, or unforeseen works must be approved by the Technical Team Leader or Head of Service as being necessary and appropriate before work related to the variation or unforeseen circumstances can be started, except in the event of an emergency where remedial work must be done to prevent harm or damage to property.
- 5.7. Home owners may, in some circumstances, be allowed to upgrade aspects of the build at their own expense (for example patterned tiles in bathrooms), but this must be agreed with the HHIA before work begins.
- 5.8. Work must be signed off as satisfactory by the HHIA before payment is made.

6. Monitoring and reporting

- 6.1. The HHIA will be subject to certain controls and reporting mechanisms to ensure that it is delivering the service that it is designed to do, that it is delivering value for money while meeting high operational standards, and that each of the Partners is satisfied that it is working for the best interests of the Partnership and their residents.
- 6.2. The HHIA will provide the following reports:

Appendix 1

Annual Report	<p>General overview of the HHIA's activities, including new services provided and links with other strategic considerations such as local district initiatives, BCF Plan and CCG objectives.</p> <p>Performance against published KPIs and targets</p> <p>Customer feedback and satisfaction rates</p> <p>Next 12 months expected targets</p> <p>Next 12 months intended service plan</p>	<p>HHIA Board</p> <p>Members</p> <p>Stakeholders</p> <p>Public</p>
Annual Service Plan	<p>Budget forecast for the next 12 months, extrapolated to 36 months</p> <p>Expected performance targets for the next 12 months</p> <p>New services in development or potential growth</p> <p>Marketing or promotional activities</p> <p>Identification of any gaps in resources, and plans to address any concerns.</p>	HHIA Board
Quarterly Report	<p>Quarterly Performance against published KPIs and targets</p> <p>Quarterly performance against management PIs and targets</p> <p>Trends identified</p> <p>Next quarter adjusted targets</p> <p>Performance against service plan</p> <p>Complaints, compliments and comments received</p>	HHIA Board
Quarterly Statement	Financial metrics	HHIA Board

of Accounts	disaggregated to district level, including: DFG Capital Grant spent and committed in total; Fee income received; Other funding received towards works, by type (i.e. charitable, discretionary) Client contributions towards works received or invoiced.	Hertfordshire Chief Financial Officers group
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- 6.3. The HHIA will be subject to internal audit in the first full year of operation, and a view will be taken at that point on the frequency of subsequent audit arrangements. Each district will have the right to request information for their own auditing or scrutiny arrangements.
- 6.4. Customer feedback and evaluation will be carried out regularly, and this will focus on customer outcomes and service standards, as well as satisfaction with the processes of the application. Feedback will be incorporated into the Annual Report and be used to inform development of new services, and drive service improvement.

7. Working with other agencies

- 7.1. The HHIA will be working with vulnerable people who may be in receipt of services from other areas of the council, from their district council partners, or from other statutory or third sector organisations.
- 7.2. Wherever possible, and within the bounds of legislative and regulatory requirements, the HHIA will work collaboratively with these agencies to ensure that people receive a joined-up response to meeting their needs. The HHIA will work within the principles of Making Every Contact Count, and will refer to other agencies, with the individual's permission, where appropriate to do so.
- 7.3. The HHIA will be mindful of its Safeguarding duties as a public authority agency, and will ensure that all staff employed by it, and those contracted to it, are aware of where and how to report suspected abuse.
- 7.4. The HHIA will meet its statutory duties in relation to Data Protection and Data Sharing, and will ensure all personal data is treated appropriately and sensitively. All staff will be suitably trained in data management procedures.

8. Complaints, compliments and comments

- 8.1. Complaints, compliments and comments should be addressed to the Head of Service, who may delegate to the relevant Team Leader to investigate.
- 8.2. Any complaint against a member of staff employed by the HHIA will be guided by the Herefordshire County Council Complaints Procedure, and any grievance or disciplinary measures required will be instigated as appropriate.
- 8.3. Requests for a review of an Occupational Therapy Assessment will be carried out in accordance to that services' policy and procedures.
- 8.4. Any complaint made by an individual against a Contractor working in their home will be investigated by the Head of Service, and appropriate action taken.
- 8.5. All complaints, compliments and comments will be logged and reported to the HHIA Board quarterly, and will be used to drive continuous service improvement.

SCHEDULE 3
THE HHIA BOARD

A. Activities of the HHIA Board

The activities of the HHIA Board shall include but shall not be limited to:

1. determining the strategic direction of the HHIA;
2. driving continuous improvement;
3. approving and monitoring any shared policies;
4. setting, monitoring and reviewing service and performance standards;
5. setting the Budget in September each year;
6. considering and, where appropriate, approving requests by HCC to recover costs, claims, liabilities, expenses and payments for Initial Set Up Costs in relation to the establishment of the HHIA;
7. considering opportunities for new business/ service areas;
8. informing and recommending policy in relation to and Mandatory and Discretionary DFG grants;
9. determining the Fee Level on the basis of reasonable information provided by the Head of Service;
10. monitoring the Statement of Accounts and Activity Statements relating to the HHIA;
11. oversight of procurement arrangements;
12. providing general supervision of the provision of the Shared Service;
13. reviewing the governance arrangements as set out in this Agreement;
14. considering the admission of prospective New Partner Authorities;
15. determining any payment due from a Partner Authority in accordance with clause 12.3;

16. contributing to, and providing information for, the Head of Service's performance appraisal;
17. receiving reports/ plans from the Head of Service;
18. considering any changes to funding regimes and/or determining costs arising as a result of legislative change in accordance with clause 15.6;
19. approving payment(s) to be made by any Withdrawing Partner Authority in accordance with clause 16;
20. resolving conflicts between competing interests amongst the Authorities collectively and individually relating to the HHIA, the HHIA Board and/or the Shared Service, including as part of the dispute resolution procedure in accordance with clause 19; and
21. considering the publication or release of confidential information relating to this Agreement.

B. Reserved Matters

The following decisions of the HHIA Board are Reserved Matters:

1. approval of the Service Plan, including any in-year variations;
2. in accordance with clause 10.6, the decision whether to reimburse the Partner Authorities or to invest a surplus jointly either in the Shared Service or in another project;
3. the admission of a new Partner Authority; and
4. any termination of this Agreement.

SCHEDULE 4
BUSINESS CASE

**Hertfordshire Shared Home
Improvement Agency (HIA)**

Final Business Case

February 2017

**Jamie Sutterby- Assistant Director, Health
Integration**

**Helen Maneuf - Assistant Director, Integrated
Planning & Resources**

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APPENDICES

Appendix A	Options Analysis
Appendix B	Home Improvement Service Process Draft
Appendix C	High Level Timeline
Appendix D	List of Tables and Figures

Relevant papers available on request
Shared Home Improvement Agency Function - Options Paper <ul style="list-style-type: none">Presented to the Chief Executive's Co-ordination Group (CECG) in January 2016Presented to HCFO in March 2016
Shared Home Improvement Agency Function - Financial Business Case <ul style="list-style-type: none">Presented to HCFO in May 2016

REVISION RECORD			
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Inclusions from Helen Maneuf / Jamie Sutterby / Hayley King	12/07/16	1.01	Draft
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Updated to include amended information following HCFO meeting on 21/07/2016	18/08/2016	3	Draft
Updated to include Welwyn Hatfield and to include some revised figures from other districts	23/01/2017	4	Draft
Updated to exclude Welwyn Hatfield	27/02/2017	5	Draft

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to establish the financial case and final business case for the setting up of a Shared Home Improvement Agency function.

Costings have been carried out for a small group of five authorities which have indicated a significant interest in progressing with the shared service, with a further authority presented as joining in Year Two.

Table 1: Representation of authorities

Year One Five authorities	Year Two Six authorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broxbourne Borough Council (BBC) • East Herts Council (EHC) • Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) • North Hertfordshire District Council • Watford Borough Council (WBC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broxbourne Borough Council (BBC) • East Herts Council (EHC) • Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) • North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) • Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) • Watford Borough Council (WBC)

Vision and Objectives

The vision for the DFG proposal is to create a Shared Home Improvement Agency function inclusive of Disabled Facilities Grant service and integrated Occupational Therapy.

The background to the proposed new service is described in **Section 1**.

The objectives of a Shared Home Improvement Agency function are to:

- Ensure that all individuals in Hertfordshire who need housing adaptations to support independent living will have access to an appropriate service that is timely, accessible, equitable and fit for purpose to address rising demographic pressures
- Deliver a fully standardised service, enhancing operational efficiency, customer satisfaction and improving value for money
- Implement robust monitoring arrangements against key performance indicators
- Improve service resilience through joined up working, adopting a common methodology and service standards, sharing staff knowledge, skills and expertise
- Open up future opportunities to expand into private sector adaptations and align to wider Clinical Commissioning Group activity in order to maximise income generation, efficiency and value and impact of the DFG element of the Better Care Fund.

The strategic drivers and benefits are further described in **Section 2**.

High Level Proposals

The preferred proposals recommended as a result of this Business Case are to:

- Provide a common framework for procuring contractors to deliver adaptations in clients' homes, and the centralisation of the assessment and administrative functions

- Deliver a professional Home Improvement function to meet the needs of the partner Councils and the requirements defined in Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and the Care Act 2014
- Ensure ongoing value for money of home improvement services in the Councils which participate in the Shared Service, in order to maximise the housing, health and social care system benefits of the DFG element of the Better Care Fund
- Governance of the shared service by a Memorandum of Understanding which will set out the detailed arrangements for the Shared Service. Partners will be required to sign up to the terms and conditions of this document for a set period of time in order to be part of the Shared Service.

The scope of the proposed Service is described in **Section 5**.

Financial Summary

Total spend on DFG and HRA adaptations by district councils within the county has been of the order of an average of £6.2m per year in recent years. In addition, HCC funds minor works: £378k was budgeted for these in 2014/15. In the same year, District Council staffing costs totalled an estimated £624k, with HCC's Housing Occupational Therapy service delivered via Serco costing £804k.

A number of national developments created an opportunity to review the delivery of DFG within the county area and consider how to integrate provision of help with home adaptations across housing, health and social care system.

Table 2 – 6 below provide a summary of the current cost and funding position, and proposed ongoing cost of the Shared Home Improvement Agency Service.

Table 2: Existing Cost & Funding - District Average Annual Cost of Home Improvement Services

Table 2 reflects the following

- Gross and net costs of running the Home Improvement service, and details how this is financed in each authority.

Table 2: District Average Annual Cost of DFG and Home Improvement Related Spend

The table below summarises the average annual cost of DFG and Home Improvement related services in all Hertfordshire district authorities.

	BBC	DBC	EHF	HBC	NHDC	SADC	SBC	TRDC	WBC	WHBC	Districts total
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Running Costs	111	66	113	82	50	70	80	94	111	123	900
Disabled Facilities Spend	450	602	384	435	605	701	350	418	386	442	4,773
HRA adaptations	0	0	0	0	0	0	500	0	0	0	500
Gross cost of service	561	668	497	517	655	771	930	512	497	565	6,173
Agency fee income	0	(35)	0	0	(50)	0	0	0	0	0	(85)
Net cost of service	561	634	497	517	605	771	930	512	497	565	6,088
Funded by											
Grant	(314)	(366)	(293)	(295)	(360)	(291)	(305)	(250)	(279)	(316)	(3,070)
Revenue resources	(56)	(32)	(113)	(82)	(12)	(70)	(80)	0	(36)	(123)	(604)
HRA resources (revenue and capital)	0	0	0	0	0	0	(500)	0	0	0	(500)
Other capital financing (usually capital receipts)	(191)	(236)	(90)	(140)	(232)	(409)	(45)	(262)	(183)	(126)	(1,914)
Total financing	(561)	(634)	(497)	(517)	(605)	(771)	(930)	(512)	(497)	(565)	(6,088)

Notes

- Baseline figures have been investigated thoroughly since the outline business case and updated where appropriate; the most significant changes are that running costs have been amended from £539k to an increased figure of £900k. This is following the verification of district information, and the inclusion in running costs of system costs, overheads, and travel costs, where previously only staffing costs were known.
- There is differing treatment among districts regarding whether staffing costs are charged to revenue or capital.
- Registered housing providers also fund some adaptations, in some cases in full but more commonly by contributing a percentage towards the cost of works; these figures are not generally included in table 2.
- Three Rivers and St Albans did not respond to the request for updated and verified information, therefore, the original information received has been used.

- Client contributions have been excluded as there was inconsistent interpretation and treatment of these among districts essentially rendering them non-comparable.

Table 3: Total HIA Related Expenditure

Table 3 reflects the following

- HCC's total adaptations expenditure (2015/16 figures) alongside the countywide OT resource. This is added to the district total (from above – see table 2)
- This gives a Hertfordshire wide total for all HIA related expenditure, and details how this is financed.

	HCC	Districts Total	Hertfordshire Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s
Running Costs	800	900	1,700
Disabled Facilities	559	4,773	5,332
HRA adaptations	0	500	500
Gross cost of service	1,359	6,173	7,532
Agency fee income	0	(85)	(85)
Net cost of service	1,359	6,088	7,447
Funded by			
Grant	0	(3,070)	(3,070)
Revenue resources	(1,359)	(604)	(1,963)
HRA resources (revenue and capital)	0	(500)	(500)
Other capital financing (usually capital receipts)	0	(1,914)	(1,914)
Total financing	(1,359)	(6,088)	(7,447)

Table 4: Proposed Ongoing cost of the Shared Home Improvement Agency Service

Table 4 reflects the following:

- The model allows the costs of the shared service to be flexed according to the level of resource needed to run activities with different numbers of participating councils.
- Costs of adaptations are forecast in the model to continue as in current operations.
- Forecast running costs exceed the running costs noted in Table 2 above; solutions to this are shown in Table 5 below.
- The Shared Home Improvement Agency function has been costed at a level which will deliver sufficient capacity to work to develop specialisms and build new service offerings.
- OT's will continue to provide a service to all districts whether they are in or out of the shared service model. This will be fully funded by HCC.

	Five authority model
	£000s
HIA Service staffing	519
OT Service	671
HIA Service costs and overheads	51
Total running costs	1,241

Table 5 and 6: Revenue and Capital Impact per Authority

Table 5.1: YEAR ONE: Five Authorities (Four Districts plus HCC) - Revenue Impact

	BBC	EHC	NHDC	WBC	TOTAL
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Running costs of shared service	102	87	137	87	413
Capitalisable costs	(53)	(45)	(71)	(45)	(213)
Net revenue cost of service	49	42	66	42	199
Current revenue budget for DFG	56	113	12	123	305
Residual costs in district i.e. non-cashable savings	55	48	31	111	244
Extra revenue budget required for shared service	48	(24)	85	29	138
Fee income at 15% of DFG spend (6 month operation)	(34)	(29)	(45)	(29)	(137)
Extra revenue budget required if charge fee income	14	(52)	39	0	2
Pooling of income to ensure revenue neutral approach for each authority	-	-	-	-	2

- The revenue running costs for each authority have been apportioned based on current levels of DFG spend.
- Salaries are part-year only as the service will gradually build up staff until go live in September. Fee income has therefore only been estimated for 6 months of operation.
- HCC fully funds the OT service and pays a proportionate amount towards the Head of Service salary costs. HCC has not been included in the table as it does not take a share of fee income.
- Residual costs in each authority have been identified; these are non-cashable savings if the district moved to the shared service model such as IT system costs, overhead recharges – which would still need to be met from other budgets.

- The revenue cost of the shared service has been compared to each district's current revenue budget for DFG taking into account residual costs. Districts would be expected to contribute a maximum revenue amount of their current revenue budget for DFG less residual costs to the shared service in the first year.
- Due to the caveat given by districts that the shared service would only be a feasible option if costs were maintained at current levels, the option of using fee income has also been included. For the shared service to break even in Year One, fee income of 15% would need to be charged, as shown above.
- This assumes a pooling of fee income in order to generate a revenue neutral position for each district, as agreed at the Hertfordshire Chief Financial Officers' meeting in December.
- The expectation is that fee income received may negate the need to ask districts for their revenue contribution, and a decision would be taken towards the end of the financial year based on performance of the shared service.
- The aim is that the shared service will be able to carry out significantly more adaptations than currently, and therefore, the table reflects the worst case scenario, which still enables the shared service to break even, without having to ask for revenue contributions.

Table 5.2: YEAR TWO: Six Authorities (Five Districts plus HCC) – Revenue Impact

	BBC	EHC	NHDC	SBC	WBC	TOTAL
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Running costs of shared service	116	99	156	90	99	559
Capitalisable costs	(62)	(53)	(83)	(48)	(53)	(300)
Net revenue cost of service	54	46	72	42	46	259
Fee income at 11.5% of DFG spend	(52)	(44)	(70)	(40)	(44)	(250)
Extra revenue budget required if charge fee income	2	2	3	2	2	9

- In Year Two, districts would NOT be asked to contribute their current revenue budget less residual costs – the shared service would be expected to break even using fee income alone.
- A fee level of 11.5% assuming the same number of adaptations being carried out as currently would enable this.

Table 6 reflects:

- The current level of spend on DFG's continuing
- Each district will receive a significant increase in capital grant available to them

Table 6.1: Five Authority Model – Capital Impact (Four Districts Plus HCC)

	BBC	EHC	NHDC	WBC	TOTAL
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
DFG works spend	450	384	605	386	1,825
Increased DFG grant 16/17	(577)	(530)	(654)	(523)	(2,284)
Extra capital money available	(127)	(146)	(49)	(137)	(459)

Table 6.2: Six Authority Model – Capital Impact (Five Districts Plus HCC)

	BBC	EHC	NHDC	SBC	WBC	TOTAL
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
DFG works spend	450	384	605	350	386	2,175
Increased DFG grant 16/17	(577)	(530)	(654)	(576)	(523)	(2,860)
Extra capital money available	(127)	(146)	(49)	(226)	(137)	(685)

- HCC is not included in these tables as it does not receive DFG.
- The capital impact on individual districts is the same regardless of how many authorities are in the model.

Next Steps

The next phase of the project will include:

- Defining governance and oversight arrangements
- Developing a change management approach
- Designing the management and operating model for the Shared HIA Service including processes, vision, structures, behaviours, location, Service Level Agreements, Key Performance Indicators
- Establishing targets for delivery (see Appendix C for timeline and next steps)
- Compiling an implementation plan including systems convergence, policy harmonisation

A shadow form of the service will be in operation from April 2017 with full go-live from September 2017. A high level timeline is contained within Appendix C.

The next steps for the project are further described in **Section 7**.

Required Decisions

1) Agreement to the high level recommendations

- Create a Shared Home Improvement Agency function inclusive of Disabled Facilities Grant service and integrated Occupational Therapy.
- Consideration as to the opportunity presented by the increase in funding from the Better Care Fund to consider the best way of investing this capital

2) Approval to progress to Service Development phase

The service development phase incorporates the governance arrangements, the operating model, charging arrangements, and the detailed implementation plan, to be in place by autumn 2016

3) Commitment to this project

Delivery of the project requires:

- A commitment to fund set up costs and preparations for the recruitment to the Head of Service role, as detailed on p32
- A commitment to maintain local contribution levels to home adaptations for a period to be defined, thereafter this will be subject to an annual review of budgets by participating authorities

4) Recommend the Business Case to their Members

To review the Business Case and assess its merits against the local baseline financial position, and to recommend to Members the adoption of a Shared Home Improvement Agency function.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 National Background

The Spending Review 2015 has detailed one of its main objectives for the next four years is to develop an integrated health and care system, and that there would be £500m available by 2019-20 for the Disabled Facilities Grant. The grant is currently worth £220m in 2015-16. It has been stated that this increased level of funding will enable around 85,000 home adaptations in 2019-20, which is expected to prevent 8,500 people that year from needing to move to residential care.

1.2 Local Background

Disabled Facilities Grant is used to fund adaptations to property to help disabled people to remain independent in their homes. The requirement for Councils to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) service is a mandatory and statutory function for local housing authorities. The delivery of this function sits within District Council housing services. It is governed by the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

Total spend on DFG and HRA adaptations by district councils within the county has been of the order of an average of £6.2m per year in recent years. In addition, HCC funds minor works: £378k was budgeted for these in 2014/15. In the same year, District Council staffing costs totalled an estimated £624k, with HCC's Housing Occupational Therapy service delivered via Serco costing £804k.

A number of national developments created an opportunity to review the delivery of DFG within the county area and consider how to integrate provision of help with home adaptations across housing, health and social care systems:

In 2013, the Government announced the creation of the Better Care Fund (BCF), as part of ongoing changes to the delivery of health and social care services across the country. Health and social care services were required to create a single pooled fund to support closer working between organisations in the area.

The BCF includes the Government's capital grant contribution for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG). This had previously been provided to District Councils directly from Central Government. This funding change for DFG provided an ideal opportunity, especially as the BCF may not have the requirement to passport funds directly through to local authorities in the future.

For the first time the contribution of housing to the care and support system has been recognised via the Care Act, defining housing as a 'health related' activity. The Care Act 2014 also stipulates that Hertfordshire County Council retains social care duties in relation to the delivery of home adaptations.

In response, a partnership review between the District and Borough Councils and the County Council was commissioned by the Chief Executive's Co-Ordination Group (CECG). The governance arrangements for the review include a Steering Group with representatives from each of the Councils and a project group made up of two representatives from the local authorities, HCC project management resource, a professional lead and an external subject matter expert.

The partnership has undertaken work to develop a proposal for a Shared HIA Service and brought a paper to the CECG in December 2015 setting out the options for the delivery of the service.

1.3 Purpose of the Business Case

The purpose of this document is to establish whether there is a sufficient business case for exploring in more detail the setting up of a Shared Housing Improvement Agency (HIA) function and whether there is a particular way of sharing this service that is preferred.

The business case will test how far the potential partner Councils are prepared to work together towards common ends, informed by a high level analysis of whether a shared service model has sufficient cost and service benefits to proceed with the initiative.

The business case offers the Project Board and members of the respective Councils the opportunity to consider the merits of the proposal and the investment required before committing further resource.

The Business Case document describes:

- Why the Councils are considering sharing Housing Improvement Services
- The objectives of the project
- The approach taken
- The options that were considered
- The recommendation that is being proposed with associated costs and timescales
- The major implications and risks of the project

2 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

2.1 Why Consider Sharing Home Improvement Services

Councils across Hertfordshire work effectively in a wide range of partnerships in many service areas. The drivers behind a Shared Home Improvement Agency (HIA) Service are:

- To think strategically about the use of home adaptations and take a joined up approach to improving outcomes across health, social care and housing
- Supporting independent living by enabling Hertfordshire residents access to an appropriate service that is robust and equitable with transparency of delivery.
- More efficient and resilient service that helps local authorities deal with increased budget pressures
- The existing track record of effective two-tier working in the County
- The opportunity to explore new and innovative ways of working such as development of a Home Improvement hub
- The wish to avoid duplication of improvement efforts

2.2 Project Vision, Objectives and Benefits

Vision

The vision for the DFG proposal is to create a Shared Home Improvement Agency function inclusive of Disabled Facilities Grant service and integrated Occupational Therapy.

Objectives

The key deliverables of the Shared Home Improvement Service are set out below

- Ensure that all individuals in Hertfordshire who need housing adaptations to support independent living will have access to an appropriate service that is timely, accessible, equitable and fit for purpose to address rising demographic pressures
- Deliver a fully standardised service, enhancing operational efficiency, customer satisfaction and improving value for money
- Implement robust monitoring arrangements against key performance indicators
- Improve service resilience through joined up working, adopting a common methodology and service standards, sharing staff knowledge, skills and expertise
- Open up future opportunities to expand into private sector adaptations and align to wider Clinical Commissioning Group activity in order to maximise income generation, efficiency and value and impact of the DFG element of the Better Care Fund.

Benefits

The benefits of a Shared Home Improvement Service are:

- Increasingly effective use of the total DFG resource available to participating authorities resulting from knowledge sharing and efficiency of process
- Economies of scale in terms of staffing structure, working practices and systems
- A resilient service able to deal with fluctuations of demand, and therefore accessible to those when needed
- Increased customer satisfaction
- A solution which is available to all Hertfordshire councils
- A size of team which allows for career progression

3 APPROACH TO DEVELOPING THE BUSINESS CASE

3.1 Remit of the Project

The purpose of this document is to establish whether there is a sufficient business case for exploring in more detail the setting up of a Shared Housing Improvement Agency (HIA) function and whether there is a particular way of sharing this service that is preferred.

The business case will test how far the potential partner Councils are prepared to work together towards common ends, informed by a high level analysis of whether a shared service model has sufficient cost and service benefits to proceed with the initiative.

In light of the change in funding stream for DFGs, the district councils, in partnership with the County Council held a workshop in August 2015 to discuss current DFG service arrangements and areas for improvement. It was agreed that it would be useful to conduct a review of the way DFG services are accessed and delivered across the county.

In January 2016 the Chief Executive's Co-ordination Group (CECG) considered an options paper. CECG authorised the creation of a project to examine the Business Case for a Shared Home Improvement Agency function, committing to funding project management support to achieve this.

Subject to Business Case approval, the intention is to implement new structural arrangements in 2017/18 followed by a two year period of service development as new ways of working are established.

Costings have been carried out for a small group of five authorities which have indicated a significant interest in progressing with the shared service, with a further authority presented as joining in Year Two.

Underpinning this Business Case is a set of workings which can easily be flexed for other combinations of authorities depending on appetite for inclusion within the proposal. Table 1 shows the representation of authorities which have been included in the costings.

Table 1: Representation of authorities within the Business Case

Year One Five Authorities	Year Two Six Authorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broxbourne Borough Council • East Herts Council • Hertfordshire County Council • North Hertfordshire District Council • Watford Borough Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broxbourne Borough Council • East Herts Council • Hertfordshire County Council • North Hertfordshire District Council • Stevenage Borough Council • Watford Borough Council

3.2 Setting up the Project

Following the August workshop the project structure was agreed as set out below. A Project Lead was identified and Operational Group established.

Project Governance

The following governance groups are already in existence for this project:

- Fortnightly Operational Group (Project Team) chaired by the Project Lead – Jamie Sutterby, with representatives from two District Councils.
- Steering Group (Project Team) chaired by a District Council lead, representatives from every District councils attend
- Chief Executive's Co-ordination Group (CECG) to provide steer where necessary
- Member updates where necessary for decision making
- Workstreams to develop different strands of the implementation process

3.3 Stages in Developing the Business Case Below are the key phases which make up the Business Case process:

Figure 1: Business Case Development Stages



Following approval of this Outline Business Case the project has progressed to developing the Final Business Case, and has started to develop the Implementation Plan. This includes a detailed Service Specification and more detailed financial information. See Appendix C for a high-level timeline of the project.

Section 4 Establish Baseline

This section seeks to outline the position of each authority in relation to the cost of their current service, performance, staffing numbers, grades, roles, and IT systems.

Section 5 Appraise Option

This section seeks to analyse options that have been considered and provide appropriate recommendations as to the preferred option.

Section 6 Define Scope

This section seeks to clarify what the shared service could deliver, as well as boundaries of its activity and how these activities will interface with partner Councils.

Section 7 Quantify Costs and Benefits

This section seeks to set out the quantitative benefits of the shared service model, and detail both the current running costs for each authority, as well as the future running costs under the proposal, including set-up costs, and ongoing staffing costs. It looks at methods of apportioning the costs between the authorities involved

Section 8 Project Management Delivery and Next Steps

This sections seeks to outline of how the project is set-up, will be managed and the key risks involved.

4 ESTABLISHING THE BASELINE

4.1 Current Cost of Home Improvement Services

Since the outline business case, baseline cost information has been rechecked with districts. The most significant change resulting from this is that running costs have been amended from £539k to an increased figure of £900k.

The following caveats were noted regarding the baseline cost information:

- There is a mixture of information from both financial and service records, not all of which was consistent within individual authorities.
- DFG staffing is set up in a number of different ways in authorities which made it hard to compare costs on a like for like basis.
- Not all authorities took the same approach regarding the charging of costs to capital and costs were not always separately identified to DFG activity.

With these caveats in mind, the exercise demonstrated that total spending on DFG and HRA adaptations by district councils within the county has been of the order of an average of £6.2m per year in recent years. DBC spends an additional £1.5m on HRA adaptation works and equipment, but these are currently delivered through an outsourced arrangement so have been excluded.

The baseline position of district council expenditure on Disabled Facilities Grant and other adaptations, along with funding is summarised as shown in Table 2 below. The table summarises average costs using all available data provided by district councils which, depending on the authority, covered the period 2012/13 to 2015/16

Table 2: District Average Annual Cost of DFG and Home Improvement Related Spend

The table below summarises the average annual cost of DFG and Home Improvement related services in the participating authorities.

	BBC	DBC	EHF	HBC	NHDC	SADC	SBC	TRDC	WBC	WHBC	Districts total
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Running Costs	111	66	113	82	50	70	80	94	111	123	900
Disabled Facilities Spend	450	602	384	435	605	701	350	418	386	442	4,773
HRA adaptations	0	0	0	0	0	0	500	0	0	0	500
Gross cost of service	561	668	497	517	655	771	930	512	497	565	6,173
Agency fee income	0	(35)	0	0	(50)	0	0	0	0	0	(85)
Net cost of service	561	634	497	517	605	771	930	512	497	565	6,088
Funded by											
Grant	(314)	(366)	(293)	(295)	(360)	(291)	(305)	(250)	(279)	(316)	(3,070)
Revenue resources	(56)	(32)	(113)	(82)	(12)	(70)	(80)	0	(36)	(123)	(604)
HRA resources (revenue and capital)	0	0	0	0	0	0	(500)	0	0	0	(500)
Other capital financing (usually capital receipts)	(191)	(236)	(90)	(140)	(232)	(409)	(45)	(262)	(183)	(126)	(1,914)
Total financing	(561)	(634)	(497)	(517)	(605)	(771)	(930)	(512)	(497)	(565)	(6,088)

Notes

- Baseline figures have been investigated thoroughly since the outline business case; the most significant changes are that running costs have been amended from £539k to an increased figure of £900k. This is following the verification of district information, and the inclusion in running costs of system costs, overheads, and travel costs, where previously only staffing costs were shown.
- There is differing treatment among districts regarding whether staffing costs are charged to revenue or capital.
- Registered housing providers also fund some adaptations, in some cases in full but more commonly by contributing a percentage towards the cost of works; these figures are not generally included in table 2.
- Three Rivers and St Albans did not respond to the request for updated and verified information, therefore, the original information received has been used.
- Client contributions have been excluded as there was inconsistent interpretation and treatment of these among districts essentially rendering them non-comparable.

4.1.2 County Council Overview

HCC funds minor adaptations including grab rails, stair rails, bath rails or other works that are below £1,000. If the work is over £1,000 and the person is eligible for a Disabled Facilities Grant they are encouraged to apply for the grant unless the work is urgent (i.e. to facilitate hospital discharge or if the person is terminally ill). For those who are assessed to pay a contribution to the Disabled Facilities Grant and the work costs less than £1,000, HCC can pay the person's contribution.

Major adaptations may be arranged and funded in various ways, depending on the cost of the adaptation, whether the property is Council, Housing Association, privately rented or owner-occupied, the financial circumstances of the person and the differing policies and practices of other agencies. Funding for major adaptations may be available where the person is deemed to be eligible, and no other sources of funding are available.

Given the focus on DFG via the BCFs, in March 2016 the Department of Health discontinued the Social Care Capital Grant (SCCG) from 2016/17. The SCCG in Hertfordshire was worth £2.302m in 2015/16.

In respect of Adult Social Care, HCC employs Occupational Therapists (OTs) under its contract with Serco. The OTs work in partnership with district council DFG services, giving advice and making prescriptions in relation to DFG activity. Staffing costs currently relating to the OT resource are estimated at £800k, and ongoing OT staffing costs are expected to be fully funded by HCC in any shared service arrangement. Serco advise that an OT resource of 13 FTE would be required in the new arrangement.

Table 3 shows HCC's total adaptations expenditure (2015/16 figures) alongside the countywide OT resource. This is added to the district total (from above) to show a Hertfordshire total.

Table 3: Total HIA Related expenditure

	HCC	Districts Total	Hertfordshire Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s
Running Costs	800	900	1,700
Disabled Facilities	559	4,773	5,332
HRA adaptations	0	500	500
Gross cost of service	1,359	6,173	7,532
Agency fee income	0	(85)	(85)
Net cost of service	1,359	6,088	7,447
Funded by			
Grant	0	(3,070)	(3,070)
Revenue resources	(1,359)	(604)	(1,963)
HRA resources (revenue and capital)	0	(500)	(500)
Other capital financing (usually capital receipts)	0	(1,914)	(1,914)
Total financing	(1,359)	(6,088)	(7,447)

4.1.3 DFG Grant Funding

BCF allocations of DFG to individual authorities increased in 2016/17 as per Table 4 below.

Table 4: DFG Grant Allocation 2015/16 and 2016/17

	2015/16	2016/17	Change
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
BBC	314	577	263
DBC	366	675	309
EHC	293	530	237
HBC	295	538	242
NHDC	360	654	294
SADC	291	531	240
SBC	305	576	271
TRDC	250	456	206
WBC	279	523	244
WHBC	316	592	276
Hertfordshire Total	3,070	5,652	2,581

4.2 Current Services

Making comparisons between districts is very difficult because each authority has developed a DFG service in its own way to respond to local needs and maximise use of resources within their organisation.

4.2.1 Service type

In six authorities, the service is managed within the environmental health service and in the other four districts, it sits within the housing service. In most authorities, the DFG service is part of the wider private sector housing function although in one authority, it is in a different part of the housing service altogether.

There are a number of different delivery models. All authorities have some direct input into the grant process although the range of involvement varies from minimal with the main activity being grant approvals and completions, to more detailed involvement akin to that provided by an HIA. This might include discussing options around adaptations, supporting clients in completing application paperwork, obtaining estimates on behalf of clients and overseeing works.

Staffing levels vary between different authorities. In most authorities, the DFG function is carried out by officers who provide a range of services and it has been necessary to estimate the proportion related to the DFG function. The required officer resource is also affected by the extent to which agents or other support services are used.

4.2.2 Waiting Lists

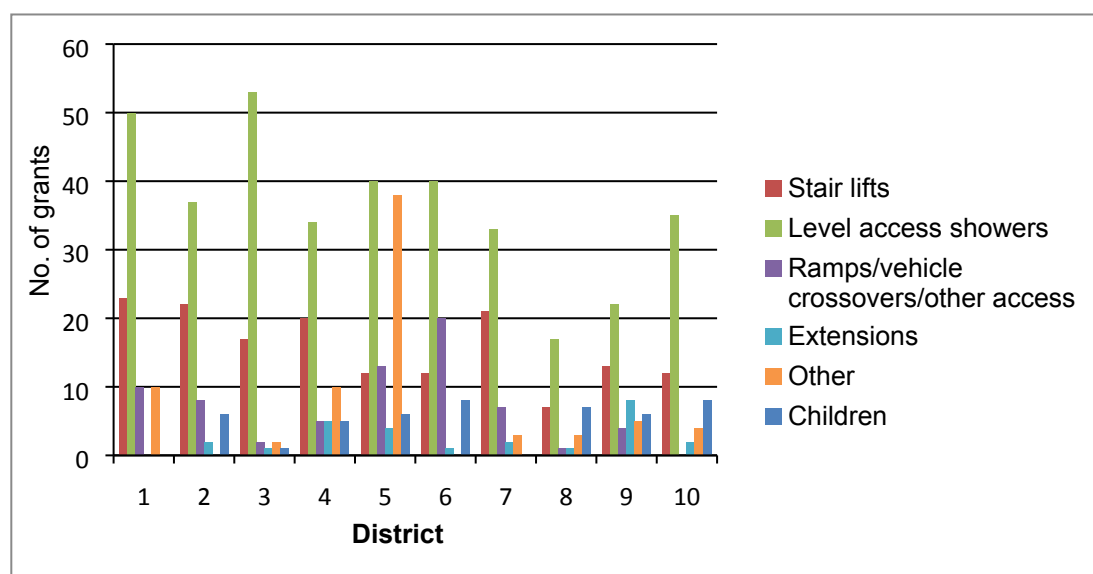
HCC has reported that the current average waiting time for an Occupational Therapy assessment is 8-12 weeks.

Districts have reported that once a referral is received from the OT Service, an initial response is made within 2 weeks or less, so effectively there are no waiting lists across districts. Completion of the adaptation required will depend on a number of factors including the nature of the works, input from the client, and availability of contractors.

4.2.3 Types of adaptation

The charts below indicate the main types of adaptation that DFGs are used to fund. It can be seen that in every district, level access showers are the most common adaptation, a total of 361 accounting for nearly 50% of all adaptations across the County. Level access showers and stair lifts total around 70% of all adaptations

Figure 2 Adaptation type by district authority

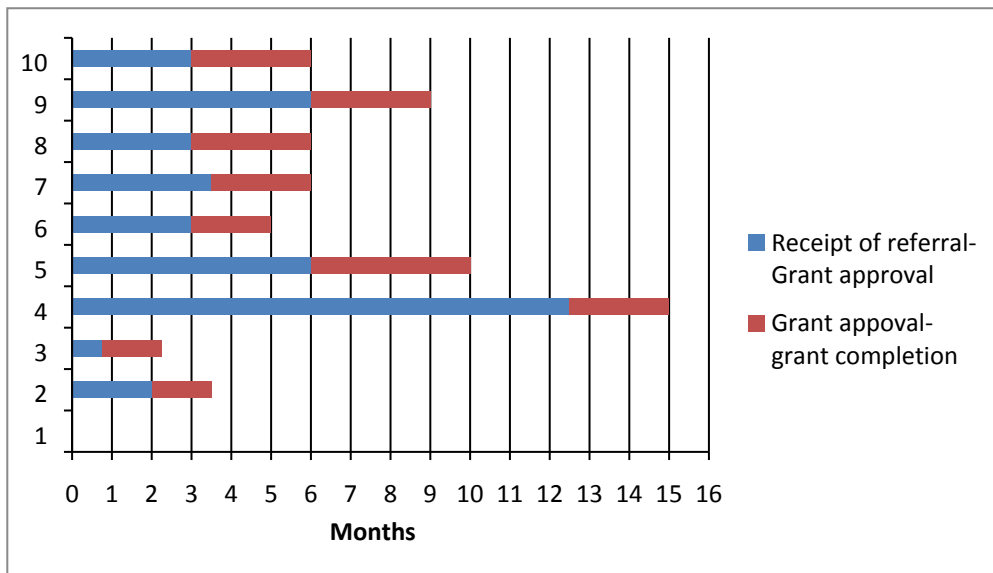


4.2.4 Timescales

The timescales for assessment, processing of grant applications and completion of works were investigated as part of a previous project. However, it was impossible to even provide an indication of how long the process is from a client perspective.

Once district councils receive a referral, there are a number of stages that need to be gone through, first to complete an application and then, once a grant is approved, to complete the works. District councils were asked to estimate the typical time for these two stages, the results of which are shown in the chart below. Again, it has to be accepted that there will be variations because larger jobs, for example an extension to incorporate a bathroom, will obviously take longer than the fitting of a stair lift.

Figure 3 Timescales for processing grant applications by district councils



5 SCOPE OF SERVICES

The scope section of this Business Case seeks to clarify what the shared service could deliver, as well as boundaries of its activity and how these activities will interface with partner Councils.

The Operational Group considered which responsibilities and functions within the DFG service could be shared across the participating Councils.

5.1 Overview

The vision for the HIA is that it will provide a range of services to support independent living. The core element of the service would be delivery of the disabled facilities grant function. However, it is envisaged that this core service can be enhanced in a number of ways to provide an improved service to clients who qualify for a DFG and those who do not qualify but nonetheless need adaptations or other support, which if not provided, could result in increased costs to the health and social care authorities.

5.2 Core Service

The service will both manage the application process for Disabled Facility Grants (DFGs) and discretionary grants, assessment of applications and applicants (including Occupational Therapist (OT) assessments) plus the delivery, including supporting people through the repairs and adaptation to their home.

The key objective will be to provide an advice service which ensures people have information about their housing options and where the choice is made to enable older people, people with disabilities (including children) and those on low incomes to remain living in their homes safely, securely and independently. Support provided will be delivered to people in their own home.

The services to be provided will include:

- Information, advice and guidance, including administration of grant applications, test of resources and income management advice/benefit checks
- Advice about housing options and other support/housing schemes plus sign posting as appropriate to schemes such as equity release
- OT assessments
- Scheme design and project management including letting the works contract.

By integrating the OT assessment and adaptation delivery elements of the process into a single service, it is envisaged that the timescales for delivery of adaptations can be significantly reduced from many months to weeks for straight forward adaptations.

5.3 Enhanced Services

Currently, some clients are assessed as requiring adaptations but due to their financial situation are not entitled to a DFG. At present no further support is offered and clients are expected to make their own arrangements for the adaptations that they require. The HIA would be in a position to offer assistance in arranging the required adaptation work for a proportionate fee. This fee income would contribute to the overall cost of running the service.

Many HIA services around the country offer a handyman service to assist people in carrying out basic maintenance and enhancement tasks in their own homes. A reasonable fee is charged, which may be a fixed fee for specific tasks or a reasonable hourly rate. Such services from reliable agencies are valued by elderly people or other vulnerable groups. The aim would be to operate this service on at least a cost neutral basis, with any surplus contributing to the Service's overall costs.

5.4 Future Service Development

The Care Act 2014 sought to put in place significant changes in how health and social care services are delivered, which all authorities and agencies working in this sector need to respond to. The Better Care Fund presents an opportunity to integrate provision of help with home adaptations across housing, health and social care systems to achieve better health and wellbeing outcomes. The success of this regime will be measured by outcomes including:

- Numbers of people admitted to residential and care homes;
- Effectiveness of reablement;
- Delayed transfers of care ('bed-blocking');
- Avoidable emergency admissions; and
- Patient / service user experience

The HIA will be well placed to develop enhanced services to contribute towards these outcomes, for example by enabling people to continue to live independently at home rather than being admitted to residential and care homes.

The table below uses the workshop results to give a view, based on the mapping exercise, of which activities would be performed by the shared service, and which by council partners.

Table 5: Core HIA Process: Boundaries and Interfaces with Councils

Activity	Shared Service	Councils
Home Improvement Risk Assessment	Maintain risk assessment of activity & use this to inform work planning	Contribute information to the risk assessment
Work Planning	Formulate an annual plan of activity	Consider, influence and accept the annual plan
Work Allocation	Determine how resources to be allocated and when activity will occur	Agree the timing of activity and make available resources to support this
Reporting	Report on activity to Councils	Share reports with stakeholders

5.5 Business Management and Support Processes

The service will have business management needs as set out below:

Figure 4: Business Management and Support

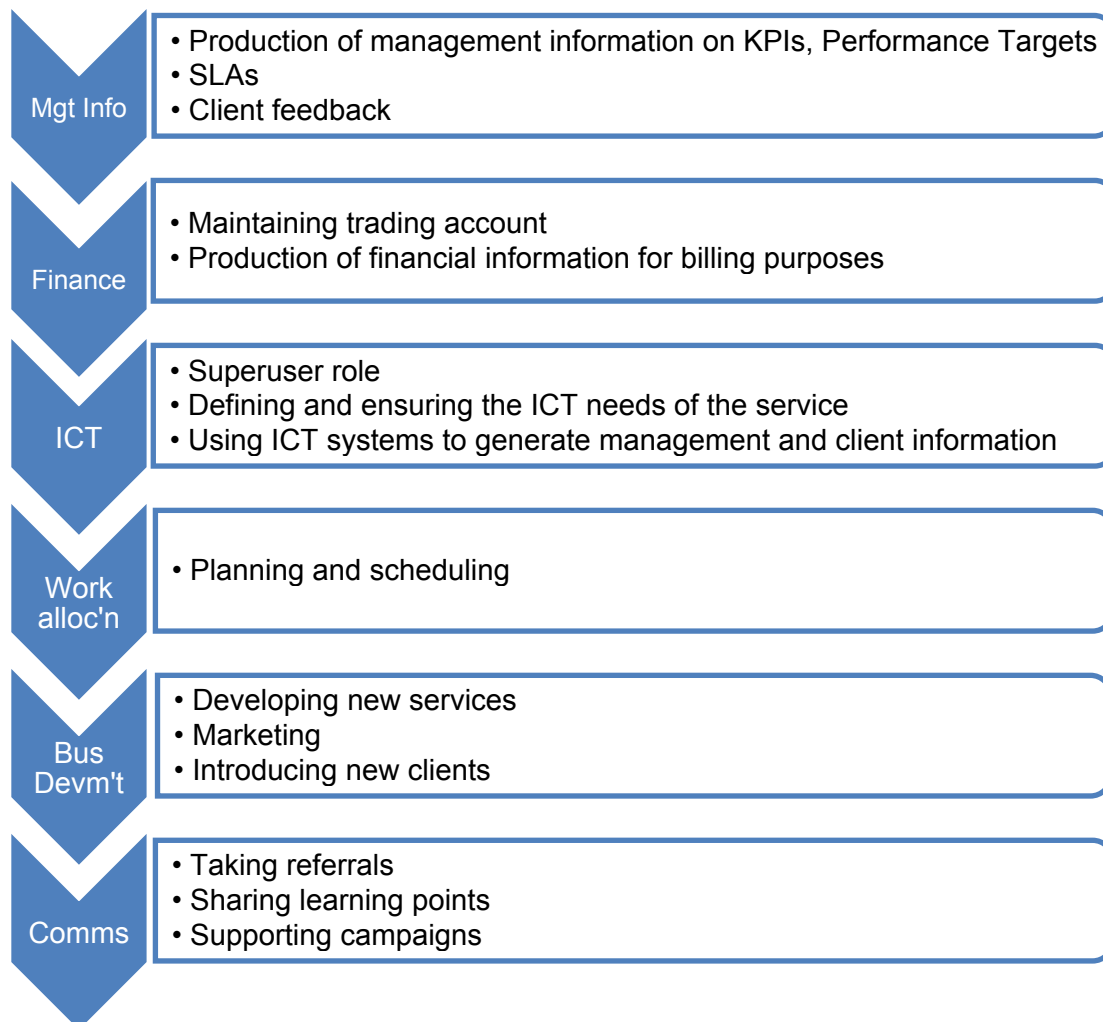


Table 6: Business Management and Support: Boundaries and Interfaces with Councils

This table gives a view of the allocation of business management and support tasks between a shared service and partner councils.

Task	Distribution	
	Shared Service	Councils
Performance reporting	Generate performance reports according to agreed format and timetable	Monitor and review activity
Finance	Generate bills Maintain trading account	
ICT	Implement and maintain ICT systems	Provide access to local systems
Work allocation	Determine how resources to	Agree the timing of activity and

Task	Distribution	
	Shared Service	Councils
	be allocated and when activity will occur	make available resources to support this
Business Development	Identify and develop opportunities to grow the service	
Communications	Communicate the results of activity	Provide feedback on service performance Communicate the work of the service to stakeholders

5.6 Exclusions

The following areas are excluded from the scope of this business case:

Extended Involvement Team OTs – the EIT OTs remit is large and varied and a large proportion of their time is spent on other work besides adaptations. For this reason it would be too complicated to extract from the service now. However the EIT will be a key interface with the new Shared Housing Improvement Agency and with a view to include this in the future.

6. QUANTIFYING COSTS AND BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSED MODEL

6.1 Proposal

The Business Case proposal is to set up a Shared Service to deliver a Shared Housing Improvement Agency function across Hertfordshire.

6.2 Benefits

A shared service model will deliver financial and qualitative benefits that meet the project's objectives. Qualitative benefits were outlined in the executive summary.

Financial benefits, which would accrue even in the six authority approach, include:

- Joint procurement
- Sharing of management overheads & other specialist and process-related economies of scale
- Opportunity for a consolidated financial assessments process.

6.3 Costs

A model has been developed which allows the costs of the service to be developed for any combination of authorities joining the service. The assumptions and caveats relating to this modelling are:

- Staffing structure and grading of the proposed service will require HAY evaluation (or similar).
- We have not attempted to model for increasing demand or costs.
- We have not estimated savings from changes to procurement practice.
- We have made no estimate of savings from financial assessments - there may be duplication between financial assessments carried out by districts and by HCC, providing scope for efficiency savings.
- We have assumed that the OT service for DFGs will transfer to the shared service and this will be fully funded by HCC.
- There may be scope for savings or increased capacity on the part of the service by flexing the mix of professionally qualified and non-qualified staff in the proposed structure.

6.3.1 Sizing the Team

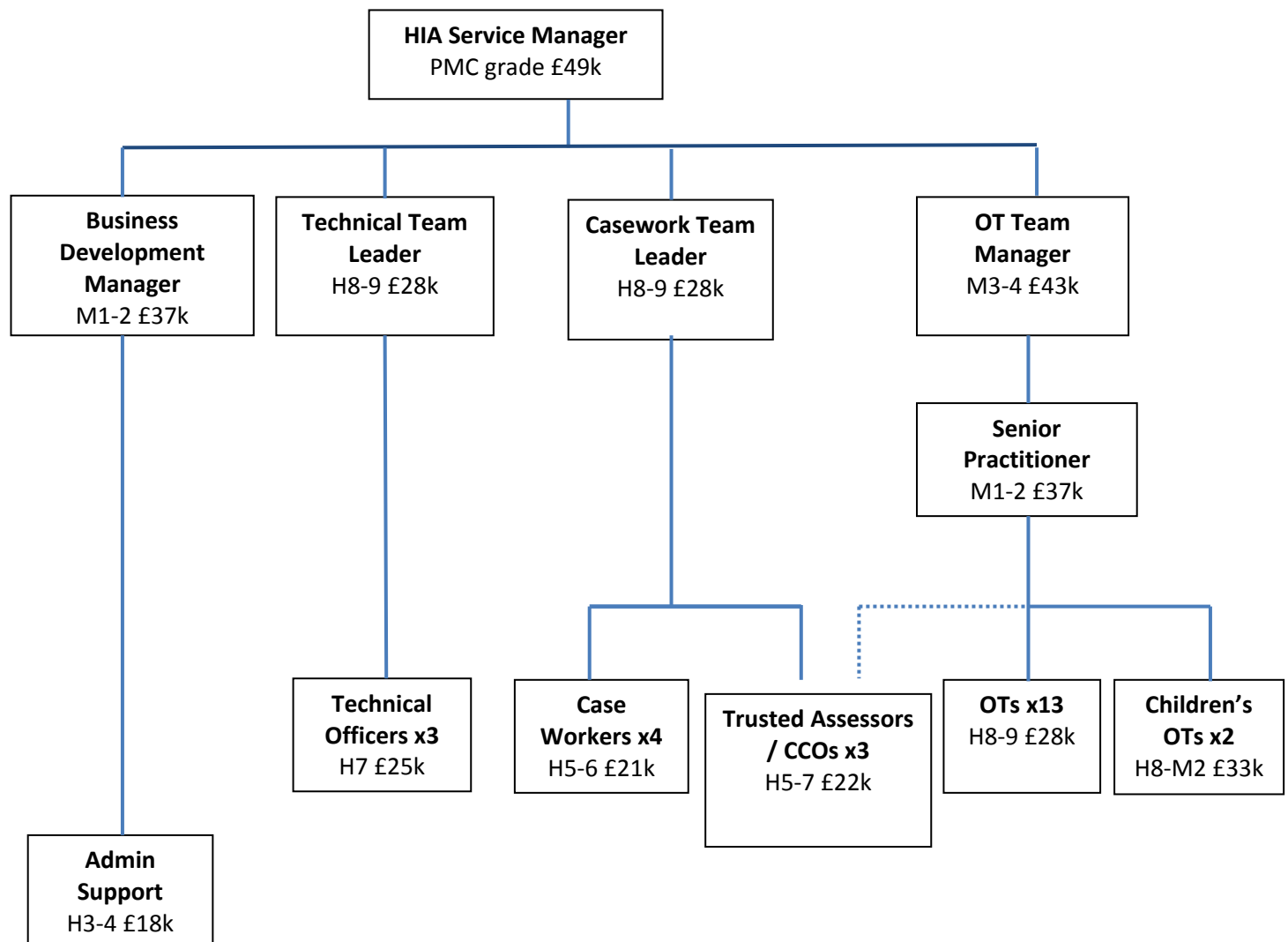
In order to determine a model for the team the caseload numbers of the district and borough councils and of the OT service were obtained.

Benchmarking states that a Technical Officer (TO) working in a high-performing HIA, with a good efficient system, a contractor framework and a robust case management IT system, should be able to process around 175 cases a year and a Caseworker (CO) between 120 and 150, depending on the complexity of the case.

For OT activity a figure of 4.4 cases per week (taken from the HCC Performance Dashboard) has been used, along with an average leave, sickness, and training absence of 15%). This was then used to develop the staffing model shown in Figure 5 below.

This staffing model below is for the five authority model.

Figure 5: Staffing Model for Shared Home Improvement Agency Function



6.3.2 Proposed Ongoing Costs of the model

The annual running costs of the above model are demonstrated in table 7 below:

Table 7: Proposed Ongoing cost of the Shared Home Improvement Agency Service

	Five authority model
	£000s
HIA Service staffing	519
OT Service	671
HIA Service costs and overheads	51
Total running costs	1,241

OT Service costs above include the cost of two Children's Occupational Therapists; however there are still ongoing discussions about where these posts will be funded from.

Costs of adaptations are forecast in the model to continue as in current operations.

The forecast running costs exceed the current running costs noted in Table 2 above; solutions to this potential barrier are discussed in Section 7.4.

It will be helpful to design a service with a structure that is fit for purpose going forward in view of rising levels of demand resulting from demographic pressures, and the government's wish to invest more funding in this area through to 2019/20.

OT's will continue to provide a service to all districts whether they are in or out of the shared service model. This will be fully funded by HCC.

6.3.3 Initial Set-up Costs

Areas of expenditure have been identified below; these are estimates of costs based on the experience of setting up a Shared Anti-Fraud Service. Extra costs may be identified once more detailed implementation planning has taken place but costs are not likely to be material to each authority involved.

Table 8: Set-up costs of the Shared Service

Description of expenditure	Cost
	£000s
Project management	Covered by BCF
Legal support	1.5 per partner
Case management system; assumes new system purchased	25
IT, telephony, other supplies and services set-up costs	25
Head of Service from April 2017 – Sept 2017	27
Cost per partner based on six authority model	14

6.4 Apportionment of Running Costs

Grant conditions relating to DFG advise that the monies can only be used to fund capital expenditure. Therefore we have assumed for these purposes that the running costs of the shared service need to be charged to revenue

Three options for apportionment of running costs were set out in the outline business case and Option A was recommended. This option entailed apportioning the running cost based on the expenditure on aids and adaptations, using a three year average over the period 2013/14 to 2015/16. All further financial information is based on this option.

In all three scenarios it is assumed that HCC pays for the full costs of the OT resource, plus a proportionate amount of the overall head of service, and does not bear any of the other running costs.

Tables 9 and 10 below show the overall before and after position for each authority of joining the shared service. This has been split to show separately the revenue and capital impact on the authorities.

The option to charge fee income has been included in order to maintain revenue costs within the current funding envelope as far as possible, as requested by district CFO's. Currently, a number of districts charge an agency fee on DFG works. This process involves using an agent to carry out the works which enables a project management fee to be charged. This can then be used to offset the extra revenue costs.

Districts who charge fee income charge a percentage of between 8-10% currently but there is scope to charge more if necessary.

Table 9.1: YEAR ONE: Five Authority Model (Four Districts plus HCC) - Revenue Impact

	BBC	EHC	NHDC	WBC	TOTAL
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Running costs of shared service	102	87	137	87	413
Capitalisable costs	(53)	(45)	(71)	(45)	(213)
Net revenue cost of service	49	42	66	42	199
Current revenue budget for DFG	56	113	12	123	305
Residual costs in district i.e. non-cashable savings	55	48	31	111	244
Extra revenue budget required for shared service	48	(24)	85	29	138
Fee income at 15% of DFG spend (6 month operation)	(34)	(29)	(45)	(29)	(137)
Extra revenue budget required if charge fee income	14	(52)	39	0	2
Pooling of income to generate revenue neutral position for each authority	-	-	-	-	2

Notes

- The revenue running costs for each authority have been apportioned based on current levels of DFG spend.
- Salaries are part-year only as the service will gradually build up staff until go live in September. Fee income has therefore only been estimated for 6 months of operation.
- HCC fully funds the OT service and pays a proportionate amount towards the Head of Service salary costs. HCC has not been included in the table as it does not take a share of fee income.
- Residual costs in each authority have been identified; these are non-cashable savings if the district moved to the shared service model such as IT system costs, overhead recharges – which would still need to be met from other budgets.
- The revenue cost of the shared service has been compared to each district's current revenue budget for DFG taking into account residual costs. Districts would be expected to contribute a maximum revenue amount of their current revenue budget for DFG less residual costs to the shared service.

- Due to the caveat given by districts that the shared service would only be a feasible option if costs were maintained at current levels, the option of using fee income has also been included. For the shared service to break even in Year One, fee income of 15% would need to be charged, as shown above.
- This assumes a pooling of fee income in order to generate a revenue neutral position for each district, as agreed at the Hertfordshire Chief Financial Officers' meeting in December.
- The expectation is that fee income received may negate the need to ask districts for their revenue contribution, and a decision would be taken towards the end of the financial year based on performance of the shared service. If fee income at 15% was charged and the same number of adaptations were carried out as in previous years, no revenue contribution would need to be asked for, as shown in the table above.
- The aim is that the shared service will be able to carry out significantly more adaptations than currently, and therefore, the table reflects the worst case scenario, which still enables the shared service to break even, without having to ask for revenue contributions.

Table 9.2: YEAR TWO: Six Authority Model (Five Districts plus HCC) – Revenue Impact

	BBC	EHC	NHDC	SBC	WBC	TOTAL
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Running costs of shared service	116	99	156	90	99	559
Capitalisable costs	(62)	(53)	(83)	(48)	(53)	(300)
Net revenue cost of service	54	46	72	42	46	259
Fee income at 11.5% of DFG spend	(52)	(44)	(70)	(40)	(44)	(250)
Extra revenue budget required if charge fee income	2	2	3	2	2	9

Notes

- In Year Two, districts would NOT be asked to contribute their current revenue budget less residual costs – the shared service would be expected to break even using fee income alone.
- A fee level of 11.5% assuming the same number of adaptations being carried out as currently would enable this.

Table 10.1: Five Authority Model – Capital Impact

	BBC	EHC	NHDC	WBC	TOTAL
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
DFG works spend	450	384	605	386	1,825
Increased DFG grant 16/17	(577)	(530)	(654)	(523)	(2,284)
Extra capital money available	(127)	(146)	(49)	(137)	(459)

Table 10.2: Six Authority Model – Capital Impact

	BBC	EHC	NHDC	SBC	WBC	TOTAL
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
DFG works spend	450	384	605	350	386	2,175
Increased DFG grant 16/17	(577)	(530)	(654)	(576)	(523)	(2,860)
Extra capital money available	(127)	(146)	(49)	(226)	(137)	(685)

Notes

- HCC is not included in these tables as it does not receive DFG.
- The capital impact on individual districts is the same regardless of how many authorities are in the model.

6.5 Future Planning

6.5.1 Alternative Use of DFG

The BCF Policy Framework clearly encourages innovative use of DFG, as well as setting out an expectation that local authorities with housing responsibility are expected to engage in joint BCF planning with welfare and Health authorities, and it is expected that health priorities, such as delayed transfer of care and readmission to hospital, will become more important in the way DFG is spent. The scope of the Regulatory Reform Order was also extended in 2008-09 to include use of DFG money, which enables authorities to use this money for wider preventative purposes.

Hertfordshire's demographics show an increasingly ageing population and therefore investing in more preventative services is key to reducing demand on services and avoiding higher costs in the future.

HCC has already begun focusing on prevention as a strategic priority. Strategic Management Board and Health and Wellbeing Board have both endorsed the strategic shift to prevention.

Based on this BCF guidance and the focus on prevention, there may be opportunities in the future to top-slice and pool together a proportion of this extra capital money to be spent collectively on Hertfordshire wide projects, for example, provision of telecare or reablement. A number of other authorities have already adopted this approach.

Top-slicing 10% of the extra capital funding for each district would give the Hertfordshire BCF £240,000 to invest in preventative work. Top-slicing 20% would provide £480,000. However, this would need agreement from all authorities to proceed so is mentioned simply as a potential consideration for the future.

7 PROJECT MANAGEMENT DELIVERY AND NEXT STEPS

7.1 Project Constraints, Assumptions and Dependencies

Key **constraints** for consideration in supporting the Business Case:

- Work stream leads will not be dedicated to the project on a full time basis so capacity, particularly for key elements, will need to be kept under review
- Availability of stakeholders will affect the delivery of the project, for example OT and District staff participation in focus groups and scoping exercises

Key **assumptions** for consideration:

- A Finance Manager is assigned to support the project
- The initial phase of the new service will be from implementation to go-live
- Go-live is planned for September 2017

Key **dependencies** for consideration:

- Harmonising systems or procuring a brand new system
- The establishment of effective and workable governance arrangements
- The need to recognise the transitional period into the Shared Service and any requirements to support DFG activity over this period
- The partnership continues for at least five years to ensure the opportunity to develop a sustainable solution. Reviews of the partnership would take place periodically.
- The provision of services which meet each organisation's needs and strategic objectives

7.2 Project Next Steps

It is proposed that the current governance arrangements continue into the next phase of the project i.e. that the Business Case is presented to the respective Cabinets, that senior Members are kept informed of progress through the usual channels, and all Members generally through joint communications where appropriate.

Governance arrangements and decision-making arrangements for the shared service operation will be explored in more detail in the next phase of the programme.

7.2.1 Formalising the Commitment of the Participating Councils

The Operational Group agreed in April 2016 that after this Business Case has been approved, each potential partner will make its own assessment of the merits of the case in relation to its own position. Each Council will apply its own decision-making process and confirm the outcome to the Board.

It is **recommended** that each authority agrees to formally commit to participate in the shared service by a date to be agreed.

7.2.2 Resourcing the Project

At all levels of our organisations, working on this project is a rapid learning curve. The engagement of staff and the way they have worked together in the project teams has been positive, and needs to continue. Ensuring that staff in each Council at all levels of the project are able to continue to commit the necessary time and effort is critical to the success of the programme.

It is **recommended** that the programme continues to be resourced by the participating Councils to work alongside the Project Manager to prepare the Service Development phase and start preparations for implementation. This resource is required to ensure that the project can be delivered in accordance with the proposed timetable.

7.2.3 Change Management

The proposed project will impact significantly on how DFG services are provided, commissioned and managed throughout the participating Councils. This will affect not only those staff directly engaged in the provision of this service but also the Councils receiving the service.

A key success factor will be the ability of the participating Councils to communicate with a wide range of stakeholders and ensure that each is adequately informed and actively and positively engaged in the development and delivery of change.

It is vital that all stakeholders in all the participating Councils are kept apprised of the Boards decisions, the scope and aims of the project and of project progress. Stakeholder management and change management will be run as an integral part of the project management process in order to inform and improve the development of the project, identify potential resistance at an early stage, shorten delivery timescales and increase the likelihood of all potential project benefits being realised.

7.2.4 Implementation plan

The service will need to work to an agreed implementation plan post go-live to prioritise how each of these service elements will be brought on stream. It will be beneficial to have additional project support during the early stages of the new service to support this.

7.2.5 Shared Service Operation

Detailed work will need to be carried out on what the Shared Home Improvement Service model will look like (business process re-engineering), how it can most effectively operate (management and governance arrangements), where it will be accommodated and how each council can best monitor its operation (client function). Some consideration will also need to be given to branding and how the service is distinguished from other related services.

7.2.6 Shared Service Performance

It will be necessary to define performance indicators and targets for the Shared Home Improvement Service. These will need to reflect the benefit delivered by the service to partners in terms of savings and improvements made, and ideally should incentivise the service to increase the value of supported living services. The data required to produce performance information will need to be straightforward to obtain.

7.2.7 Systems Convergence

It is **recommended** that the participating Councils agree in principle to agree to adopt a single case management system in order to gain the benefits of moving to a common system.

7.2.8 Harmonising policies

Each Council has its own set of policies in relation to this area. Variance in key policies is potentially an area of diseconomy to a future shared services operation. It is **recommended** that policy harmonisation is progressed where it is straightforward to do so, for example in the areas of:

- General operation procedure including performance criteria
- Financial inclusion or debt management policies
- Social care strategies, including carers, mental health and older people

Harmonisation will help achieve efficiency in terms of minimising any resource required to administer divergent policies, and reduced potential for errors in advice given.

7.3 Project Stakeholders

- Council staff
- Council senior managers and CFOs / Chief Executives
- Serco contract leads
- Elected Members
- Voluntary/Health / Housing / Social Care sectors
- Residents of Hertfordshire
- CFOs of all interested parties
- East and North Hertfordshire CCG
- Herts Valleys CCG
- NHS England

7.4 Project Issues and Risks

A detailed issue log and risk register will be developed by the project team. These registers will be monitored and maintained together with appropriate rating and controls. High impact issues and risks will be escalated by the Project Manager to the Project Lead and Sponsors as appropriate.

Key **issues** for consideration in supporting the business case:

- How should any funding / charging model work
- Need for completion of financial baseline activity
- Difficult to estimate possible TUPE/pension costs to the project
- Lack of service user input so far
- Awareness of bringing all professional referral routes into one service e.g. referrals that come from Health, independent therapists or those from out of area if a service user moves

Key **risks** for consideration in supporting the business case:

Summary of Key Risks	Probability	Impact	Risk Rating	Containment
There is a risk that the existing variability in provision and contractual arrangements of local authorities' DFG services may result in the project not being able to deliver the desired model	4 Likely	4 Medium	16 Significant	Early engagement with Districts to understand their existing arrangements
There is a risk that the Framework agreement may be too expensive	3 Possible	4 Medium	12 Significant	Early market testing and learning from other similar models
There is a risk that we are unable to include Housing OTs in the initial set up as the service is part of the Serco contract – this runs for another three years.	3 Possible	8 High	24 Significant	Early engagement with Serco to discuss cost implications of the service being transferred back to the Council early
There is a risk staff retention and motivation could drop resulting in a turnover of workforce, loss of historical knowledge and skills and associated costs	3 Possible	8 High	24 Significant	Mitigate risk by working with HR to develop and implement communications and staff engagement strategy

Appendix A Options Analysis for Procurement Review

Option	Benefits	Drawbacks
A. Framework Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to reduce costs and time associated with delivering works • Time-saving efficiencies related to administrative function and handling times • Ensures consistency and equity across districts signed up to it • Resilience of labour supply • Can support small providers (continuing stream of work, less time on admin and pricing, better procurement arrangements) • If frameworks are delivered independently to other organisational changes then benefits can be realised quickly • Can be used effectively with schedule of rates to improve cost and budgeting control • Not paying more than market value for works • Flexible for customers to choose preferred provider • Encourages competitive pricing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement procedure required • Will need to be reviewed regularly (at suitable intervals) to allow new entrants and release those who no longer want to participate without penalty • Time consuming to set up • Will need significant district/borough buy-in to make effective • Frequent review to ensure best value is achieved • Providers may not want to work on complex jobs where margins are small
B. Direct contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to reduce costs and time associated with procurement • Time-saving efficiencies related to administrative function and handling times • Ensures consistency and equity across districts signed up to it • Resilience of labour supply • Develop partnership relationship • Greater savings from guaranteed work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement procedure required • Could be paying more than market value for works • Provider may lose out if market value fluctuates • Time consuming to set up • Will need significant district/borough buy-in to make effective • Large, non-local providers are likely to win business • Less flexibility/viable options if provider is underperforming
C. Do nothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good contractual arrangements in place • Knowledgeable, committed staff • Trusted brand • Support local business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not a standardised approach to costs • Time-consuming • Admin-heavy • Paying too much for big-ticket items • 'postcode lottery' for self-funders and those with contributions who may have to pay more for the same adaptation

B.1 Options Analysis for Delivery Model

Option	Benefits	Drawbacks
A: DFG service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively low-cost • Retained control of budget for local authorities • Strong trusted brand • Better use of staff resources • Knowledgeable, committed staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs a strong lead from within • Still not a fully integrated, holistic approach • Possible TUPE/redundancy issues • May not be seen as delivering sufficient benefits for effort required
B: Small Home Improvement Agency (HIA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for technical officer, caseworkers and integrated OT service in one place • Future opportunities to develop as social enterprise • Some resilience from fluctuating demand in the system • Single system/database used • Eradicates issues with local authority recruitment (workforce recruited externally) • Less bureaucracy in decision-making • Improved customer experience including reduced waiting times for clients • Better use of staff resources and reduced revenue costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of incorporating organisation • Still only a partially integrated, holistic approach • Possible TUPE/redundancy issues
C. Complete Home Improvement Agency (HIA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for technical officer, caseworkers and integrated OT service and minor adaptations in one place • Opportunity to develop as social enterprise • Strong resilience from fluctuating demand in the system • Single system/database used • Improved customer experience including reduced waiting times for clients • Better use of staff resources and reduced revenue costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of incorporating organisation • Possible TUPE/redundancy issues
D. Do nothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective service currently being delivered • Good contractual arrangements in place • Adult OT referrals have improved consistently • Open budget for legal charges • Districts top-up BCF budget • Good political buy-in • Added value – picking up on other needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing out on opportunities to improve service and realise benefits • Current timescales across the whole chain • Lack of consistency between districts (variation in cost and response times) • Client support/agency work is varied • Process is complicated for vulnerable clients

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledgeable, committed staff • Strong trusted brand • Supports local business • Driven by need not profit • Stays local • No need to delegate grant paying powers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor support for clients not eligible for DFG • Lack of promotion of DFG services • Lack of work with GPs to promote independent living • Lacking a single point of contact • Poor management of expectations initial assessment then OT closes the case • Lack of good housing advice at the start of the process • Lack of integration around the individual • No economies of scale • Lack of monitoring • Does not have a multi-channel view of independent living – more integration required for this • HES would continue to incur costs for contractor fees for minor adaptations work
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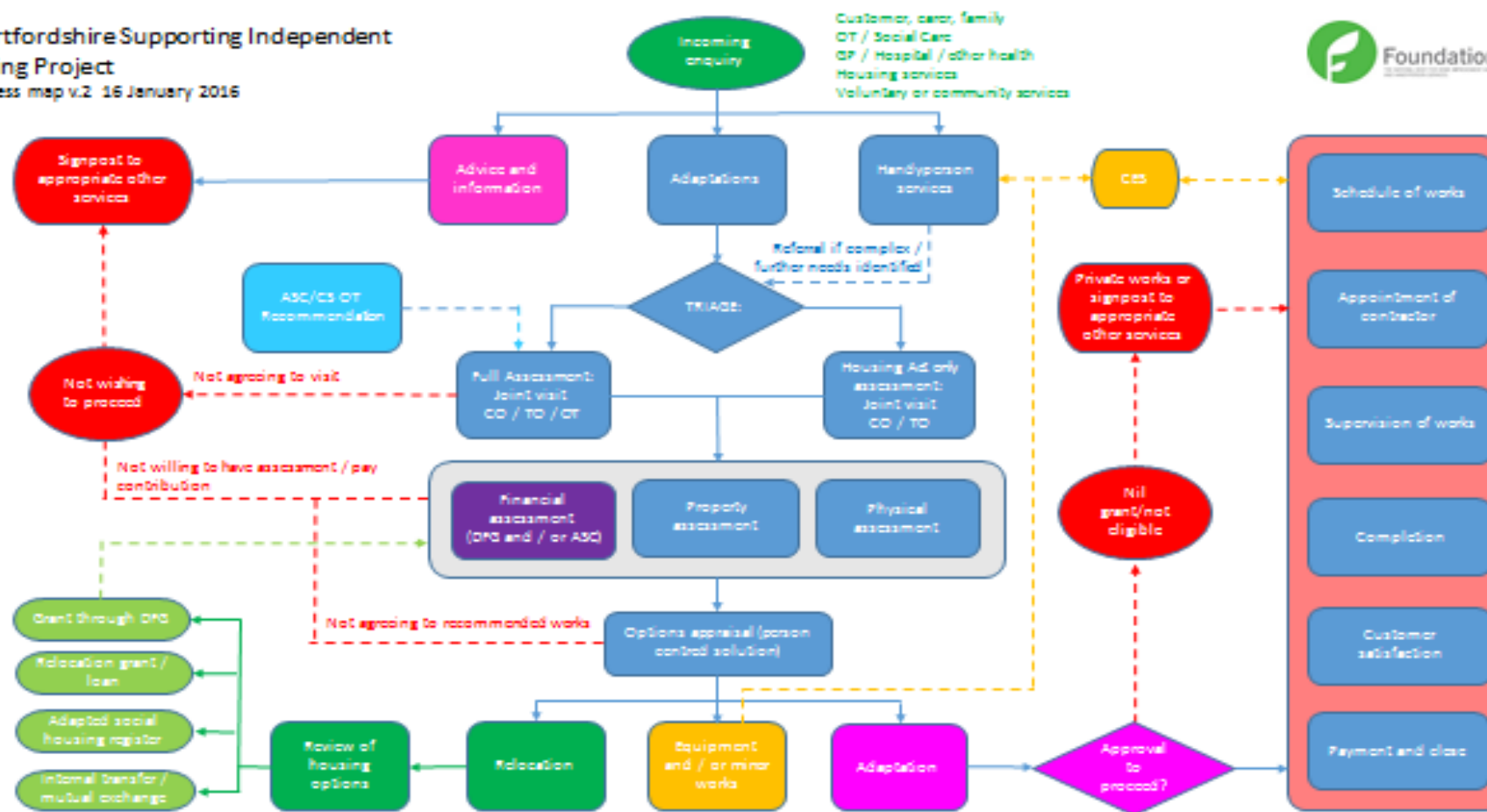
B.2 Options Analysis for Delivery Approach

Option	Benefits	Drawbacks
A. Shared service model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater resilience • Opportunity for caseworkers and integrated OT service • Not costly to set-up • Fits with Care Act 2014 • Future opportunities to develop as social enterprise • Driven by need not profit • Retained control of budget • Strong trusted brand • Stays local • More unified ownership of service/problem/budget • Single entity for range of outcomes and monitoring • Allows less interested LAs to still meet legal obligations vicariously • No need to delegate grant paying powers • Better use of staff resources • Knowledgeable, committed staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could be complicated to set-up • Needs a strong lead from within • Still not a fully integrated, holistic approach • Possible TUPE/redundancy issues • Financial risk to LA managing shared staff if made redundant – to be flagged as shared risk if taken forward
B. Outsourcing to external contractor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost effective approach, possible savings • Almost total resilience from fluctuating demand in the system • Good customer service with 'One-stop shop' approach • Commercial approach – becomes Trusted Trader for advice, home improvements and adaptations • Single system/database used • Eradicates issues with local authority recruitment (workforce recruited externally) • Less bureaucracy in decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived loss of control/ local expertise and knowledge • Possible TUPE/redundancy issues • An outsourced service will only deliver to specification (only what is in the contract) • Political lack of will for contracted services • Private sector focus may lead to poor service for customers • Lack of access/control to external databases/data protection • Need for tight legal contact with provider • Different political groups across districts and different agendas • Governance arrangements • On-going financial stability of external agency

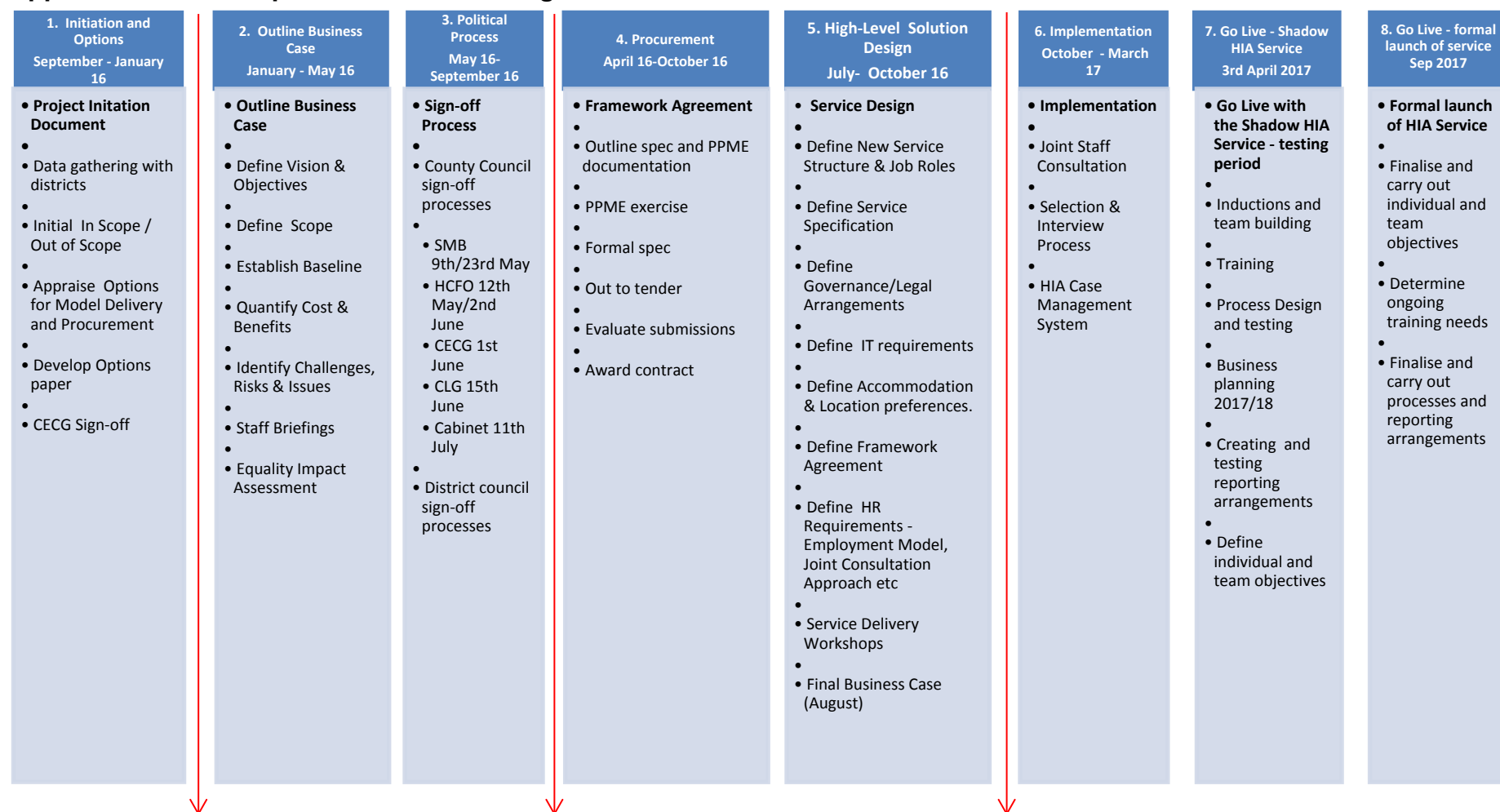
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 - 5 year contracts could lead to disruption of service to customers when contracts come to an end, or a new provider is appointed • Local authority still responsible party if contractor fails to deliver • Possible implications for OTs such as clinical oversight, registration etc.
C. A local authority arms- length organisation managing the DFG and adaptation services across Hertfordshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong CCG/HCC influence • Buy-in from LAs • Standardised practice across the county • Resilience of capacity • History of this approach in the county with HILS • Better use of staff resources • Freedom to innovate • Opportunity to develop private work for able to pay market • Opportunity for caseworkers and integrated OT service • Driven by need not profit • Stays local • More unified ownership of service/problem/budget • Knowledgeable, committed staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of incorporating organisation • Lack of support • Possible TUPE/redundancy issues

Appendix B Home Improvement Service Process Draft

Hertfordshire Supporting Independent Living Project
Process map v.2 16 January 2016



Appendix C Home Improvement Service High Level Timeline



→
Go/No-Go Decision Point

Appendix D

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Herts Home Improvement Agency Information Sharing Agreement and Protocol

Between: Hertfordshire County Council

And

Broxbourne Borough Council

East Herts District Council

Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust

North Herts District Council

Watford Borough Council

Project / Programme / Partnership	Home Improvement Agency
Lead agency	Hertfordshire County Council
Contact name	Jamie Sutterby
Contact job title	Assistant Director, Integrated Health
Contact address	County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford, SG13 8DP
Agreement start date	
Agreement review date	

Description of objectives and purpose underlying information sharing activity:

The purpose of the information sharing is to support the development and operation of a Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency (HIA) to fulfill partners' duties under the Care Act 2014 and Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, by providing a combined service for overseeing and commissioning adjustments to the home environment in support of identified care needs.

This combined service is in the spirit of the Better Care Fund Policy Framework (DCLG & DH - guidelines concerning the payment of the DFG budget):

"For 2016-17, the allocation will be based on a mixture of the existing Clinical Commissioning Group allocations formula, the social care formula, and a specific distribution formula for the Disabled Facilities Grant element of the Better Care Fund."

Data will be shared between the relevant Borough/District Council and HCC as service co-ordinator not across parties.

Description of Information to be shared

Name – Of applicant
 Address – the grant relates to
 Date of Birth – To ensure proper administration of age-related grants
 NHS Number – to link grant application to existing health / social care records to avoid duplication or contrary advice, and link services where appropriate
 Housing tenure
 Contact details of GP / other relevant health professionals
 Financial information –for eligibility checks
 Health information, including medications – for eligibility assessment
 OT clinical assessment of need –for grant determination
 Former employment / current employment – where applicable to access additional funding or services

Agreement

A1	This agreement recognises that the duty to share information can be as important as the duty to protect confidentiality.
A2	This agreement evidences the commitment of the named agencies to share information and personal data in a responsible, fair and lawful manner where it can be evidenced that there is a statutory or other requirement which is in the public interest.
A3	This agreement sets out the basic requirements which each agency agrees to comply with whenever the sharing of personal data between the agencies is proposed, considered or undertaken.
A4	This agreement does not constitute an overarching permission for the broad, comprehensive or unchallenged sharing of personal data. It provides a framework for the sharing of data which aligns with the objectives above.
A5	Third party contractors are not party to this agreement. It is the responsibility of the HIA to ensure they are provided with only the necessary service user information to fulfil their contract.

Principles

P1	Personal data will only be shared to meet the stated objectives of the specific project(s), programme(s) or partnership(s) outlined in this agreement.
P2	The sharing and use of any personal data will comply fully with the requirements of the <i>Data Protection Act 1998</i> and all relevant associated legislation, and will follow best practice guidance issued by the <i>Information Commissioner's Office</i> .
P3	Where data to be shared constitutes Sensitive Personal Data obtained under a duty of confidentiality, the sharing and use of any personal data will always be subject to a <i>Privacy Impact Assessment</i> , undertaken by the Data Controller of the information. <i>Privacy Impact Assessments</i> will be filed as appendices to this agreement.
P4	Each agency will be responsible for its own compliance with the <i>Data Protection Act 1998</i> and all relevant associated legislation, including ensuring that it has appropriate local policy and process frameworks in place to underpin best practice, safeguard personal data and protect the legal rights of Data Subjects.

Requirements

Each agency party to this agreement shall:

R1	Have appropriate organisational, procedural, physical and technical safeguards in place to ensure its full compliance with the requirements of the <i>Data Protection Act 1998</i> in relation to the processing of any and all personal data shared through this agreement.
R2	Not knowingly or negligently process personal data shared through this agreement in such a way that it places any party in breach, or potential breach, of the <i>Data Protection Act 1998</i> or any relevant associated legislation.
R3	Only use the information shared with it through this agreement for the purpose(s) agreed with the Data Controller(s) for that information.
R4	Comply with any specific requirements specified by the Data Controller(s) regarding the processing of personal information which the Data Controller(s) share(s) through this agreement.
R5	Only disclose personal information shared with it through this agreement where permission for that disclosure has first been agreed by the Data Controller which provided the information (except where the agency considers that there is a clear legal or regulatory obligation for disclosure without the Data Controller's consent).
R6	Agree secure transfer / exchange, access, storage, retention and disposal arrangements which are appropriate to the dataset being shared.
R7	Immediately inform the Data Controller(s) of any breach (or potential breach) of the <i>Data Protection Act 1998</i> , or any relevant associated legislation, in relation to its processing of the information provided by the Data Controller(s).
R8	Indemnify the Data Controller(s) against any costs incurred as a result of the agency's failure to comply with the requirements of the <i>Data Protection Act 1998</i> or any relevant associated legislation.

Agreement

On behalf of the agencies they represent, the parties named below consent to the sharing of personal data between their agencies only where the requirements of this *Information Sharing Agreement and Protocol* are fully met.

[illegible]

DRAFT



DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT (DFG) POLICY

V.1 JANUARY 2018

**Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency
Farnham House
Six Hills Way
Stevenage
Hertfordshire
SG1 2RQ**

Contents

- A. Purpose of this Policy
- B. The Role of the Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency
- C. Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)
- D. Process of Applying for, Approving, and Receiving of Grants
- E. Policy Amendments
- F. Complaints, Compliments, and Comments

Annex 1 – Eligible Works

Annex 2 – Eligible Households

Annex 3 – Homes that may be Adapted (Tenure)

Annex 4 – Homes that may be Adapted (Dwelling Type)

Annex 5 – Grant application, assessment, determination, and payment processes

Annex 6 – Test of Resources and Grant Calculation

Annex 7 – The Legal and Contractual Relationships

Annex 8 – Conditions relating to the repayment of Grant

Annex 9 – Miscellaneous Provisions

A. Purpose of this Policy

Adaptations to make homes more accessible are becoming increasingly important as the population ages. The majority of older people in Hertfordshire live in mainstream housing, but that housing often has small room sizes, steep internal stairs, baths rather than showers and steps outside. These become difficult to manage as people get less mobile with age or have to deal with sight loss or other conditions. To remain independent at home older people, their families and carers need effective ways to adapt and modify their homes.

In response to this challenge the Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency (HHIA) came into being on 1st October 2017. It is comprised of the following local authorities and its aim is to facilitate a range of independent living solutions associated with the home:

- Broxbourne Borough Council
- East Herts District Council
- North Herts District Council
- Watford Borough Council
- Hertfordshire County Council

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) administers this service on behalf of these councils.

The HHIA was established in order to create a streamlined and efficient service for the benefit of service users. Additional local authorities within Hertfordshire may wish to join the partnership in the future; when a new local authority joins the Partnership, this policy will come in to effect for residents within the boundary of that council.

This particular policy, including annexes, sets out how the Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency will administer Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to those residents of Hertfordshire living within the administrative boundaries of the local authorities cited above. The administration of Disabled Facilities Grants includes, but is not limited to, the assessment, processing, approval and payment of these grants.

The Hertfordshire Homes Improvement Agency operates within the following legislative and national policy framework:

- Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996
- Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance)(England and Wales) Order 2002
- Disabled Facilities Grant (Conditions relating to approval or payment of Grant) General Consent 2008
- The Better Care Fund
- The Care Act 2014

The full policy document will be available online and, upon request, in printed form free of charge.

B. The Role of the Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency

The application and implementation of Disabled Facilities Grants can be daunting to householders, particularly those that are vulnerable. In order to help disabled householders access DFGs, the Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency was created – it aims to streamline the way in which applications are made, how they are determined, and how the authorised adaptations are undertaken.

What assistance can the HHIA offer DFG applicants ?

The HHIA will help fill in application forms, prepare detailed Schedules of Work, and establish the costs of adaptation work. Once the grant approval has been issued, the HHIA will arrange for a contractor to carry out the work, oversee the works, ensure works have been completed to a satisfactory standard, and arrange for the grant payment to be made to the appointed contractor(s).

This will see the HHIA helping the applicant with all stages of the process, making DFGs as straightforward and stress-free as possible.

Will I have to pay for this service ?

No. The HHIA will take on the role of Agent on behalf of the applicant for the agreed fee of 15% plus VAT on the gross cost of the works involved. These costs can be included within the grant amount, up to the overall grant maximum.

Do I have to use the HHIA's services ?

The agency function of HHIA is optional. Service users are legally entitled to employ their own Agent to carry out this work, or arrange the application and the works themselves. In these cases, service users can submit their completed applications to the HHIA for processing. In such cases the HHIA will assess any quotations received against known costs for the works involved. The grant will only be approved to cover the cost needed for the work - where householder's own quotations exceed this amount, they will have to fund any difference in costs. Where a family member carries out the relevant works, only the reasonable costs of the materials involved will be included in the grant approval. These measures ensure value for money and that public funds are spent effectively.

Will the HHIA's services only relate to the provision of DFGs ?

As the Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency develops it is intended that the scope of the service will be expanded to include other forms of assistance. These could include, for example, the following:

- The provision of discretionary grants and/or loans
- The funding of a Handyperson Service
- Fast-tracked services for specific groups (for example those with a learning disability)
- Fast-tracked services for specific conditions (such as those living with Dementia)
- An Agency Service for people funding their own improvement works
- Access to subsidised assistive technology such as telecare

C. Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)

What is a Disabled Facilities Grant ?

These are grants processed by the HHIA in accordance with the requirements of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, as amended. This Act places a duty on the HHIA to provide grant assistance in appropriate circumstances.

What adaptations can be funded by a DFG ?

These grants ("Mandatory" DFGs) are available for works to the home of a disabled person to give that person access to, and the use of, rooms and facilities within their home that may otherwise be restricted due to their disability, so improving independence, privacy, confidence, safety and dignity for individuals, and their families.

By way of example, the following works are typically funded by DFGs:

- Level access showers
- Through-floor lifts
- Ramps and handrails
- Specialist toilet or bathing facilities
- Safety glazing or railings
- Improved or re-located heating, lighting or power controls
- Adapted or lower level kitchen fitments
- Widening doorways

See [Annex 1](#) for further details of eligible works.

Who may be eligible for a DFG ?

Persons who have a permanent disability - [see Annex 2](#) for further details on the eligibility of applicants.

What is the maximum value of a DFG ?

The maximum grant amount available via a single DFG is £30,000. However, there may be some very exceptional circumstances where Hertfordshire County Council may provide a discretionary loan for the costs of work above this threshold – this is not a function of the HHIA. Each case will be assessed on its merits and subject to a specific assessment process ([see Annex ?](#)).

Can I make more than one application for a DFG ?

In some cases, a deterioration in someone's condition or a change in their circumstances can require more than one DFG. Where a previous application has been approved for the same applicant(s), any financial contribution required at that time can be considered for subsequent applications, where they are agreed. This means that if a new application is made within five years (for a tenant) or ten years (for an owner) from the previous application(s) for which works were completed and grant paid, the contribution calculated will be reduced by the amount that was contributed to the previous grant(s).

See [Annex 7](#) for further details.

Are DFGs means tested ?

Works for the benefit of a disabled child are not means tested.

For adult disabled persons, the DFG is subject to the *Test of Resources* - the amount of grant paid depends upon the agreed cost of the eligible works and whether the client is required to make a financial contribution towards the cost of these works. Any contribution is determined by a formal Test of Resources (See Annex 5 for further details of the test of resources and grant calculation) carried out with respect of the disabled person (including any partner) having regard to regulations issued by the Government. If the client receives means-tested benefits already, they will usually be determined as having no contribution to make towards the cost of the works.

A preliminary means test can be carried out in order to give prospective applicants a better idea of how much, if any, they may have to contribute towards the cost of the works. These can be done online: <http://www-foundations.uk.com/dfg-adaptations/dfg-tools/test-of-resources/>

See **Annex 2** for further details on the DFG Test of Resources assessment.

Do you have to be an owner/occupier to be eligible for a DFG ?

Owner occupiers, private tenants, and social housing tenants (but not council tenants or tenants of public authorities) can apply for a DFG. In addition, occupiers of qualifying houseboats and mobile homes/caravans can also apply for a DFG.

The applicant must intend to live in the property to be adapted as their main home, for a period of at least five years following completion of the works. Applicants will have to sign a certificate confirming that this is their intention. In certain cases, any grant paid, or part of it, may be required to be repaid if any conditions attached to the grant are not complied with.

A landlord can apply for a DFG on behalf of a tenant who has a disability. The process is very similar, but the forms involved, etc., are different. Any landlord intending to apply for a DFG on behalf of a tenant with disabilities should contact the HHIA in the first instance to discuss their proposal(s).

See **Annex 3** for further details on the types of home that may be adapted.

What homes can be adapted ?

Not only traditionally constructed dwellings may be eligible for a Disabled Facilities Grant, but some park homes and houseboats also qualify for assistance - see **Annex 4** for further details on the types of home that may be adapted.

How will eligibility for a DFG be determined ?

For works to be eligible for a Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant funding they must be agreed to be:

- *Necessary and appropriate* to meet the needs of the client. This is determined by an Occupational Therapist in most cases, usually employed by Herts County Council
- *Reasonable and practical* to carry out the works identified, this will be determined by the HHIA on behalf of the relevant local authority

D. Process of Applying for, Approving, and Receiving of Grants

The HHIA will approve valid applications for DFGs and make the relevant payments upon satisfactory completion of the works. These payments may be made in stages, on behalf of the Partner Authorities. In doing so the HHIA will follow the relevant legislation and good practice, having regard to an agreed Scheme of Delegation (see Appendix 5).

Making an application for a DFG

A valid application includes the completed application form, the relevant certificate of intention to occupy, proof of ownership/tenancy, financial information needed for the 'means-test' and the applicant wishes to manage the adaptations themselves, at least two written quotations for the work. The HHIA can help with filling in the forms and obtaining the quotations for the work, etc. to make the process as smooth as possible for the applicant (see below).

How an application will be considered by the HHIA

A valid application must be approved within six months of the completed application being received by the HHIA. Following assessment, the HHIA will issue a written approval that states the amount of grant that will be paid upon satisfactory completion of the specified works. In some exception cases, the HHIA may specify a date before which the grant will not be paid. This will be no later than 12 months from the date on which the application was made and details will be included in the approval document.

See [Annex ?](#) for further details on how applications will be processed.

Post determination changes

The HHIA can agree variations to the grant amount where additional or unforeseen works are identified, although the extent and cost of the works must be agreed beforehand. Similarly, the HHIA can reduce the amount of grant where the cost or amount of works required is agreed to be less.

When agreed works must be completed

Works must be completed within 12 months of the date of approval. However, the HHIA can, in some circumstances, agree an extension of time for the completion of the works.

Payment of the grant

Payment of the grant will be made upon satisfactory completion of the work and upon receipt of a proper invoice from the agreed contractor(s). No monies will be paid up-front. Interim or part-payments can be made upon satisfactory completion of parts of the work. Again, a proper invoice from the agreed contractor must be provided for the interim payment. The HHIA will determine if sufficient works have been carried in order to make an interim payment. Interim payments will not exceed 90% of the total grant amount. Other than in exceptional or pre-agreed situations, all payments will be made direct to the relevant contractor/supplier.

Once any payment is made, any conditions attached to the grant become binding.

Can the grant, once awarded, be reduced or be reclaimed by the HHIA ?

In some limited circumstances, yes. The ability for the Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency to amend or withdraw approved expenditure is restricted by legislation to the following situations:

- due to a significant change in the circumstances of the applicant/disabled person
- due to actions outside of the rules of the DFG
- due to a disposal of an adapted property within a prescribed period

In these cases the grant may be reduced, repayment of the relevant amount of the DFG may be required. These situations are not expected to happen often, however, in such circumstances, the HHIA will determine the final outcome on a case by case basis.

See [Annex 9](#) for further details on grant repayment conditions.

E. Policy Amendments

The provisions of this policy shall remain in place until such time that it is formally amended, superseded, or deleted. Minor amendments to this policy will be agreed by the Partner Authorities (the HHIA Board) prior to their introduction. Major amendments will be considered by the Partner Authorities (the HHIA Board) prior to their formal consideration and adoption by HCC prior to their introduction.

Any Disabled Facilities Grant conditions flowing from this policy applied at the time of their formal award will remain in force unless specifically changed in writing.

F. Complaints, Compliments, and Comments

The Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency is committed to its continuous improvement and the views of its customers provide an essential source of information on which to make decisions on how best to improve the services it provides.

Any complaints, compliments, or comments regarding the operation of this policy, or level of service received from the Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency, should be directed in the first instance to Head of Service:

Head of Service
Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency
Farnham House
Six Hills Way
Stevenage
SG1 2FQ

If a matter is not resolved to customer's satisfaction Hertfordshire County Council has a well established approach to the management of customer feedback – more details are available on its website:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/complain-or-comment/make-a-complaint.aspx>

If after receiving the Hertfordshire County Council's response the customer is still dissatisfied, they can request an investigation by the Local Government Ombudsman: <http://www.lgo.org.uk/>

Annex 1: Eligible Works

The following is an excerpt from the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 that sets out the purposes for which a grant may be paid (Section 23):

- (1) The purposes for which an application for a grant must be approved, subject to the provisions of this Chapter, are the following—
 - (a) facilitating access by the disabled occupant to and from the dwelling, qualifying houseboat or qualifying park home, or
 - (b) making the dwelling, qualifying houseboat or qualifying park home, or the building, safe for the disabled occupant and other persons residing with him;
 - (c) facilitating access by the disabled occupant to a room used or usable as the principal family room;
 - (d) facilitating access by the disabled occupant to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room used or usable for sleeping;
 - (e) facilitating access by the disabled occupant to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room in which there is a lavatory, or facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of such a facility;
 - (f) facilitating access by the disabled occupant to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room in which there is a bath or shower (or both), or facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of such a facility;
 - (g) facilitating access by the disabled occupant to, or providing for the disabled occupant, a room in which there is a washhand basin, or facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of such a facility;
 - (h) facilitating the preparation and cooking of food by the disabled occupant;
 - (i) improving any heating system in the dwelling, qualifying houseboat or qualifying park home to meet the needs of the disabled occupant or, if there is no existing heating system there or any such system is unsuitable for use by the disabled occupant, providing a heating system suitable to meet his needs;
 - (j) facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of a source of power, light or heat by altering the position of one or more means of access to or control of that source or by providing additional means of control;
 - (k) facilitating access and movement by the disabled occupant around the dwelling, qualifying houseboat or qualifying park home in order to enable him to care for a person who is normally resident there and is in need of such care;
 - (l) such other purposes as may be specified by order of the Secretary of State:
 1. facilitating access to and from a garden by a disabled occupant; or
 2. making access to a garden safe for a disabled occupant.

For this purpose, “garden” means a garden belonging to, or usually enjoyed with, a dwelling, caravan or flat occupied by a disabled occupant and includes—

- a. a balcony adjoining the dwelling of a disabled occupant;
- b. a yard, outhouse or other appurtenance within the boundaries of the land in which the dwelling or caravan of a disabled occupant is situated and belonging to it or usually enjoyed with it;
- c. a yard, outhouse or other appurtenance within the boundaries of the land in which is situated the building in which the dwelling or, as the case may be, flat, of a disabled occupant is situated and belonging to it or usually enjoyed with it; and
- d. the land adjacent to the mooring of a disabled occupant’s qualifying houseboat.

Annex 2: Eligible Households

The following is an excerpt from the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 that sets out who may be eligible for a DFG (Section 100):

Disabled persons

- (1) For the purposes of this Part a person is disabled if—
 - (a) their sight, hearing or speech is substantially impaired,
 - (b) they have a mental disorder or impairment of any kind, or
 - (c) they are physically substantially disabled by illness, injury, impairment present since birth, or otherwise.
- (2) A person aged eighteen or over shall be taken for the purposes of this Part to be disabled if—
 - (a) they are registered in pursuance of any arrangements made under section 29(1) of the National Assistance Act 1948 (disabled persons' welfare), or
 - (b) they are a person for whose welfare arrangements have been made under that provision or, in the opinion of the social services authority, might be made under it.
- (3) A person under the age of eighteen shall be taken for the purposes of this Part to be disabled if—
 - (a) they are registered in a register of disabled children maintained under paragraph 2 of Schedule 2 to the Children Act 1989, or
 - (b) they are in the opinion of the social services authority a disabled child as defined for the purposes of Part III of the Children Act 1989 (local authority support for children and their families).
- (4) In this Part the "social services authority" means the council which is the local authority for the purposes of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 for the area in which the dwelling or building is situated.
- (5) Nothing in subsection (1) above shall be construed as affecting the persons who are to be regarded as disabled under section 29(1) of the National Assistance Act 1948 or section 17(11) of the Children Act 1989 (which define disabled persons for the purposes of the statutory provisions mentioned in subsections (2) to (4) above).

Annex 3: Homes that may be Adapted (Tenure)

Tenure of Applicant

The Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency wishes to support all disabled persons wherever they live. However, the legislative framework in which the HHIA operates does differentiate between the following housing tenures and the ways in which assistance can be offered:

Tenure	Description	Application notes
Owner Occupiers	Owner occupiers include freeholders (with or without a mortgage) and leaseholders (with or without a mortgage) with at least five years remaining on their lease at the date of their completed application.	Owner occupiers should contact the HHIA to make an application for a DFG. They will need to provide evidence of their ownership and a signed 'Owner's Certificate' as a part of the application process.
Private Tenants	<p>Private tenants include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) a secure tenant, introductory tenant or statutory tenant; (b) a protected occupier under the Rent (Agriculture) Act 1976 or a person in occupation under an assured agricultural occupancy within the meaning of Part I of the Housing Act 1988; (c) an employee (whether full-time or part-time) who occupies the home concerned for the better performance of his duties 	<p>Private tenants should contact the HHIA to make an application for a DFG. They will have to provide a signed 'Tenant's Certificate' as a part of the application process. In addition, their landlord will also have to sign an 'Owner's Certificate' (this demonstrates that the landlord is aware of, and agrees to, the works being carried out.) Both of these will have to be included within the application.</p> <p>In exception situations, where the HHIA consider it unreasonable in the circumstances to require one, it may accept a tenant's application without a signed 'Owner's Certificate'.</p>
Social Tenants	<p>Social housing tenants are tenants of registered not-for-profit landlords. These may be known as Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), Private Registered Providers (PRPs) or Housing Associations (HAs); some Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs), Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs), almshouses, housing co-operatives, etc., may also fall within this category.</p> <p>Many of these landlords will have</p>	<p>Tenants should initially contact their landlord regarding the adaptations required. The landlord may assess and carry out the, or they may their tenants to make an for a DFG, in which case you should contact the HHIA. If a social housing tenant applies for a DFG, they will have to provide a signed 'Tenant's Certificate' as a part of the application process. In addition, the landlord will also have to sign an 'Owner's Certificate' (this demonstrates</p>

	<p>an agreement in place with one of the councils that form the HHIA. These agreements may involve the sharing of adaption costs, or the allocation of a fixed annual budget to meet the needs of their disabled tenants.</p>	<p>that the landlord is aware of, and agrees to, the works being carried out.) Both of these certificates will have to be included within the application.</p> <p>In exception situations, where the HHIA consider it unreasonable in the circumstances to require one, it may accept a tenant's application without a signed 'Owner's Certificate'.</p>
Local Authority Tenants	<p>Local authority tenants (which includes council tenants and can include police authority, health authority, NHS Trust and other public body tenants) cannot apply for DFGs as they received funding via another route to undertake adaptations for their disabled tenants.</p>	<p>Where council tenants or other excluded public body tenants need an adaptation, they should contact their local council or public authority landlord in the first instance as they should have a procedure in place for assessing need and finding appropriate solutions.</p>

Annex 4: Homes that may be Adapted (Dwelling Type)

Type of Dwelling

Typically, Disabled Facilities Grants are used to fund adaptations to dwellings that are of a traditional construction type. However, adaption work to non-traditional dwellings, such as houseboats or mobile homes, may be eligible for DFG assistance. The applicant will have to provide an 'Occupier's Certificate' as a part of the application process. In addition, relevant land owner, or similar, of the pitch, site or mooring will also have to sign an 'Consent Certificate'. This demonstrates that they are aware of, and agree to, the works being carried out. Both of these certificates will have to be included within the application.

Type of houseboats eligible for DFG assistance	<p>A qualifying houseboat means a boat or similar structure designed or adapted for use as a place of permanent habitation which—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) has its only or main mooring within the area of a single local housing authority;(b) is moored in pursuance of a right to that mooring; and(c) is a dwelling for the purposes of Part 1 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (Council Tax), and includes any yard, garden, outhouses and appurtenances belonging to it or usually enjoyed with it;
Type of park homes eligible for DFG assistance	<p>A qualifying park home means a caravan within the meaning of Part 1 of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 (disregarding the amendment made by section 13(2) of the Caravan Sites Act 1968) which—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) is stationed on land forming part of a protected site within the meaning of the Mobile Homes Act 1983;(b) is occupied under an agreement to which that Act applies or under a gratuitous licence; and(c) is a dwelling for the purposes of Part 1 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (council tax), and includes any yard, garden, outhouses and appurtenances belonging to it or usually enjoyed with it.

Annex 5: Grant application, assessment, determination, and payment processes

The Application

The HHIA will provide you with an application form which will set out the further documentation you will need to support your application. An application is only valid if it is made on the HHIA's prescribed form and if it includes all the information required. The HHIA can help with all of the paperwork needed.

An applicant must either be the owner of the dwelling (including qualifying houseboat or park home) or be a tenant (including licensees), and be able to provide an 'Owner's Certificate' or a 'Tenant's Certificate'. This will not necessarily be the disabled person for whom the works are required. In such cases the applicant should make it clear on whose behalf the application is being made.

When applying for a grant the applicant (whether an owner occupier, tenant, or landlord) will be required to submit a certificate stating the intention that throughout the grant condition period of five years (or such shorter period as the disabled person's health and other relevant circumstances permit) the disabled person will occupy the dwelling as his or her only or main residence.

If the applicant wishes to manage the adaptation works themselves, they will have to submit at least two written quotations. The HHIA will assess any quotations received against what it believes are reasonable costs for the works involved. The grant will only be approved to cover the cost assessed to be needed for the work. Should an applicant provide their own quotations and these exceed this assessed amount, they will have to cover any difference in costs. Where a family member carries out the relevant works, only the reasonable costs of the materials involved will be included in the grant approval.

Assessment

The HHIA is required by the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 to be satisfied that the proposed works are both:

- necessary and appropriate to meet the disabled person's needs; and
- reasonable and practicable depending on the age and condition of the property.

In reaching its decision as regards the 'necessary and appropriate' test, the HHIA will consider factors such as:

- whether the works are needed to provide for a Care Plan to be implemented which will enable the disabled occupant to remain living in their existing home as independently as possible; and
- whether the works would meet, as far as possible, the assessed needs of the disabled person taking into account both their medical and physical needs; and

- distinguish between what are desirable and possible legitimate aspirations of the disabled person, and what is actually needed and for which grant support is fully justified.

Factors relevant to the 'reasonable and practicable' test include:

- Architectural and structural characteristics of the home in question
- Space available within the home (rooms and circulation spaces)
- Planning or conservation considerations
- The impact on other occupiers of the home or building

The HHIA needs to be satisfied concerning both tests, and the overall feasibility of the works, in order to legally approve a Disabled Facilities Grant. Accordingly, The HHIA is obliged to refuse a DFG if it believes the scheme is not reasonable and practicable.

The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 requires the HHIA to seek the views of Occupational Therapists and housing professionals when considering the above.

When does means testing take place ?

DFG determination

The HHIA is required by legislation to make a decision on applications within six months of the receipt of a completed and valid application, along with any additional information it may reasonably require.

Should an application be approved, the HHIA will provide written confirmation of this decision. The approval will state the amount of grant that will be paid upon satisfactory completion prescribed works. It will also specify the contractor(s) whose quotations have been used in determining the grant amount, and therefore, who should be used to carry out the works. The approval correspondence will also state any conditions relating to the grant.

In some exception cases, the HHIA may specify a date before which grant is not payable. This will be no later than 12 months from the date on which the application was made and will be included in the approval document.

Payment of the DFG

The grant will only be paid when the HHIA is satisfied that the work has been completed to its satisfaction and in accordance with the grant approval correspondence and upon production of an acceptable invoice, demand or receipt of payment for the works. The HHIA may, at its discretion, pay the grant in full on completion of the works or by instalments as the works progress.

The HHIA will pay the grant direct to the contractor(s) or provide an instrument of payment in a form made payable to the contractor. This should not affect the grant recipient's right to ensure that the contractor has completed the works to their satisfaction. If the contractor has not, the householder should notify the HHIA so that it can withhold payment pending an investigation.

Where the applicant is assessed to have a contribution towards the cost of the agreed works, this contribution must be paid to the HHIA *before* the contractor(s) can start the work. This amount will then be paid to the contractor(s) by the HHIA at the appropriate time, but before any grant is paid to the contractor(s).

An invoice is not acceptable if it is for work or services provided by the applicant or a member of his or her family. Where the works are carried out by the applicant or a relative, only invoices for materials or services that have been bought in will be acceptable.

Once a grant payment has been made, any conditions relating to the grant become binding. Once the work has been confirmed as being complete by the HHIA (the “Certified Date”) the grant conditions period starts and the conditions remain in force until the relevant grant conditions period has elapsed.

Annex 6: Test of Resources and Grant Calculation

Test of Resources

Where an application is subject to a financial assessment, there are four principal stages within the means testing process:

Stage	Description
Stage 1: Calculation of household income requirement	This is referred to as 'allowable income' and is calculated using a set of standard allowances for living costs using basic amounts of income support/pension credit and a flat rate allowance for housing costs. These figures are set by the Government
Stage 2: Assessment of actual household income	The actual income of the applicant's household income is then established. A 'tariff' income is added as regards any savings over £6,000. If the household is already in receipt of any means tested benefits, they are automatically 'passported' through and awarded a 100 per cent grant, even if they have some small surplus income according to this calculation.
Stage 3: Affordability of a loan	For those applicants not in receipt of a means tested benefit, a calculation is undertaken to establish whether there is sufficient 'surplus' household income to afford a loan to fund the agreed adaption works. The calculations assume a loan period of 10 years for owner-occupiers and 5 years for tenants at a standard rate of interest and incorporate 'tapers' (see above).
Stage 4: Calculation of grant value	The final stage of the process is the comparison between the agreed costs of the adaption works and the ability (or otherwise) of the household to finance these via a loan. If the calculated loan amount is the same or greater than the cost of the adaptations, the applicant is not eligible for financial assistance by the HHIA. If the loan amount is less than the cost of works, the amount of grant is calculated as the total cost of works minus the calculated loan amount.

Notes

- The means test does not apply where an application for grant is made by the parent or guardian of a disabled child, up to and including 16 years of age, or young person under 19 in full time education.
- The cost of the works/adaptations is obtained from the agreed quotations/costs for the eligible work plus any reasonable ancillary costs or expenses incurred solely as a part of the application. These can include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ Agency Service fees
- ✓ Architect or surveyor's fees
- ✓ Solicitor's fees

- If a contribution is required from the relevant person this must be deducted from the amount of grant which would otherwise have been paid. Therefore, if the cost of the works is above the maximum £30,000 limit the grant will be £30,000 less the contribution. If the cost of the works is less than the £30,000, the grant will be the agreed cost of the works less the contribution.

Successive Applications

Where a previous application has been approved for the same applicant(s), any financial contribution required at that time can be considered for subsequent applications, where they are agreed, providing the new application is made within five years (for a tenant) or ten years (for an owner occupier) from the previous application(s) where works were completed and the grant paid. The contribution calculated for the new application will be reduced by the amount that was contributed to the previous grant(s).

For example, where an applicant made a £5,000 contribution to a previous DFG and the test of resources for the subsequent DFG shows the contribution to be £8000, this amount would be reduced to £3,000 due to the previous applicant's contribution.

Annex 7: The Legal and Contractual Relationships

TEXT TO BE INSERTED REGARDING AGENCY MANAGED WORK

TEXT TO BE INSERTED REGARDING SELF MANAGED WORK

TEXT TO BE INSERTED REGARDING THIRD PARTY MANAGED WORK

TEXT TO BE INSERTED REGARDING CLIENTS THAT DO NOT HAVE THE CAPACITY TO ENTER INTO CONTRACTS FOR FORMAL AGREEMENTS

Annex 8: Conditions relating to the repayment of Grant

The Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency is charged with securing value for money, ensuring that the public funds that it administers are allocated in a lawful, fair, and transparent way. The vast majority of Disabled Facilities Grants are not repayable but there are some circumstances where the HHIA may seek the repayment of part, or all, of the awarded payment:

Change in circumstances

Where a DFG has been approved (but the approved works have not been certified as complete) and the applicant ceases to be entitled to such a grant, no grant shall be paid or, as the case may be, no further instalments shall be paid, and the HHIA may demand that any instalment of the grant that has been paid, be repaid, together with interest from the date on which it was paid, until the repayment is made.

Where a DFG has been approved, but has not been certified as complete, and:

- (i) the works cease to be necessary or appropriate to meet the needs of the disabled occupant, or
- (ii) the disabled occupant ceases to occupy the home concerned or it ceases to be the intention that they should occupy it, or
- (iii) the disabled occupant dies;

the HHIA may decide:

- (a) that no grant shall be paid or, as the case may be, no further instalments shall be paid, or
- (b) that the relevant works, or some of them, should be completed and the grant, or an appropriate proportion of it, be paid, or
- (c) that the application should be re-determined in the light of the new circumstances.

Disposal of an adapted dwelling

TEXT TO BE INSERTED

- Written certified representation
- No more than once relating to a disposal
- The HHIA decision shall be final
- Hardship shall be considered in the context of the JRF minimum income calculator

Receipt of compensation payment

Where an applicant's disability is associated with a pending compensation or insurance claim, any Disabled Facilities Grant is awarded on the condition that the applicant takes reasonable steps to pursue any relevant legal and/or insurance claim for damages.

In the event of an insurance settlement and/or the award of damages, the Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency reserves the right to seek the repayment, in part or full, of a DFG that is associated with that insurance settlement and/or award of damages

These cases will be determined by the HHIA Board on a case by case basis.

Annex 9: Miscellaneous Provisions

Where the applicant wants additional or upgraded works (above the works agreed by the HHIA) they will need to enter into a private agreement with the agreed contractor and pay the contractor directly for these works. This will be outside of the DFG process and will not involve the HHIA.

Householders will not normally be eligible for and grant funding if works have been commenced before the HHIA has approved an application; any grant will be reduced to take account of the works already completed. .

Once the work is complete, the applicant or the home owner becomes responsible for any future maintenance or up-keep of the adaptations or facilities provided. For some facilities, such as stairlifts, it is possible to obtain extended warranties, etc., in such cases the HHIA can provide guidance on the options available.

The cost of carrying out works for the benefit of a disabled person through a DFG are usually exempt from VAT, providing the applicant signs a certificate for the contractor/supplier confirming that the work/supply was for a disabled person for their own domestic use. The HHIA can help with the paperwork for this.

Multiple applications for DFGs

As a result of this, it means that it may be in the interest of applicants to proceed with an application even where it is clear that their contribution will exceed the costs of the work. Although this will lead to the approval of a `nil grant` applicants are advised that in any subsequent application the contribution will be reduced by an amount equivalent to the approved cost of works of the previous DFG, not the assessed contribution which is likely to have been greater. In order for the HHIA to approve a DFG taking in to account previous contributions it must be satisfied that the works for which the original application was submitted were completed to a satisfactory standard and the new application is within the five or ten-year time periods.

HERTFORDSHIRE HIA BOARD MEETING

11 January 2018

HHIA Budget

1. Background

The HHIA Board convened a special ad-hoc meeting in November to consider the revenue position and requested an up-date and draft budget for 2018-19. The HHIA Board also designated the representative from Broxbourne BC to be the lead Board member for finance and this report has been prepared in liaison with them. It sets out the following:

1. Set-up costs;
2. Likely outturn for 2017-18;
3. Draft budget for 2018-19;
4. Contributions required from member authorities; and
5. Proposed financial contribution from Stevenage BC.

The HHIA Board has spent a considerable amount of time discussing the business case financial assumptions and projections and this report now up-dates the information contained in the business case (schedule 4 to the partnership agreement, PA).

2. Business case assumptions

The business case rests on the straightforward assumption that the HHIA would operate in a way that capitalisable costs and fee income would exceed running costs and thereby generate a surplus to be either reinvested through the HHIA or returned to the member authorities, or a combination of both.

3. Set up costs

Initially, it was recognised that there would be both one-off and mobilisation costs associated with the establishment of the HHIA. The business case modelled this on a *six* member partnership (schedule 4; table 8; paragraph 6.3.3) and this showed the following estimate.

Item	Cost	
Project Management	£0	(covered by HCC)
Legal support	£9,000	
Case management IT	£25,000	
IT and other costs	£25,000	
Head of service salary	£27,000	(not clear but presumed to be six months)
Total	£86,000	
Partner contributions	£84,000	(£14,000 x 6)

The business case was not clear on the time-frame for defining the set-up period as opposed to “business as usual” revenue expenditure. It also assumed that only the Head of Service would be in post during the set-up period. It was not clear how the £2,000 deficit in the business plan was to be met. Nevertheless, actual set-up costs incurred by the HHIA have been significantly below those in the business plan.

Actual set-up costs 2016-17 and 2017-18

Staff costs (to 30 September 2017)	£18,031
Travel (to 30 September 2017)	£1,000
IT costs (to 30 September 2017)	£62
Recruitment	£1,804
Legal fees - partnership agreement/Governance	£12,484
Legal fees - contractor framework	£6,460
Website set up	£6,000
Implementation costs - Case management system	£13,500
Consultancy	£5,000
Total costs	£64,341

Contribution from Broxbourne	-14,000
Contribution from East Herts	-14,000
Contribution from North Herts	-14,000
Contribution from Watford	-14,000
Contribution from HCC	-14,000
Total contributions	-70,000

Surplus **-£5,659**

The actual set-up costs to 30 September are estimated at £64,341; considerably less than the business case but there are only five partner authorities. Assuming each authority contributes the full amount there would be a notional surplus of £5,659 in relation to set-up costs.

4. Running costs of the HHIA

The running costs of the HHIA (excluding one-off and mobilisation costs) were modelled on a five member partnership (schedule 4; tables 5.1 and 9.1). The tables are not entirely clear in respect of the phasing of salary costs (i.e. when it was assumed staff would be in post) but fee income was forecast for six months @£137,000. The tables showed a revenue deficit of £63,000 for six months after taking account of capitalisable costs and fee income.

Item	Cost	
HHIA running costs	£413,000	
Capitalisable costs	-£213,000	
Fee income	-£137,000	(assumed as six months)
Deficit	£63,000	

As mentioned earlier, tables 5.1. and 9.1 are not clear in terms of definitions and assumptions used. The table is described as a year 1 *revenue impact* but it's not clear when the assumed start and end date is and as such the figures are subject to changes relating to grant activity;

staff start dates etc. This is extremely important as the assumption relating to fee income and salary costs are a critical part of the business model. In addition, it should be noted that the capitalised element of the HHIA's running costs is assumed to be 51.57%. The table below shows the anticipated outturn for the year to 31 March 2018.

Year 1 revenue costs (excluding set-up) to 31 March 2018

Staff costs	187,191
Travel	8,100
IT costs	733
Mobiles	1,090
Equipment (digital cameras)	2,500
Website maintenance	1,000
Case management system - licences/maintenance	14,935
Printing and stationery	1,500
Marketing	10,000
Total costs	227,049
Capitalised salaries	102,243
Fee income	45,000
Total income	147,243
Deficit	79,806

Note: The deficit is before HCC overheads for office and employee-related costs as these are not included. The fee income of £45,000 is based on £300,000 of works and this is therefore an estimate with some risk it may not be achieved.

The current outturn projection to 31 March 2018 shows an anticipated revenue deficit of £79,806 largely due to the reduced fee income projection. This has been due to a number of factors, the most important of which are set out below.

1. The Board's decision to phase the handover of cases.
2. Delays in the procurement framework.
3. Staggered recruitment of the HHIA team, including inability to recruit to some posts initially (i.e. technical officers).

It should be noted that capitalised costs equate to 50.74% of the salary costs.

The HHIA Board will need to agree how to meet the revenue deficit in 2017-18. Using the projections in the business case (tables 5.1 and 9.1) the original assumed revenue contributions are set out below.

Authority	Revenue neutral contribution level	
Broxbourne	£1,000	(+£14,000 set up)
E.Herts	£65,000	(+£14,000 set up)
N.Herts	(£19,000)	(+£14,000 set up)
Watford	£12,000	(+£14,000 set up)
Total	£59,000	

Assuming the level of contributions set out in table 5.1 – repeated above - for 2017-18 the total contributions would still leave a deficit of up to £21,000 below the projected outturn for 2017-18. If the £5,659 surplus on the set-up contributions is used for 2017-18 revenue expenditure HCC is prepared to consider meeting the balance on a one-off basis provided the partner authorities agree to make a contribution to achieve a balanced budget and any further contribution necessary in 2018-19.

Year 2 running costs (2018-19)

The table below shows the draft revenue budget for the HHIA for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019. Although it is assumed that Stevenage BC will join the HHIA from the 1 April 2018 the fee figures does not take account of this. The draft revenue budget including Stevenage BC is included in Appendix 1.

Expenditure

Item	Cost
Staffing	£537,153
Travel	£27,225
IT/telephones etc	£8,565
Recruitment	£0
Office accommodation etc	TBC
Training etc	£4,200
Website	£1,000
Case management software	£14,935
Printing and Stationery	£5,000
Marketing	£5,000
Total	£603,078

Income

Capitalised salaries	£276,562	
Fee income	£229,801	(11.5% exc Stevenage)
Total	£506,363	

Deficit	£96,715
----------------	----------------

Note: the expenditure figures do not include HCC office accommodation and employee related expenditure. The fee income assumes 100% of grant is spent so there is some risk around this.

The projected operating costs for 2018-19 compares with the business case assumption (Table 7; page 30) of operating costs of £570,000 excluding the occupational therapy service – this was based on five members.

4. Proposals to achieve a balanced budget

In order to bridge the revenue funding gap it is proposed to use a fee % of 15%. However, this will still leave a shortfall of £47,000 before office and employee-related on-costs. In order to meet the deficit the HHIA Board needs to consider a full range of options: these are set out below for discussion.

1. Reducing operating costs

It is proposed that the full revised staffing structure agreed by the HHIA board is not progressed other than to recruit to the technical officer position currently filled by an agency member of staff. This will mean that the caseworker team leader position will be kept vacant – this saves £29,000 on the revenue budget in 2018-19 (as 41% of this position was to be capitalised).

2. Increasing fee % from 11.5% to 15%

It is proposed to have a standard fee of 15% - this will affect the figures presented early and increase the fee income to £373,329 including an assumed £82,711 of fee income relating to grant activity in Stevenage. An analysis of the impact of fee levels on the forecast outturn is provided in Appendix 1. It should be noted that increasing the fee % will reduce the overall amount of grant available; it is suggested that the fee % is reviewed in a year's time by the HHIA Board with a view to reducing it over time if possible. The other alternative is to keep the fee income at 11.5% but the partners would need to make a revenue contribution.

3. Review of capitalisation costs

A review will be commissioned of the capitalisation assumptions to ascertain if this can be increased. This will be subject to HCC resources providing advice in respect of capital compliance requirements. No increase is assumed at the present time other than the adjustment to the post proposed to keep vacant mentioned at point 1. If post responsibilities change or the proportion of time spent in each area is to change then further analysis would be needed to look at the capitalised assumptions.

4. Contribution from Stevenage BC

Clause 6 of the partnership agreement sets out the terms of admitting a new partner. The partnership agreement allows the existing partner authorities to agree a contribution and for 2018-19 it is recommended that a one-off payment is sought of £14,000 + any contribution reflecting the difference between the current cost of the service (in 2017-18) less the residual costs to Stevenage Borough Council. The benefits of Stevenage Borough Council joining are significant in terms of fee income and it is recommended that the final contribution figure be delegated to the HHIA Head of Service in consultation with the Chair of the HHIA Board.

5. Additional partner authority contributions

The business plan (section 10) assumed that a surplus would be possible in year 1 and that fee income generated by the HHIA would be distributed among the partner authorities until each partner authority achieved a revenue neutral position; in other words the contribution from each would be no more than the individual partner authorities' revenue budget for DFGs in 2016-17. Conversely, clause 10.6 requires the partner authorities to indemnify HCC where the HHIA shows a deficit and this cannot be remedied over a three-year period. Clause 15 sets out the requirement of the partner authorities to indemnify HCC for any losses incurred by the HHIA – the partner authorities must meet an equal share (including HCC) – in the absence of an agreement stating otherwise.

Following consideration of this report it is recommended that should the revised budget set for 2018-19 contain a deficit that the partner authorities will each meet an equal share of the deficit in addition to any contribution made previously.

6. Use of DFG funding

In order to take advantage of the HHIA and the freedoms contained in the regulatory reform order it is proposed that DFG capital funding be reviewed by the HHIA Board in order to make wider use of the freedoms. A separate report appears elsewhere on the agenda concerning the DFG grant policy.

7. HCC on costs

The figures do not include the costs of operating the HHIA that currently fall to HCC. These are mainly the costs of payroll, office accommodation, HR and finance support, and other related costs. The business plan, (table 7; page 30) estimated running costs as £570,000 without the OT service of which £519,000 was for staffing. On-costs of £51,000 were included in the business plan. No on-cost figures are included in the revenue estimates for 2017-18 or 2018-19 at the present time.

5. Recommendations

1. That the Board agree to use a fee of 15% for all works for 2018-19 only and review this before the end of the financial year (2018-19).
2. That the Board note the estimated set-up costs of £64,341 in 2017-18 and agree that all members should contribute the £14,000 set up contribution.
3. That the Board agree to use the surplus set-up contribution of £5,548 to reduce the projected revenue deficit of £79,806 for 2017-18.
4. That the Board note the anticipated revenue deficit of £79,806 in 2017-18 and that in order to achieve a balanced budget in 2017-18 the partner authorities agree to make a revenue contribution of £38,806 and agree how this will be apportioned.
5. That the Board note that HCC will make a one-off voluntary revenue contribution of £41,000 to achieve a balanced budget for 2017-18.
6. That the Board note that should the projected fee income for 2017-18 be below the estimated amount a further revenue contribution will be required from each partner.
7. That the Board note the projected surplus for 2018-19 and agree that the partner authorities will need to make further revenue contributions in 2018-19 once HCC on-costs are taken into account.
8. That the Board note that further work is required to identify the on-costs HCC incur in relation to hosting the HHIA and that at the moment these figures are not included in full; any additional costs will increase the revenue contributions needed from the partners to achieve a balanced budget in 2018-19.
9. That the Board instruct the Head of the HHIA to produce a three-year expenditure and income forecast (2018-19; 2019-20; and 2020-21) and Statement of Account for 2017-18 and present this to the next meeting.

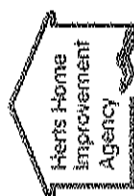
Attachment: Appendix 1 – revised budget for 2018-19.

Appendix 1 – Analysis of fee levels for 5 and 6 member partnership

	5 member partnership		6 member partnership	
	Fee 11.5%	Fee 15%	Fee 11.5%	Fee 15%
Expenditure				
Staffing	£537,153	£537,153	£537,153	£537,153
Travel	£27,225	£27,225	£27,225	£27,225
IT/telephones etc	£8,565	£8,565	£8,565	£8,565
Recruitment	£0	£0	£0	£0
Office accommodation etc	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
Training etc	£4,200	£4,200	£4,200	£4,200
Website	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000
Case management software	£14,935	£14,935	£14,935	£14,935
Printing and Stationery	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000
Marketing	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000
Total	£603,078	£603,078	£603,078	£603,078
Income				
Capitalised salaries	£276,562	£276,562	£276,562	£276,562
Fee income	£229,801	£290,618	£295,203	£373,329
Total	£506,363	£567,180	£571,765	£649,891
Deficit/(surplus)	£96,715	£35,898	£31,313	(£46,813)

Other income:	SBC Contribution	£14,000
	SBC Revenue	TBC
	Private fee income	£25,000 e
	Partners (balance)	£20,194

The partners balance is the £59,000 contribution less the £38,806 the partners need to pay in order to achieve a balanced budget in 2017-18. This would leave the partners in “revenue neutral” position provided the fee income and spend profile, and operating costs, are in line with the budget outlined.



Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency

Board Members:

Andy Godman
North Herts DC

(Policy)

Jonathan Geall
East Herts

(Chair)

Justine Hoy
Watford BC

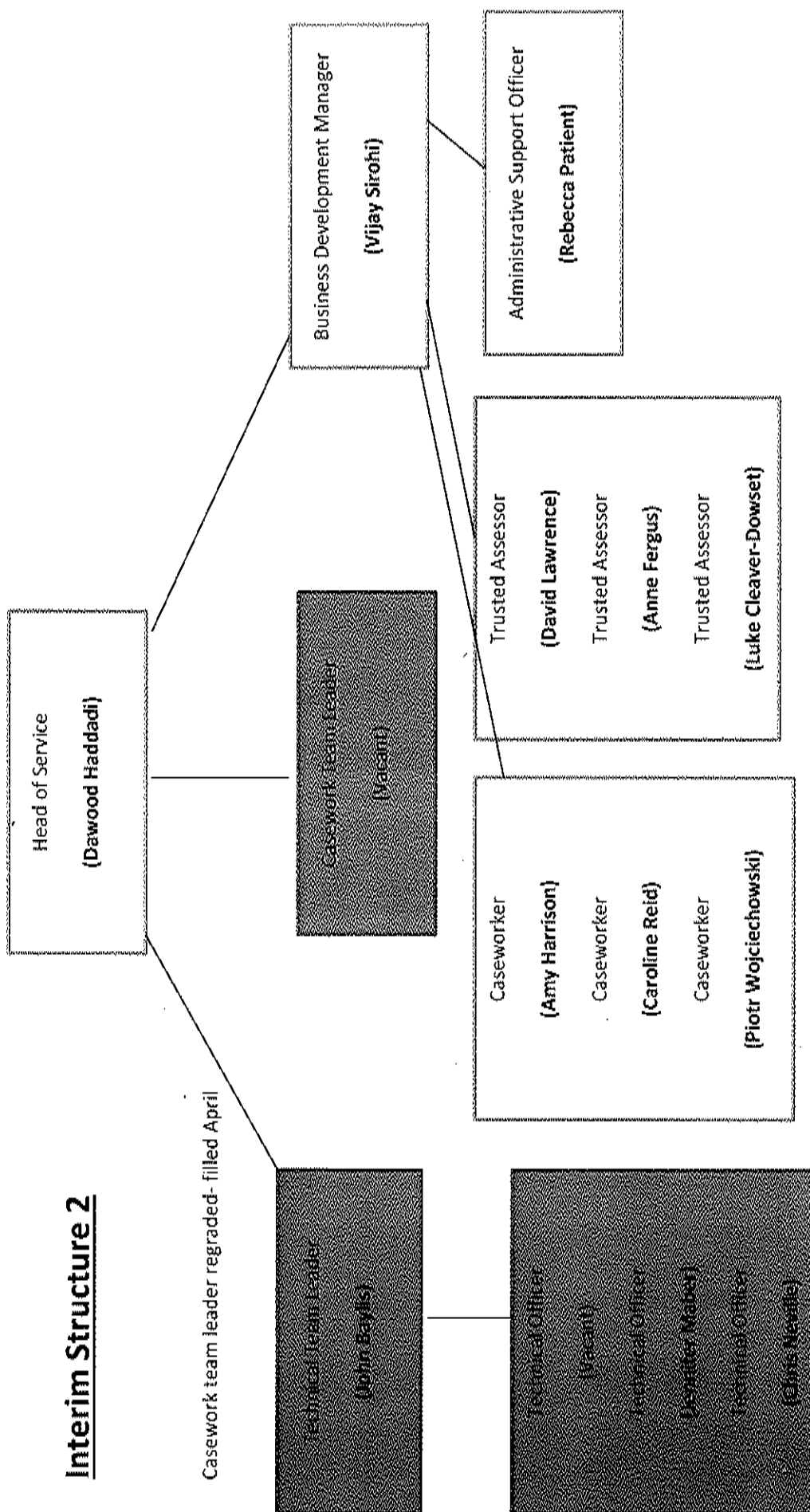
(Recruitment)

Peter Linkson
Broxbourne

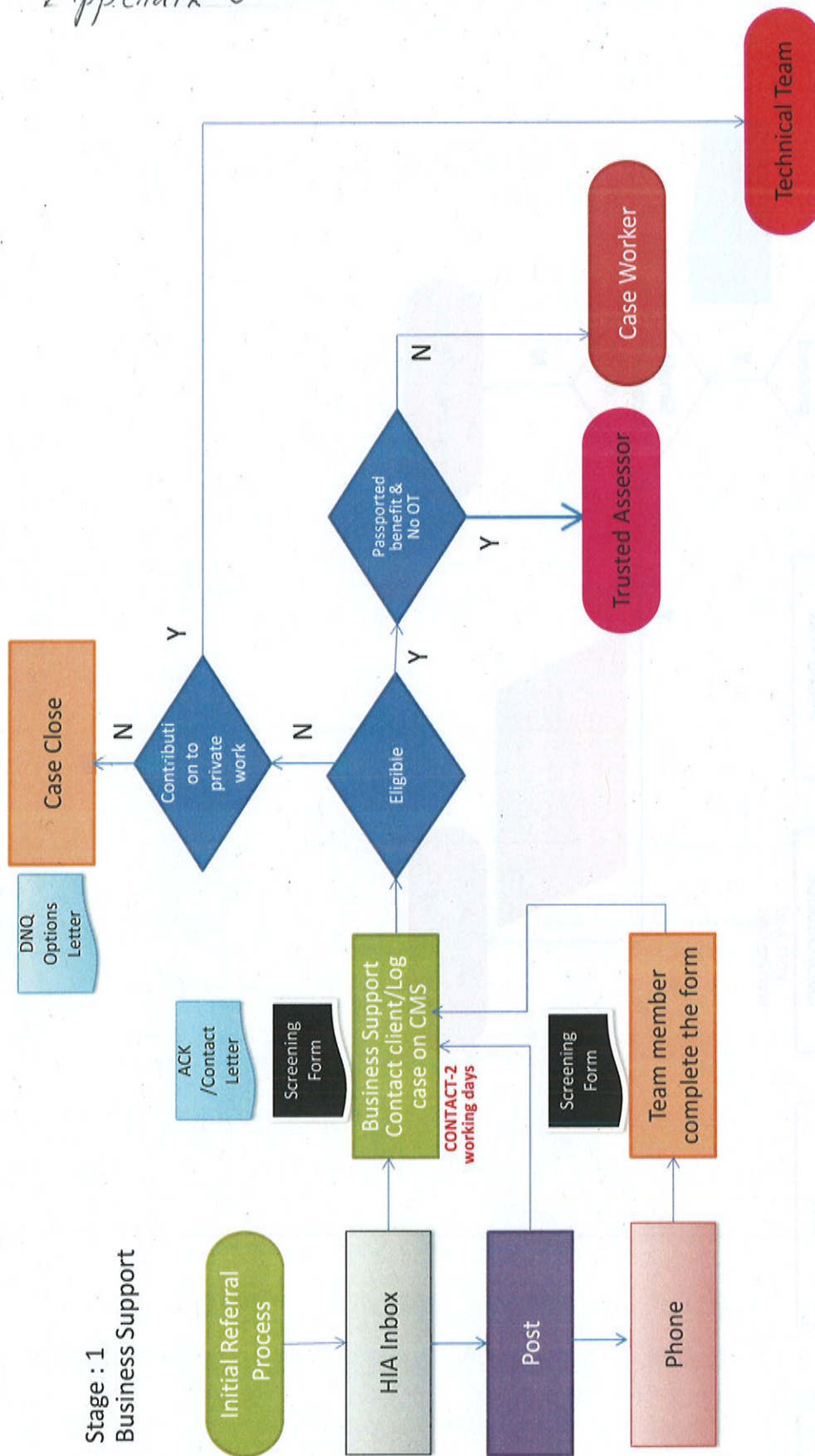
(Policy)

Steven Lee-Foster
Hertfordshire
County Council

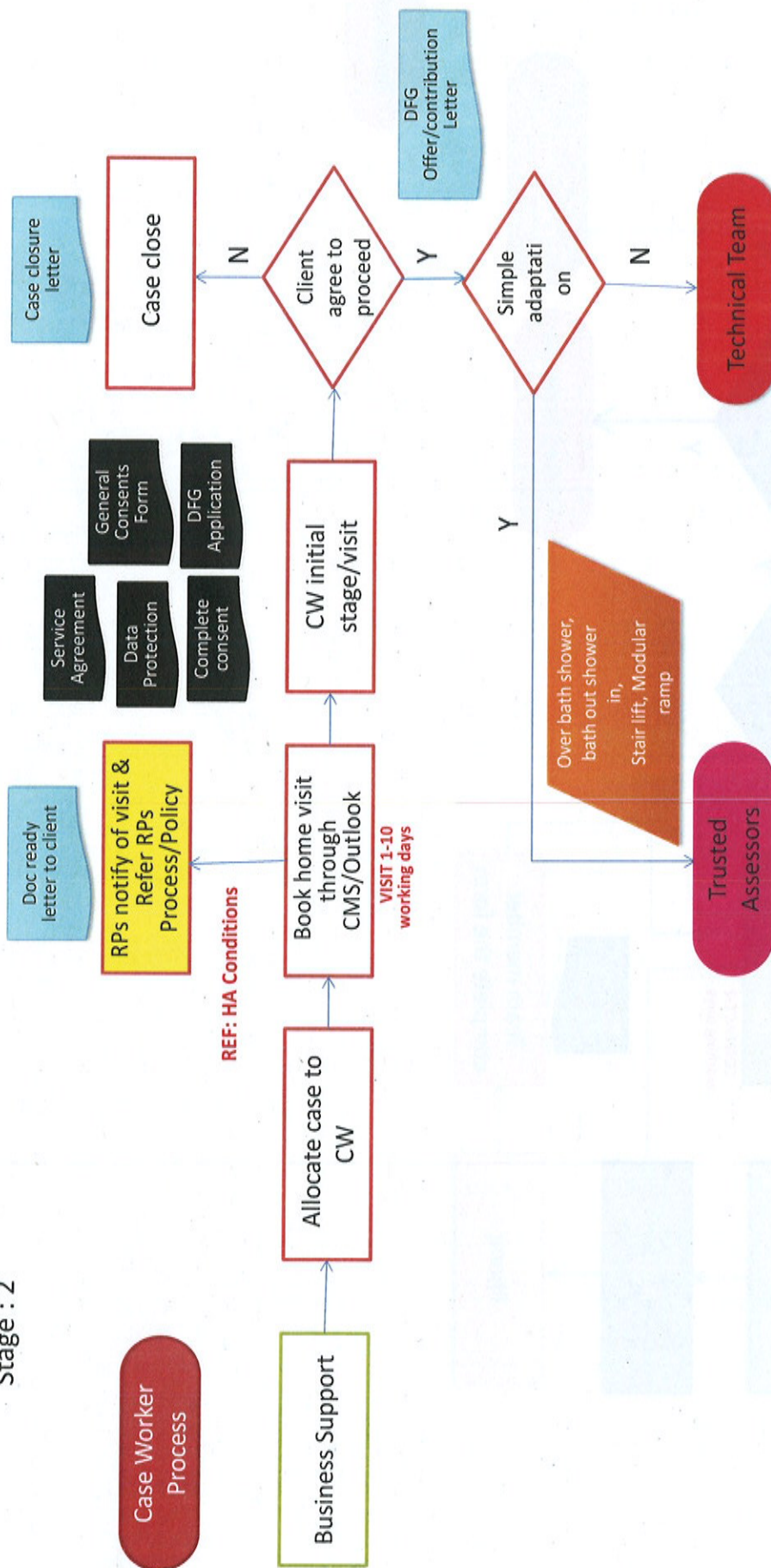
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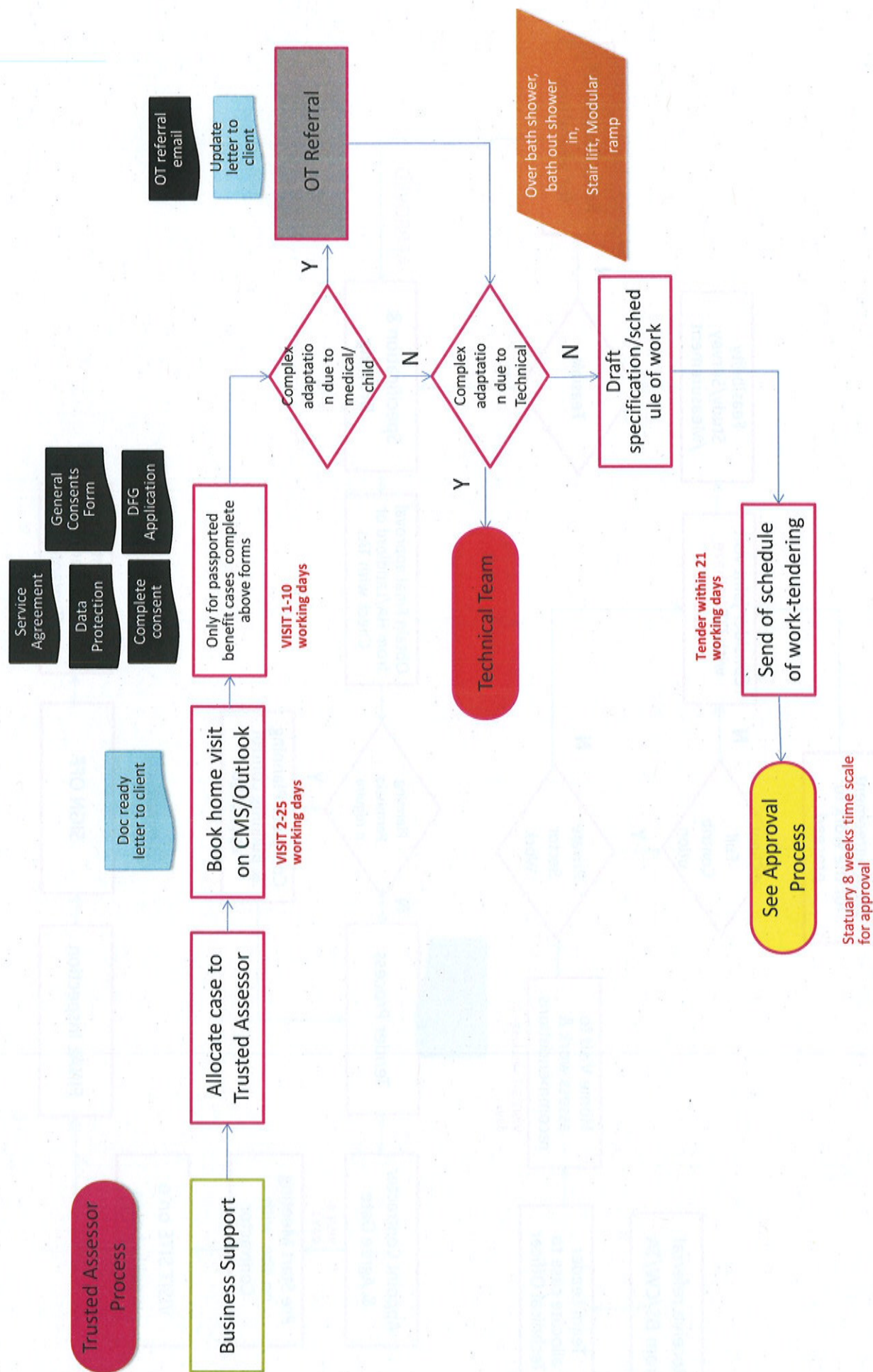
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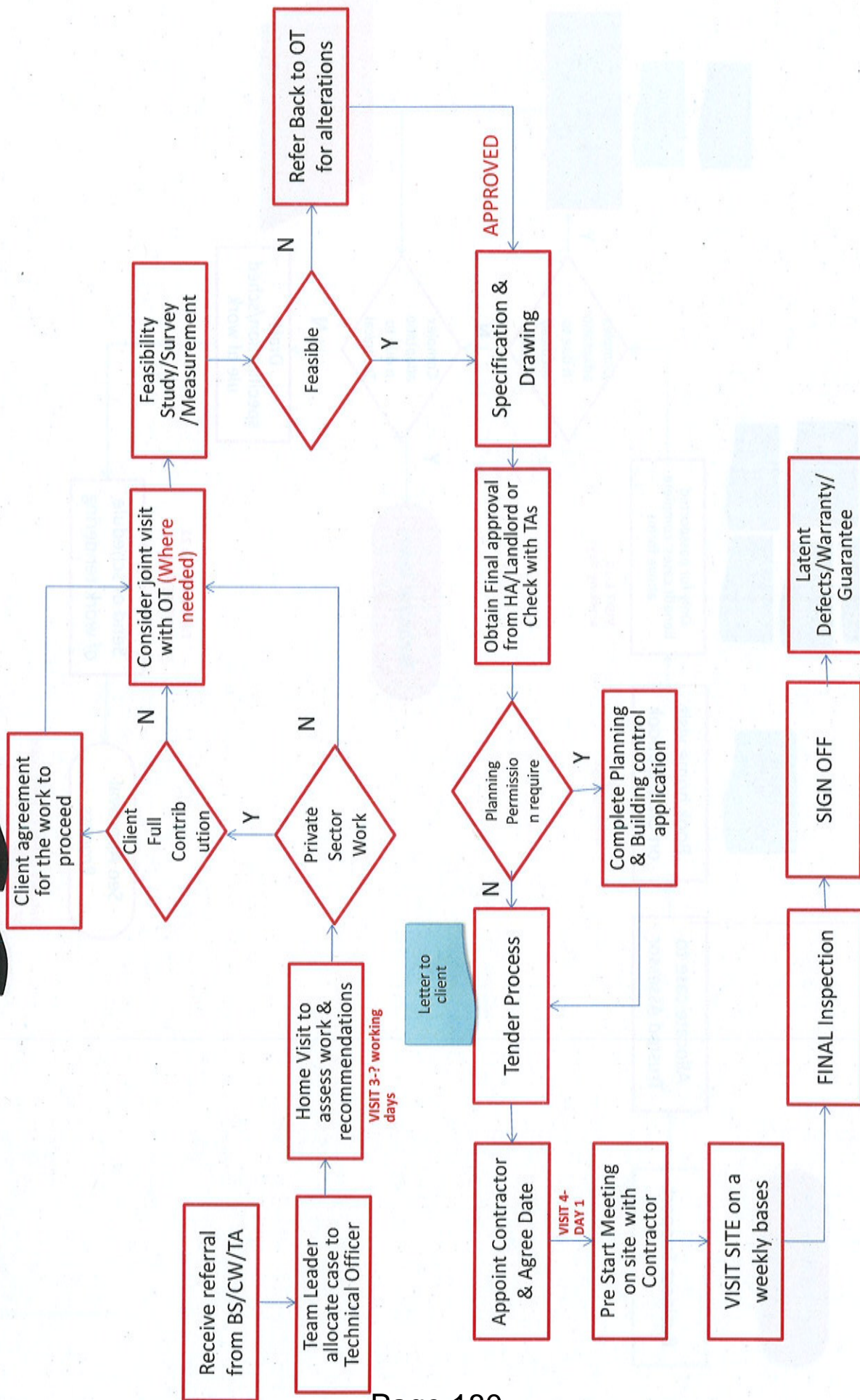


Stage : 2

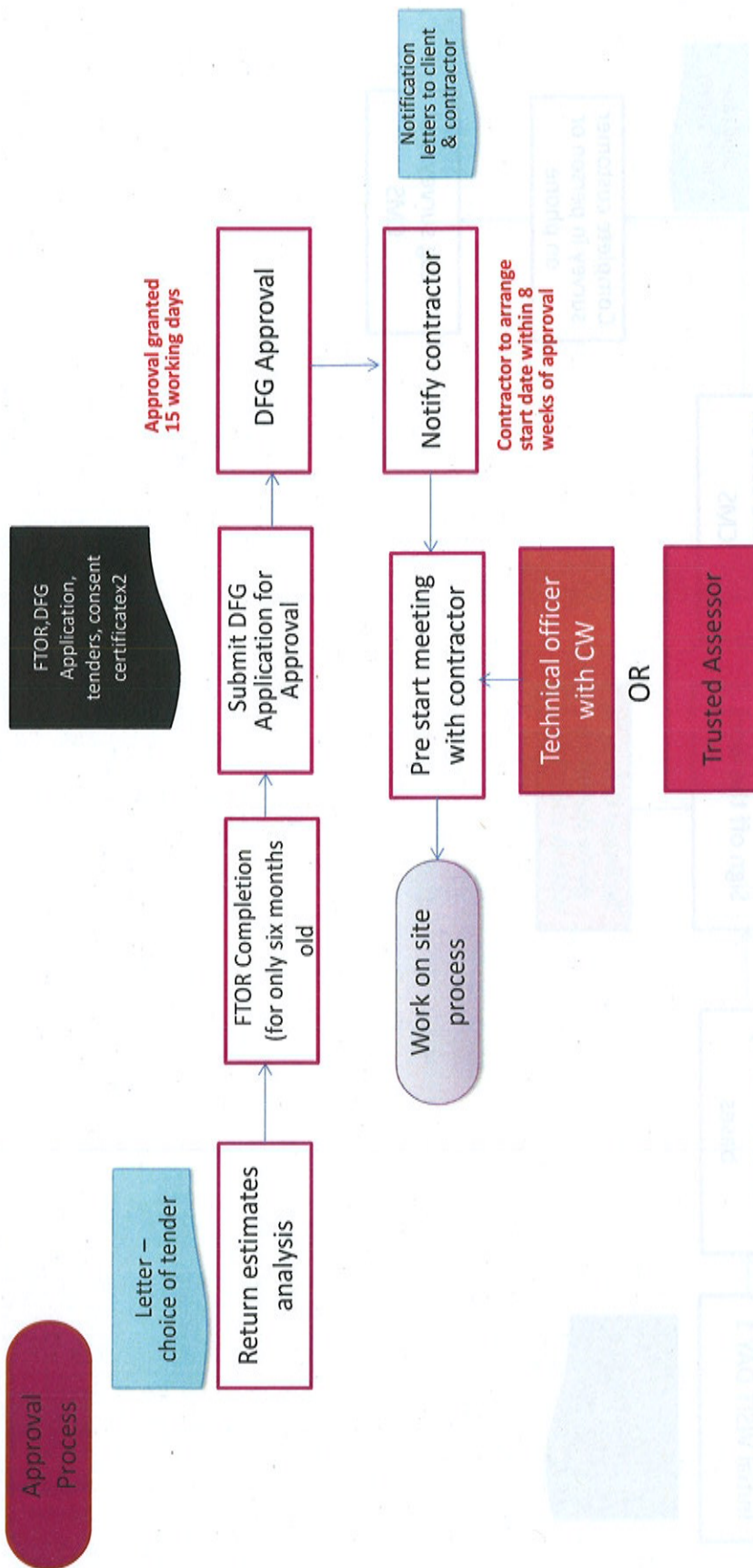


Stage : 3-
Passported benefit with no OT

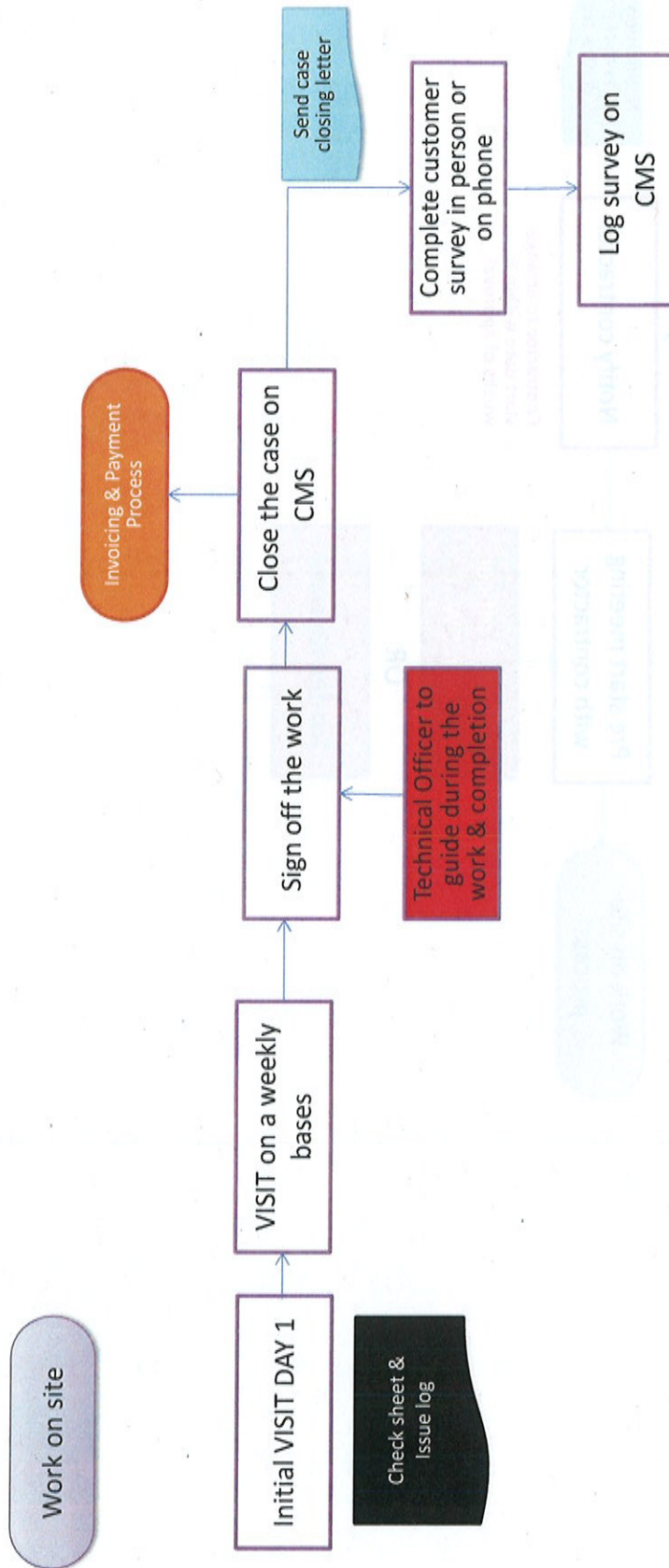


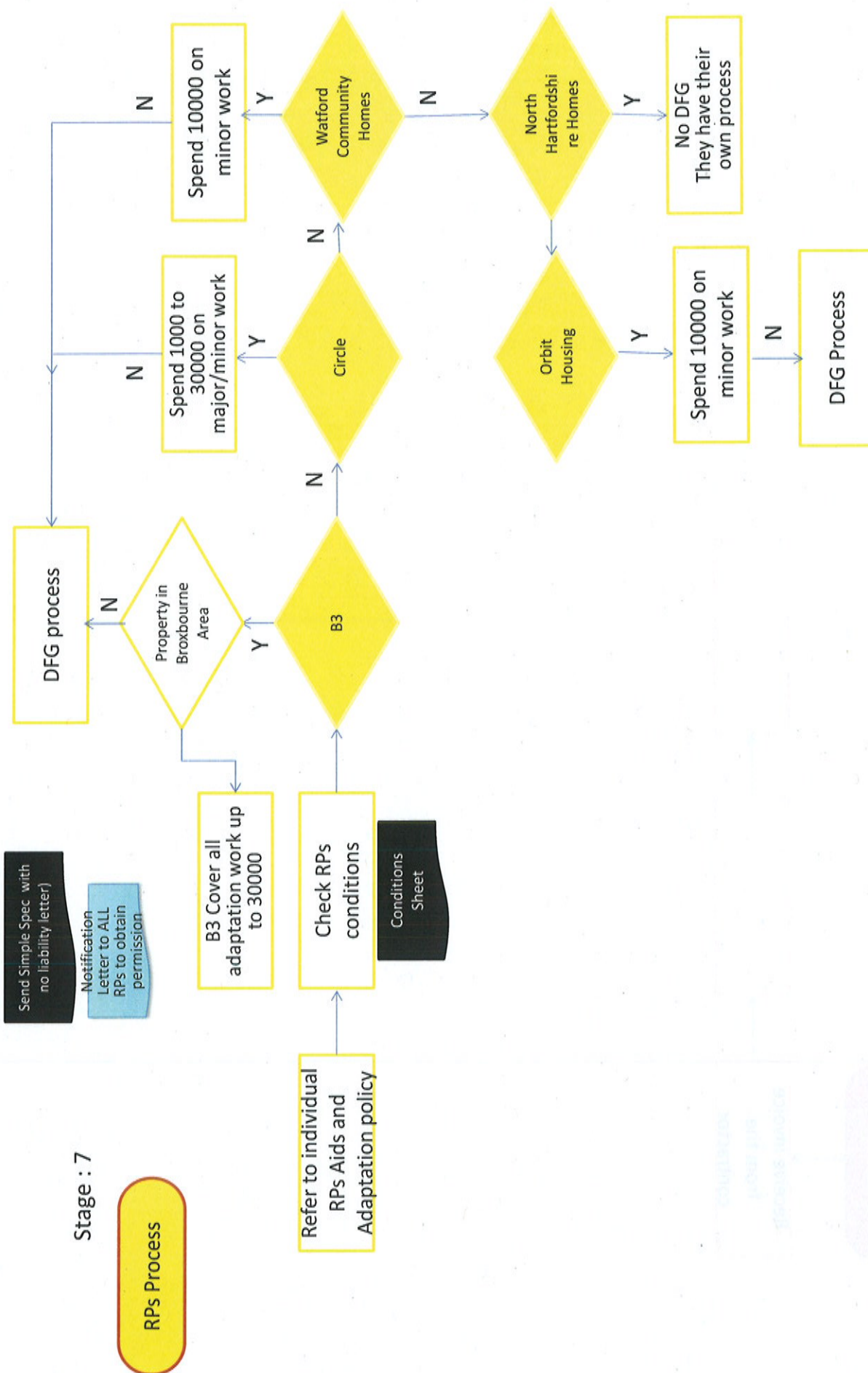


Stage : 5-
Assigned Case worker

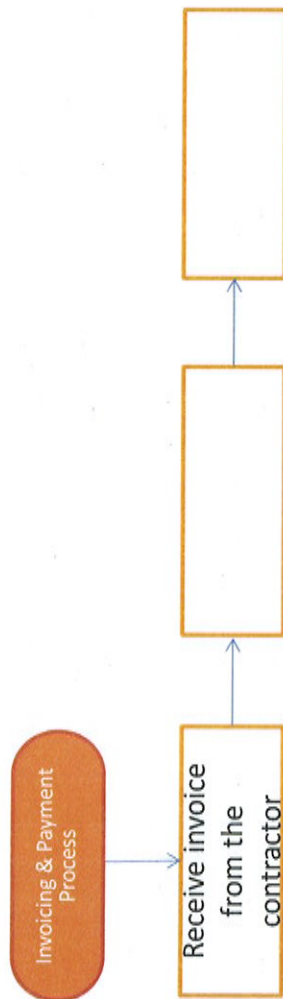


Stage : 6





Stage : 8



KPI	Measure	Source	Outcome	Collection Frequency	Reporting Frequency	Board	Annual Report
1	Total number of enquiries received	HHIA Case Management System	Customers experience an excellent service Customers receive a high quality service with grants determined within timescales.	Monthly	Quarterly	X	X
2	Total number of DFG applications received - by borough/district	HHIA Case Management System		Monthly	Quarterly	X	X
3	Total number of DFG applications determined as eligible - by borough/district	HHIA Case Management System		Monthly	Quarterly	X	X
4	Number of DFG grant determinations given within 6 months of receipt - by borough/district	HHIA Case Management System		Monthly	Quarterly	X	X
5	Total number of DFGs completed - by borough/district	HHIA Case Management System		Monthly	Quarterly	X	X
6	Number of DFGs completed 12 months or more after determination - by borough/district.	HHIA Case Management System		Monthly	Annually		X
7	Total number of “privately funded” applications received - by borough/district	HHIA Case Management System	Customers experience an excellent service Customers receive a high quality service with applications determined within timescales.	Monthly	Quarterly	X	X
8	Total number of “privately funded” works completed - by borough/district	HHIA Case Management System		Monthly	Quarterly	X	X
9	Total value of “privately funded” works completed - by borough/district	HHIA Case Management System		Monthly	Quarterly	X	X

10	Number of DFGs completed <£1,000 value - by borough/district	HHIA Case Management System	Customers are supported to maintain independence A wide range of improvements are undertaken to adapt properties to meet customers' needs.	Monthly	Quarterly	X	X
11	Number of DFGs completed £1,001-£4,999 value - by borough/district	HHIA Case Management System		Monthly	Quarterly	X	X
12	Number of DFGs completed £5,000 to £30,000 value - by borough/district	HHIA Case Management System		Monthly	Quarterly	X	X
13	Number of DFGs completed >£30,001 value - by borough/district	HHIA Case Management System		Monthly	Quarterly	X	X
14	Number of DFGs completed where beneficiary is a child - by borough/district.	HHIA Case Management System		Monthly	Quarterly	X	X
15	Number of households ineligible for a DFG provided with advice and information - by borough/district.	HHIA Case Management System	Customers are supported to maintain independence Customers are supported to access further assistance or support to maintain their independence.	Monthly	Quarterly	X	X

KPI	Measure	Source	Outcome	Collection Frequency	Reporting Frequency	Board	Annual Report
16	Number of referrals made to other services by the HHIA by type – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Home safety b) Befriending c) Dementia d) Assistive technology e) Safeguarding f) Voluntary sector services g) Housing h) Social Care i) GP j) Other 	HHIA office systems	The service supports residents to access other services to maintain or promote independence Customers receive advice and support to access other services.	Quarterly	Quarterly	X	X
17	Total number of DFGs completed where recipient was in hospital immediately prior to completion.	HHIA office systems	The service contributes to wider health and social care improvements The HHIA enables customers to remain at home by undertaking works to support their independence	Quarterly	Quarterly		X
18	Number of grant recipients who report an improvement in being able to undertake daily tasks following completion of works.	HHIA Customer Satisfaction Survey		At end of all completed works	Annual		X

KPI	Measure	Source	Outcome	Collection frequency	Reporting frequency	Board	Annual Report
19	Number of unique visitors to the HHIA web-page(s)	HHIA web-analytics	Awareness of the HHIA services increases over time Residents and professionals have a wide range of easily accessible information.	Monthly	Quarterly	X	X
Page 188	% of respondents who returned a Customer Satisfaction Survey who were happy with the quality of work completed (DFGs)	Customer satisfaction Survey	Customers are provided with an excellent service Contractors working on behalf of the HHIA meet the standards required.	At end of all completed works	Quarterly	X	X
21	% of respondents who returned a Customer Satisfaction Survey who were happy with the quality of work completed (self-funders)	Customer satisfaction Survey	Customers are provided with an excellent service Contractors working on behalf of the HHIA meet the standards required.	At end of all completed works	Quarterly	X	X
22	% of respondents who returned a Customer Satisfaction Survey who were happy with the overall quality of the	Customer satisfaction Survey	Customers are provided with an excellent service	At end of all completed works	Quarterly	X	X

	service received from the HHIA (DFGs)		The HHIA meets the standard of service required.				
23	% of respondents who returned a Customer Satisfaction Survey who were happy with the overall quality of the service received from the HHIA (self-funders)	Customer satisfaction Survey	Customers are provided with an excellent service The HHIA meets the standard of service required.	At end of all completed works	Quarterly	X	X
24	Number of complaints received.	HHIA office systems		Monthly	Annual	X	X
25	% of complaints upheld.	HHIA office systems		Monthly	Annual	X	X
26	% of all respondents who returned a Customer Satisfaction Survey who would recommend the HHIA to someone else.	Customer satisfaction Survey		At end of all completed works	Annual		X
27	Average time taken to complete works from date application approved (DFGs) – by borough/district	HHIA Case Management System	Customers experience an excellent service Customers receive a high quality service with average time to complete works improving year-on-year.	Quarterly	Quarterly	X	X
28	Average time taken to complete works from date application approved (self-funded) – by borough/district	HHIA Case Management System		Quarterly	Quarterly	X	X

KPI	Measure	Source	Outcome	Collection frequency	Reporting frequency	Board	Annual Report
29	Number of applications for a DFG approved by tenure – by borough/district: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Owned outright - Owned with a mortgage - Private rented - Shared ownership - Rented from a RP - Rented from a local authority 	HHIA Case Management System	Customers are supported to maintain independence Activity encompasses a wide range of tenures.	Quarterly	Annually		X
30	Number of self-funded works completed by tenure – by borough/district: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Owned outright - Owned with a mortgage - Private rented - Shared ownership - Rented from a RP - Rented from a local authority 	HHIA Case Management System		Quarterly	Quarterly	X	X
31	Number of applications for a DFG approved by household type – by borough/district	HHIA Case Management System	A wide range of needs are met by the HHIA Activity encompasses a wide range of household types.	Quarterly	Quarterly	X	X
32	Number of self-funded works completed by household type – by borough/district	HHIA Case Management		Quarterly	Quarterly	X	X

		System					
33	Number of applications for a DFG approved by gender – by borough/district	HHIA Case Management System		Quarterly	Annually		X
34	Number of self-funded works completed by gender – by borough/district	HHIA Case Management System		Quarterly	Annually		X
35	Number of applications for a DFG approved by ethnicity – by borough/district	HHIA Case Management System		Quarterly	Annually		X
36	Number of self-funded works completed by ethnicity – by borough/district	HHIA Case Management System		Quarterly	Annually		X
37	Number of applications for a DFG approved by age – by borough/district	HHIA Case Management System		Quarterly	Annually		X
38	Number of self-funded works completed by age – by borough/district	HHIA Case Management System		Quarterly	Annually		X

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Part I – Release to Press



Meeting EXECUTIVE
Portfolio Area Children, Young People and Leisure
Date 13 MARCH 2018



STEVENAGE CULTURAL STRATEGY (A 10 YEAR STRATEGY FOR ARTS & HERITAGE)

KEY DECISION

Authors	Rob Gregory	x 2568
Contributor	Geoff Caine	x 2206
Lead Officers	Rob Gregory	x 2568
Contact Officer	Rob Gregory	x 2568

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The report outlines the finalisation of a Cultural Strategy for the town and summarises a number of cultural ambitions over the next 10 years in order for Stevenage to become a destination creative town.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the final draft of the cultural strategy at Appendix A to this report be approved.
- 2.2 That the proposed set of milestones for 2018/19 be noted.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council has been working with Arts Council England to develop an overall vision for the town as a cultural destination, building on both its unique heritage and the opportunities to further develop its cultural offer.
- 3.2 In August 2017 both organisations co-commissioned Arts Reach to assist in the development of a 10 year cultural strategy for the town. The creation of a dedicated strategy is recognised as a strong commitment to place-shaping and cultural regeneration. It recognises both the economic and social benefits a strong cultural offer brings to a place.

- 3.3 Arts Reach engaged with a range of cultural stakeholders and partner organisations as part of the process and captured the Council's ambitions as part of the Future Town Future Council programme – particularly linked to Town Centre Regeneration and the opportunities to re-imagine Stevenage as a cultural destination.
- 3.4 As a consequence the strategy focuses on a number of key themes in order to build the profile of Stevenage as a destination creative town.
- Widening the Cultural Offer
 - Increasing Cultural Engagement
 - Connecting and Advocating Cultural Opportunities
 - Celebrating the Heritage of Old Stevenage & The New Town
 - Developing Opportunities for Children and Young People
 - Improving Health and Wellbeing
- 3.5 Through stakeholder engagement the strategy outlines a number of cultural ambitions over the next 10 years. The draft strategy is attached to this report as an appendix. The ambitions are summarised below:
- Create an extensive new trail of public art, with a focus on interactive artwork, to draw residents and visitors to the cycle network and to Fairlands Valley Park and to enhance the regenerated town centre, also helping to revitalise the existing heritage sculpture trail
 - Facilitate new creative spaces for artists (studios), musicians (practice rooms/recording facilities) and creative/digital industry SMEs to build the local pool of artists, practitioners and creatives
 - Develop existing Outdoor Festivals and events to increase the cultural offer, and develop new Outdoor Arts and heritage offers that together create volunteering and other opportunities for local people and added value attraction for visitors
 - Maximise skills and personal development opportunities for Stevenage residents through engagement with cultural activity
 - Upgrade and improve the Gordon Craig Theatre offer and maximise other performance spaces to meet the 21st century needs of the Stevenage community
 - Relocate and revitalise the Stevenage Borough Museum to widen access and increase footfall. Develop a USP as the First New Town Museum
 - Increase provision of music making, recording and performance facilities
 - Support development of new focused Arts and Health initiatives and programmes (supporting the Borough Plan for Health and Well-Being)
 - Deliver the Cultural Education Challenge by supporting and enabling cultural entitlement for all children and young people

- Create a Borough wide Arts and Heritage Forum to act as a platform for communication and cultural advocacy, encompassing professional, amateur and community sectors
- 3.6 The ambitions are underpinned by a strong emphasis on culture being accessible to and valued by everyone and as a key driver for economic development and the broader benefits of Stevenage as a cultural destination.
- 3.7 Following executive approval of the draft strategy in January 2018 further cultural stakeholder consultation sessions were held during February to gain feedback on the draft strategy 17 different organisations engaged in the sessions along with a number of local residents and artists. There was strong support for the creation of the strategy with ideas and suggestions on activities that could be supported and developed. There was particular support for the creation of an arts and heritage forum to bring organisations and ideas together. The emphasis of literature and the spoken word being recognised as part of the cultural offer across the town was also highlighted. There was strong support for pop-up and creative use of empty spaces and a clear collective aspiration to better promote and market the cultural sector across the town. Opportunities to further enhance the offer at Fairlands Valley Park were also noted. All comments and suggestions were subsequently incorporated into the final strategy document.
- 3.8 On 16th February the Council hosted a visit from the Arts Council and other strategic partners including Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership to gain further commitment to the delivery of the cultural strategy. There was strong support for the ambitions identified in the strategy. The Arts Council were enthused by the Council's approach to culture, particularly in relation to SG1 and the place-shaping agenda. There is a clear opportunity to work with the Council's regeneration partner Mace to further develop the cultural regeneration of the town centre. Equally there is an opportunity for Stevenage to help to develop the Arts Council approach to "New Towns" in the south-east. The Arts Council expressed its willingness to work further with Stevenage on the delivery of the cultural strategy and will consider match-funding the initial facilitation and implementation of the strategy over the next 12 months.
- 3.9 The Community Select Committee met on 27th February to consider feedback from the stakeholder consultation events and to develop ideas around the cultural action plan and associated milestones for 2018/19. Ideas included the opportunities to enhance planned exhibitions/events over the next 12 months, the potential to further engage with the community and voluntary sector and Schools and possibilities to develop an interactive cultural trail around the town. There was also a clear focus that the future Stevenage cultural offer needs to be accessible to all of the town's residents to grow participation.
- 3.10 It is therefore suggested that during the next 12 months the following activities are undertaken:
 - The appointment of a cultural enabler post to drive the initial implementation of the strategy.
 - A formal strategy launch.

- The establishment of an arts and heritage forum.
- The cultural enhancement of an existing community event/festival.
- Public realm community/schools arts projects.
- Utilisation of empty/redundant town centre retail spaces for arts/exhibitions.
- Further engagement with communities/cultural organisations and artists.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

- 4.1 The strategy has now been updated to reflect the comments and suggestions received since the draft was published in January. Members' approval is now sought to approve the final version.
- 4.2 It is proposed that a summary 'user friendly' strategy document is produced following approval to be shared as part of a formal launch later in the year.

5. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 5.1 It is recognised that the ambitions contained within the strategy will require financial investment. The Council will seek to work with other co-investors such as Arts Council England, Heritage Lottery Fund and Hertfordshire LEP to help to realise these ambitions.
- 5.2 The 2018/19 New Homes Bonus allocations recommended for approval (on this Executive agenda) include £40,000 to support a time-limited post to help to facilitate and mobilise the initial strategy implementation. The Arts Council will also consider match-funding to support this work.
- 5.3 In implementing the Strategy there may be some further match-funding or pump priming required related to progressing certain initiatives, however, individual business cases will be made to support these. In addition a fundraising strategy has been developed in appendix B to this report.

Legal Implications

- 5.4 There are no immediate legal implications highlighted through the finalisation of the strategy.

Risk Implications

- 5.5 The Council will need to consider associated risks in relation to key deliverables as the cultural action plan develops and will need to maintain an appropriate risk register in relation to key projects.

Policy Implications

- 5.6 The strategy links to the development of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the town in the recognition that engagement in arts and culture supports wellbeing. The strategy will also link to the Capital Strategy with reference to physical cultural assets such as the Gordon Craig Theatre, Stevenage Museum and Stevenage Arts Centre.

Planning Implications

- 5.7 Policies HC6 and HC7 of the Local Plan outline the Council's commitment to protect existing and provide new cultural facilities.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.8 The development of further cultural opportunities and initiatives through the strategy will consider equality and diversity implications with an underlying value that culture should be accessible to and valued by everyone. For example, Stevenage has established groups representing communities from a wide range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds, such as the Irish Network and Stevenage World Forum. It also has established structures for youth participation through the Youth Council and Youth Mayor programme and established groups representing older people across the town and those with disabilities. Through the development and delivery of the strategy engagement will develop through these mechanisms to maximise inclusion. The delivery of the strategy will make specific links to other inequalities such as health and financial exclusion to ensure an encompassing approach to tackling inequalities across the town.

Service Delivery Implications

- 5.9 The strategy references aspirations to replace the Stevenage Museum and aspirations to upgrade the current Gordon Craig Theatre offer as part of a wider leisure facilities programme. Considerations around the future culture and leisure offer at Fairlands Valley Park will also be considered in relation to this. Operational implications will be further considered as these aspirations progress.

Safeguarding Children Implications

- 5.10 The development of further cultural education opportunities for children and young people will need to include appropriate safeguarding considerations.

Other Corporate Implications

- 5.11 The strategy will link to the Town Centre Regeneration and Co-operative Neighbourhood Management strands of the Future Town, Future Council programme.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

BD1 Consultants Brief

APPENDICES

A Final Draft Cultural Strategy

B Fundraising Plan

C Action Plan



Stevenage Re-Imagined

A Ten-Year Arts and Heritage (Cultural) Strategy for Stevenage

Making Stevenage a destination creative town



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Stevenage Re-Imagined

A Ten-Year Arts and Heritage (Cultural) Strategy for Stevenage

Vision

Making Stevenage a destination creative town

As the first New Town Re-Imagined, Stevenage aims to offer:

- Flagship performing arts, museum and heritage facilities
- An iconic public realm arts programme
- Extensive creative industries spaces and hubs, including digital, to attract and develop talent and to support skills development and economic growth

Through this Strategy a developed, enhanced and sustainable cultural offer, complementing town centre regeneration, will substantially improve local quality of life and health; benefit businesses and the economy; engage children and young people; and attract visitors from the County, London and beyond to a thriving, busy and accessible creative environment.

Big Ideas

A series of focused and connected ambitions provide developmental aims that are embedded in this Strategy, a Strategy which belongs to the people and the creative sector, as well as to Stevenage Borough Council and its partners. Through Stevenage Re-Imagined the Borough will:

- Plan and deliver a major public art programme and trail, enhancing the town centre and Old Town public realm, parks and opens spaces, and the extensive network of cycle paths in the Borough, helping build an exceptional creative profile for Stevenage and working with the business community
- Encourage the establishment of permanent and temporary (pop-up) artist studios and creative industry hubs, including digital media, to support local talent, stimulate employment, develop career pathways and build a strong local pool of creative practitioners and artisans
- Enhance the depth and artistic quality of Festivals and events, maximising the opportunity to enliven the town centre, the Old Town and Fairlands Valley Park, and promoting a unique Festival offer for Stevenage
- Upgrade the Gordon Craig Theatre offer to meet the needs of the 21st century Stevenage population and creating a facility with a suitable range of spaces to attract and inspire visitors
- Consider relocating the Stevenage Museum to a town centre location, with an aspiration to develop the First New Town Museum
- Encourage the provision of high quality music facilities for the town that build on Stevenage's musical traditions and enable young talent to access skills development and career opportunities
- Link arts and heritage with sport to build on the town's substantial sporting heritage and cycling unique selling point (USP), and encourage joined-up events and festivals
- Support innovative Arts and Health projects that use creativity to enhance well-being and quality of life, and support the Borough's Health and Well-Being Strategy – Healthy Stevenage
- Ensure the Hertfordshire Cultural Education Partnership is able to widen levels and richness of engagement to maximise opportunities to engage all of the Borough's children and young people and to build pathways for ongoing cultural engagement

In Stevenage the arts and heritage will be accessed and valued by everyone in the community, will be supported by the business community, and will become a magnet to attract visitors.

Contents

1. Supporting Borough and Partner Strategies and Policies
2. Complementing partner and stakeholder organisations
3. Themes
4. Key Aims
5. Resources and resource requirements
6. Key milestones
7. Delivery responsibility
8. Evaluation

1. Supporting Borough and Partner Strategies and Policies

The Strategy's Vision, and the identified themes and aims and action plan support key priorities within other strategies, policies and plans that align with Stevenage Re-Imagined, and in particular goals within:

Stevenage Future Town Future Council – Corporate Plan

From a cultural perspective the intended outcomes of the Future Town Future Council Programme are:

- A. A sustainable high quality cultural offer
- B. Sustained growth of cultural engagement
- C. Improving life chances of local people, including health and wellbeing
- D. The most vulnerable are supported by arts and cultural activities
- E. Direct business growth for arts and cultural organisations, with a positive impact on town centre businesses

Stevenage Borough Local Plan

The Strategy recognises three key elements:

- Regeneration
- Housing provision
- Employment growth

Top priority is regeneration of the town centre to help stimulate interest in Stevenage as an attractive place to live, work, visit and invest and to deliver a step-change in perception. Opportunity areas are designated to deliver high-calibre, mixed use schemes of homes, offices, retailing, sporting, cultural, civic, and leisure uses.

Stevenage Regeneration Plan - Stevenage Central Framework Vision

The Regeneration Plan has identified six major Opportunity Areas for investment to transform Stevenage into an attractive, sustainable and thriving place, within a positive environment appropriate for 21st century living. The aspirations for Stevenage Central (Opportunity Area 1) are to “create a vibrant town centre where people want to live, work and play”:

- A town centre with a vibrant evening economy
- Increased numbers of homes
- A hub for public sector services
- High quality design and greener, better integrated public space
- A transport hub and improved connectivity
- Clear public transport, cycle and walking links with the High Street, Leisure Park and Roaring Meg

This Strategy also references the **Community Strategy - Stevenage 2021 – Our Town Our Future** and the **Borough’s Health and Well-Being Strategy**

The Community Strategy links to the wider Hertfordshire Community Strategy and identifies priorities as:

- Children and young people
- Healthier communities and older people
- Safer and stronger communities
- Economy, enterprise and the environment

Hertfordshire County Council Corporate Plan 2017-2021 – County of Opportunity

The Corporate Plan has four key ambitions:

- Opportunity to Thrive
A cleaner, greener county with children and adults given the support they need.
- Opportunity to Prosper
Successful businesses, with plenty of job and education opportunities.
- Opportunity to be Healthy and Safe
Healthier lifestyles, tailored social care and less crime.
- Opportunity to Take Part
More volunteers and residents getting involved with their community.

HLEP Strategic Economic Plan for Hertfordshire

Four Priorities are identified:

- Maintaining global excellence in science and technology
- Harnessing relationships with London and elsewhere
- Reinvigorating places for the 21st Century
- Foundations for Growth

Stevenage is particularly referenced for investment support towards regeneration with the note that “place-based regeneration needs to go hand-in-hand with the commercialisation of the town’s science-based assets, particularly when the latter are amongst the finest in the UK.”

Arts Council England Great Art and Culture for Everyone

- Excellence is thriving and celebrated in the arts, museums and libraries
- Everyone has the opportunity to experience and to be inspired by the arts, museums and libraries
- The arts museums and libraries are resilient and environmentally sustainable
- The leadership and workforce in the arts, museums and libraries are diverse and appropriately skilled
- Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts, museums and libraries

Complementing partner and stakeholder organisations

We know that this Strategy will complement and support the work of partner and stakeholder organisations because, in addition to Stevenage Borough Council Officers and Members, there has been intensive consultation with the following organisations and initiatives:

- Stevenage Leisure Ltd (SLL) – Gordon Craig Theatre team
- Stevenage Museum
- Stevenage Arts Guild
- Hertfordshire County Council via Hertfordshire Music Service and Music Education Hub
- Stevenage Schools
- North Hertfordshire College
- University of Hertfordshire
- UH Arts
- Creative Hertfordshire
- Royal Opera House Bridge
- East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust
- Hertfordshire Public Health Service
- Hertfordshire Libraries
- The Practice Roomz
- Stevenage Lytton Players
- Stevenage Festival

- Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (HLEP)
- Hertfordshire Cultural Education Partnership (HCEP)*
- Arts and Horticulture in the Hospital Project

*Hertfordshire Cultural Education Partnership has identified three key priorities as development goals:

- Advocating for the value of cultural learning
- Enhancing local relationships between schools, the education sector and cultural activity
- Ensuring access and entitlement for all young people to a high quality, diverse, creative and cultural education (prioritising children with protected characteristics)

Strategic partner and stakeholder consultation has taken the form of individual meetings, group meetings and telephone conversations. The development of the Strategy has also involved workshops and discussions with a range of local community groups and survey activity to seek views from individual schools, community groups and artists/practitioners. It was particularly important to seek the views of representative samples of local people, and this was undertaken by arranging music and visual arts workshops that would subsequently allow feedback discussion and debate. In some cases, attendance at community group meetings facilitated group discussion and comment, in order for future aspirations for arts and heritage development to be shared.

A detailed report on the Strategy consultation process is attached as Appendix A. Highlighted below are some of the common and consistent comments shared during the consultation process:

- Lack of connectivity between existing activity (including that in schools) and absence of a joined-up approach to marketing and promoting arts and heritage activity

“There is a lot going on in the town but the various groups need to work together to get the maximum results”

- The aspiration for more and a wider range of participatory activity that is accessible and affordable (and inclusive e.g. for young people with special educational needs)
- The need for studio performing arts space/theatre provision that can be used by both community groups and for a different touring, professional product (including spoken word and literature). There is also a strong aspiration to see music performance space in the town centre

“A properly run live music venue has been much needed within Stevenage in all my years of living here. It would provide a home venue to showcase the talent that Stevenage has in abundance, but end up playing further afield due to lack of local opportunity/platform.”

- A desire for enhanced and additional Festival activity, incorporating music plus arts and crafts. This aspiration includes a desire for more events at Fairlands Valley Park
- The need to maximise and build on the town's sculpture trail and Mondrian heritage and to create space for exhibition
- Importance of enhancing and relocating the Stevenage Museum and of using empty buildings for creative activity and engagement on both a permanent and pop-up basis

Themes

The themes that drive Stevenage Re-Imagined have emerged from the aspirations inherent in Borough Strategies, Policies and Plans, and from the priorities identified by the cultural sector and by other stakeholders in the town, including the local community.

1. Widening the cultural offer

There is a need to respond to a changing demographic (anticipated 10,000 new town residents, primarily young adults), to provide a wider mix of cultural activity to attract visitors, to offer Stevenage residents a range of cultural opportunities that better support skills development and career pathways for young people, to engage the business community improve health and well-being and enhance the environment. Stevenage residents benefit from:

- Permanent and temporary exhibitions in the Borough Museum
- The main theatre programme (and exhibitions) offered by the Gordon Craig Theatre*
- Occasional shows and cultural events in the Leisure Centre Main Hall
- The Stevenage Leisure Ltd Theatre Academy and Outreach programme (for children and young people)
- Performances from The Lytton Players at the 80 seat Lytton Theatre
- Musical events and concerts in the Stevenage Music Centre at Nobel School
- Occasional performances in the Valley School theatre space
- Participatory opportunities available through the 20 groups that are members of Stevenage Arts Guild
- Stevenage Festival (biennial)
- Stevenage Day (annual)
- Stevenage Charter Fair (annual)

- Other events, not directly with arts content, such as the annual Fireworks, the Celebrate event hosted by the World Forum, and Cycling Festivals

*The programme offered by the Gordon Craig Theatre is strongly focused on music (Tribute bands), comedy, popular dance, popular entertainment and family shows (including the Christmas show). In addition, the theatre produces three in-house shows annually, incorporating musicals and drama. There is also a strong community offer.

Whilst Stevenage has an existing and relatively vibrant cultural offer, levels of engagement are comparatively low and the town and its inhabitants are ambitious for more, recognising the impact culture can play on quality of life. There are relatively few professional artists and practitioners living and working in Stevenage. There is an aspiration to offer a full range of performing arts activity (including spoken word and literature), to build on the town's traditions of music engagement and performance, and to revive the commitment to public realm art which saw Stevenage as an early pioneer in placing exceptional artworks in public space.

2. Increasing cultural engagement

The 2016 survey of Hertfordshire residents included sample responses from 100 people from within each Local Authority area. The survey sample indicated that Stevenage had the lowest cultural engagement in the County with only 30% of those responding indicating they had engaged with arts and culture over the previous twelve months. The Taking Part Survey (2010) indicated Stevenage was in the bottom 20-30% of Local Authority areas for cultural engagement with only 41% of the population indicating an engagement of three times per annum or more (the highest Local Authority area engagement level was 65%). The Borough Museum is reporting reducing engagement from Stevenage schools and there is a risk that children and young people are missing out on important creative opportunities to enhance their learning and future employment opportunities.

Despite these statistics there is focused cultural engagement through Stevenage facilities and initiatives:

- The Gordon Craig Theatre (500 seats) is popular, selling to an average 67.5% capacity (91% for a long-running Christmas pantomime) and the theatre's Academy is engaging 230 children and young people each week
- The Practice Roomz attracts 80 or more musicians/bands each week (many coming into Stevenage from other locations) to use its six recording studios and practice rooms
- The Community Arts Centre (managed by Stevenage Arts Guild with 20 organisations as members) is in substantial demand to host the activities of local community and amateur arts groups, but its current location on the Roaring Meg Retail Park may not be the most obvious location for an arts centre in the town.
- The Lytton Theatre delivers a programme of amateur theatre, with supporting youth theatre and has its own venue with 80 seats and an aspiration to update and improve the facilities.

- The County Music Service, with its Stevenage Music Centre base at Nobel School, serves many children and young people with music tuition and ensemble performance opportunities
- Stevenage Festival provides a ten-day biennial programme of activity delivered entirely by volunteers and community arts groups
- Stevenage Day is a vibrant one-day Festival event each June, with a substantial live music programme

However, with a population of 90,000 there is considerable scope to improve local cultural engagement, and in particular to ensure that there are accessible opportunities for the whole Borough community, including culturally diverse communities (Irish, Polish, Romanian, Caribbean and Filipino communities are highlighted), those from more disadvantaged backgrounds and those with protected characteristics.

3. Connecting and advocating cultural opportunities

Whilst there are focused cultural opportunities in Stevenage, local organisations report a lack of connection and visibility. Activity is often offered and delivered in isolation, and there is little sense of the overarching cultural offer, reducing impact and advocacy for engagement. This issue is reflected in under use of facilities such as the Borough Museum, Stevenage Music Centre and Valley School Theatre, underuse of cycle paths, and declining attendances at some local amateur and community theatre and music performances. Some users of the Community Arts Centre commented that it is well used but felt it lacked profile due to its location in the Roaring Meg Retail Park. There are greater opportunities to utilise library facilities for arts and heritage activity. Those in the sector report lack of collaborative initiatives and joined-up publicity and advocacy, which together might provide stronger marketing and promotion than individual organisations and practitioners are able to deliver. The need for cultural organisations to work together on this is apparent. There is also a need to fully engage the business community and its employees.

Delivery of the Stevenage Regeneration Plan and implementation of the Cultural Strategy provides the platform to raise the profile of arts and heritage activity and opportunities, and to position culture as a central ingredient of life in Stevenage. The creation of a new Arts and Heritage Forum to bring representatives from the sector together, and to enable regular communication and collaboration (including joined-up marketing), will also bring impetus to a new and high level cultural advocacy.

4. Celebrating the heritage of Stevenage

Stevenage has a longstanding history and heritage, in addition to the heritage status of being the country's first New Town. The original Roman Way, which became the Great North Road, passes through the town and alongside the Six Hills, the largest surviving Roman Barrow group in England and a scheduled Ancient Monument. Stevenage town centre is a Conservation Area, reflecting the value placed on the architecture and town layout that created the first

New Town development in the late 1950's/early 1960's. Current regeneration plans place value on the New Town heritage and will see restoration and regeneration to make a vibrant and iconic environment that complements a changing town centre demographic and ambience.

Stevenage Old Town dates back to the medieval period with many old coaching inns, and with many surviving High St buildings from the Victorian era. Alongside is the site of the Vincent Works, where the famous Vincent Motorbikes were made in the town between 1928 and 1961. Fairlands Valley Park offers an exceptional landscape environment of 120 acres, also complimenting the extraordinary network of cycle pathways (45 km) – a visionary resource unmatched by other UK towns.

Natural heritage includes Whitney Wood and Stevenage also boasts the heritage of public art (primarily sculpture) commissioned and installed in the late 1950's as part of the New Town development and including work from Henry Moore (relocated inside Barclay School) and the Franta Belsky Joy Ride in the Town Square.

The architecture of the new town is rooted in mid-20thC design, with its use of materials like concrete alongside modular panels that provide “pops” of colour. This is most visible in the Town Square which is recognised by Heritage England for its unique place as England's first pedestrian shopping centre. The town also embraced the De Stijl art movement, which encompassed Mondrian, with the pool at the base of the Clock Tower a Mondrian influence. Public art also includes murals presented in the many underpasses that support the cycle network. Various sculpture trails have been initiated to encourage public engagement.

Stevenage regeneration includes a commitment to relocate and refresh Stevenage Museum, providing additional focus on Old Stevenage heritage and the First New Town heritage and ensuring a central location, with drop-off and close proximity parking, making the Museum more widely accessible. There is an important opportunity to redress the underuse of the cycle network, encouraging a new approach to public art and stimulating substantial new engagement with walkways and cycle paths, enhancing cultural contribution to health and well-being. Development of Outdoor Festivals and events will provide a catalyst to increased use of Fairlands Valley Park, as well as enlivening the regenerated town centre, maximising visitor footfall. Heritage Lottery Fund has initiatives that offer opportunities to maximise the heritage of Stevenage and there is also an important opportunity for business engagement.

5. Developing opportunities for children and young people

It is particularly important for Stevenage's children and young people, including those with special educational needs, to have regular access to creative learning opportunities. Valley School has an existing performing arts presentation space, Barclay School aspires to a new Drama Centre and Nobel School hosts the Stevenage Music Centre with rehearsal, practice and performance facilities (though underused at the moment). However, curriculum and budget

pressures are reducing the emphasis on creative arts subjects and extra-curricular activity, and Hertfordshire Music Service (the Music Education Hub lead) reports lower take-up of music opportunities in Stevenage, making it necessary to partner with other areas in order to provide the full range of music learning. Stevenage Arts Guild is mindful that its membership is primarily older people and whilst the Gordon Craig Theatre has a vibrant and popular Academy (and undertakes important outreach work) the benefit reaches a small proportion of the Borough's children and young people.

The establishment of the Hertfordshire Cultural Education Partnership (HCEP) provides an opportunity to deliver focused targets to increase the engagement of the town's children and young people. Stevenage will be a priority focus for HCEP to pilot work and initiatives that test new activity to meet identified targets. Building on the demand for music practice and recording space for young bands and musicians, there is an opportunity to enhance local music facility provision (and to maximise facilities already available) encouraging new levels of engagement. Widening the cultural offer, and encouraging increased family engagement through participative opportunities at outdoor festivals (e.g. Stevenage Day and the Charter Fair) and as part of public art design and development, will also build aspiration and a commitment to taking part for children and young people of all ages and backgrounds.

6. Improving health and well-being

Over the last twenty years Stevenage has suffered from increasing levels of deprivation (economic and social), in common with other New Towns across the UK. This has been exacerbated by decline in the defence and manufacturing industries, leaving high unemployment amongst lower skilled households. Stevenage currently falls within the bottom half of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation with disadvantages including:

- Higher unemployment rates (3.4%) than the average for Hertfordshire and England
- Higher dependency on benefits (13.5%) than the average for Hertfordshire
- Poorer levels of health (4.57% bad or very bad) compared to the average for Hertfordshire
- More people in social grades C2 and DE (48%) than the average for Hertfordshire or England
- High levels of teenage pregnancy and lone parents

The people of Stevenage are determined this will change and cultural activity can play a significant part in transformation of expectation, and engagement in activity leading to improved health, increased skills and opportunity, and better quality of life. This Strategy has a strong focus on building cultural capital, and encouraging people to take part through participation and voluntary involvement in a wide range of cultural activity, and supports the new Borough Strategy for Health and Well-Being – Healthy Stevenage

Engagement with interactive public art; increasing opportunities through Outdoor Festivals and events, including sporting events such as the cycling festival; enhancement of creative activity delivered through and with schools; initiation of Arts and Health projects (including Arts on Prescription or social prescribing); a widened cultural offer; and better advocacy and marketing, will together play a substantial role in improving local health and well-being (mental and physical) and enhancing quality of life. It is important these initiatives create opportunities for older people with failing health.

There are two cross-cutting themes that are embedded across all six themes identified above:

- Access for All
- Economic development

Stevenage Re-Imagined has a commitment to equality of opportunity and to ensuring that all Borough residents are able and actively encouraged to access arts and heritage opportunities, irrespective of background, social or economic circumstances, health issues, or any disability.

The Strategy is also firmly connected to the economic development and well-being of the town. The Themes and identified Key Aims all play a role in supporting economic development and prosperity, by improving the environment, enhancing leisure and recreation opportunities for employees, making Stevenage a better place to live and work, and by enhancing the skills of local people (and pathways for young people) to contribute to the economy.

Key Aims

Ten Aims have been identified to underpin the Stevenage Re-Imagined Vision and to enable delivery to the six identified themes. The Action Plan supplied as Appendix C provides SMART Objectives that link to each Aim and will present the detailed delivery route map.

Aim	Themes and SBC Corporate Plan Goals supported	Activity and Outcomes
1. Create an extensive new trail of public art, with a focus on interactive artwork, to draw residents and visitors to the cycle network and to Fairlands Valley Park and to enhance the regenerated town centre, also helping to revitalise the existing heritage sculpture trail	Themes - 1,2,4,5 and 6 Goals – A, B and C	Develop a programme of artwork commissioning (which may have focused stages of intensive delivery, but also ongoing commissioning opportunities) to facilitate extraordinary, interactive artwork, building on the town's cultural heritage to be sited on cycle paths, key routes from the town centre (e.g. Gunnels Wood Rd), in Fairlands Valley Park and in town centre locations (initiated as part of Stevenage central regeneration and including Mondrian style installations) and the Old Town in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract local people to walk and cycle and to experience local heritage • Make the public realm more attractive for major business employees • Encourage visitors

Aim	Themes and SBC Corporate Plan Goals supported	Activity and Outcomes
		<p>“Interactive” is the key word. By commissioning work that actively engages audiences then people will be encouraged to visit the artworks to experience them, rather than seeing the works simply as decorative elements of the route. Interactivity can also ensure people visit again and again, the experience is never the same. The regeneration programme, HLEP support, and potential input from the business community, provides a credible opportunity to deliver this initiative which can also revitalise and re-profile the existing sculpture trail and align with the planned way-marker project.</p> <p>This programme will align with Aim 2. As more artists choose Stevenage as a base the pool of local talent will bring more drive and ideas for developing new work and more imaginative ideas for locations. The programme will encourage engagement and involvement of schools, children and young people, with opportunities for community participation with artists, in design, development and installation processes (bringing skills development opportunities and activity that provides potential for engagement to support health and well-being).</p>
2. Facilitate new creative spaces for artists (studios), musicians (practice rooms/recording facilities) and creative/digital industry SMEs to build the local pool of artists, practitioners and creatives	Themes - 1,5 and 6 Goals – A, C and E	<p>There are empty spaces in Stevenage town centre that can be used to incentivise and facilitate temporary (pop-up) and permanent artist studios and creative industry spaces. These may also support creation of pop-up gallery and exhibition space. Identifying and promoting opportunities will draw artists and creatives (in a range of disciplines) from London, especially when aligned to opportunities such as a new public realm commissioning programme, and will also provide opportunities that support developing local talent. It is well documented that providing affordable studio space for artists (and for creative companies) contributes to urban regeneration. There is also potential to explore the development of a creative industries/artist hub with a bespoke building development/refurbishment that would focus this creative development and create the kind of joined-up and visible initiative that would contribute to highlighting the creative offer and improving the cultural profile of Stevenage. This brings further opportunities to develop a range of SMEs for community benefit, including artist co-operatives and social enterprises. An outcome of creating a strong local artist and creative industry sector is that more opportunities will be developed for local participation, including through activities in schools. Artists (including performing and digital artists) will drive the development of new activity and initiatives. The success of The Practice Roomz can be developed further (aligning with Aim 7) with more rehearsal and recording facilities increasing the</p>

Aim	Themes and SBC Corporate Plan Goals supported	Activity and Outcomes
		engagement of young musicians and the opportunities for local talent development.
3. Develop existing Outdoor Festivals and events to increase the cultural offer, and develop new Outdoor Arts and heritage offers that together create volunteering and other opportunities for local people and added value attraction for visitors	<p>Themes - 1,2,4,5 and 6</p> <p>Goals – A,B,C and D</p>	<p>There are a number of key existing Festivals that provide a unique offer linked to Stevenage heritage and traditions.</p> <p>The Charter Fair is part of the history of the town, and has been held every year since King Edward I granted a charter in 1281, giving Stevenage the right to hold a weekly market and yearly fair for all time. This important two day event focuses attention on the Old Town but currently does not include any substantial arts and heritage ingredients. There is an opportunity to enhance the Charter Fair for the benefit of residents and visitors, with potential for participatory activity in advance engaging Stevenage Arts Guild member organisations, local schools and the wider public.</p> <p>Similarly there is an opportunity to further build the range and quality of arts within the Stevenage Day event, in particular benefitting from establishment of a stronger local artist community and utilising the acknowledged Stevenage tradition of live music and performance.</p> <p>The Stevenage Festival (25th anniversary in 2019) is led by a strong volunteer team and will benefit from resourcing as part of a programme to enhance festivals delivery. In particular it offers an opportunity to build engagement of young people in local arts and to further develop volunteering.</p> <p>The annual Celebrate festival hosted at the Gordon Craig has been in existence for over 10 years. The event is led by a rich mix of the town's diverse communities and demonstrates the strong and diverse cultural heritage of Stevenage.</p> <p>There will be value in exploring the establishment of a new Festival for Stevenage, located in Fairlands Valley Park (and Stevenage Woodlands) and providing a rich and high quality multi art form event (that also provides heritage interest) to profile the natural heritage in addition to providing an arts platform and encouraging increased family use of the Park.</p> <p>The annual Fireworks display and emerging Cycle Festival also provide an opportunity to extend an</p>

Aim	Themes and SBC Corporate Plan Goals supported	Activity and Outcomes
		arts and cultural offer.
4. Maximise skills and personal development opportunities for Stevenage residents through engagement with cultural activity	Themes - 2,5 and 6 Goals B, C and D	<p>Many of the Key Aims will contribute to providing skills and personal development opportunities for Stevenage residents. This Strategy has a particular commitment to facilitating the participation of children and young people, the engagement of those from more disadvantaged social and economic backgrounds, and the engagement of those with protected characteristics. This aim will be achieved by building participation activity into programme delivery e.g. inviting community participants to work with artists on the design and delivery of public realm artwork, and by encouraging participation programmes and paid employment opportunities (e.g. stewarding) as part of, and in the build up to Festival events.</p> <p>Enhanced volunteering will be a priority, with a newly established Arts and Heritage Forum able to coordinate a local volunteer pool to join-up opportunities and to maximise the learning and experience that can be achieved.</p>
5. Upgrade the Gordon Craig Theatre offer and maximise other performance spaces to meet the 21 st century needs of the Stevenage community	Themes - 1,3 and 5 Goals – A and E	<p>Stevenage Borough Council is committed to upgrading the town's theatre facilities, a process that requires further feasibility work to assess the most appropriate scale and range of spaces, and level of technical fit-out, and to determine the best governance and operating option. Alongside the upgrade of the Gordon Craig Theatre, whether on the same site or an alternative location, partners will seek to enhance and maximise other performance facilities across the town.</p> <p>Delivery of a visiting performance programme will be developed across facilities with the combination of performance facilities developed to ensure there is studio theatre space to house more adventurous and cutting-edge performances (including spoken word and literature) and rehearsal space available to meet increasing demand from locally based practitioners.</p>
6. Relocate and revitalise the Stevenage Borough Museum to widen access and increase footfall	Themes - 2, 4 and 5 Goals – A, B, D and	The location for the new Stevenage Borough Museum will be selected to maximise profile, visibility and access. With substantial redevelopment Stevenage has an opportunity to demonstrate exemplary access to arts and heritage facilities. In particular the Museum will occupy a site allowing

Aim	Themes and SBC Corporate Plan Goals supported	Activity and Outcomes
and create the First New Town Museum as a unique selling point (USP).	E	for easy disabled access and for school party drop-off to encourage visits. The relocation of the Museum will facilitate new exhibitions and a sustainable approach to changing exhibitions as well as the opportunity for pop-up exhibitions to be presented in community locations. An important ingredient of the new Museum, within the regenerated town centre, will be a focus on Stevenage's heritage as the First New Town, the town centre itself also acting as an open-air exhibition of the town's heritage. This USP will be exploited to explore a role for the Museum in sharing the heritage of the wider New Town movement. The development of the new Museum will focus and profile Stevenage's heritage, encouraging wider and increased engagement, including for people to participate in heritage activity and become actively involved as volunteers. It will foster pride in Stevenage and contribute to a joined-up sense of Stevenage as a destination creative town.
7. Increase provision of music making, recording and performance facilities and activity	Themes 1,5 and 6 Goals – A, C and E	The Practice Roomz has established a significant and sustainable music practice and recording studio facility close to Stevenage Old Town. It is attracting and supporting young musicians and bands, but also attracting a range of musicians who regularly use the facilities to develop and record their work. There is capacity within the facility (and at the Stevenage Music Centre) to undertake a range of participatory and education work during daytimes and this will capacity will be better exploited. There is potential to create additional space for practice and recording either as an extension of The Practice Roomz or as a partnership project. There is demand for town centre performance space for a range of music activity which might either be incorporated in a redeveloped Gordon Craig Theatre, or established as bespoke space as part of town centre regeneration. A music performance space will build on the traditions of the former Locarno and provide cultural opportunities particularly relevant to the changing demographic of the town.
8. Support development of new focused Arts and Health initiatives and programmes (supporting the Borough Plan for Health and Well-Being)	Themes - 1,2 and 6 Goals C, D and E	Stevenage suffers from an above average level of poor health. Cultural activity provides an important opportunity to improve health and well-being through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with physical activity such as dance • Enabling people to make new contacts and friends • Providing purposeful creative activity, often with a satisfying outcome • Giving people a voice and opportunity for self-expression

Aim	Themes and SBC Corporate Plan Goals supported	Activity and Outcomes
		<p>In addition to health and well-being benefits that come indirectly through engagement and participation, this Strategy will implement specific Arts and Health initiatives, in collaboration with cultural (e.g. SLL) and health partners, to focus on creative ways to improve mental and physical health and well-being.</p> <p>In conjunction with Public Health, the local NHS Trust and the University of Hertfordshire, bespoke projects and programmes will be developed and delivered and this will include establishing an Arts on Prescription scheme. The programme will maximise the opportunity to involve students from the University's pioneering Art Therapy degree programme and will build on the success of local initiatives such as the Healthy Hub at Stevenage Arts and Leisure Centre.</p> <p>Participatory projects will be created that include both regular programmes and discreet, self-contained projects that link to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an engagement with interactive public art design and installation - increasing opportunities through Outdoor Festivals and events - enhancement of creative activity delivered through and with schools <p>Stevenage will create a flagship Arts and Health programme with a national reputation.</p>
9. Deliver the Cultural Education Challenge by supporting and enabling cultural opportunities for all children and young people	Themes - 2,3, 5 and 6 Goals – B, C and D	Pilot activity delivered through the Hertfordshire Cultural Education Partnership will be delivered in Stevenage as part of a commitment to change the low levels of cultural engagement from the Borough's children and young people. This will lead to a long-term planned programme of targeted initiatives in particular to ensure involvement and engagement from children and young people with protected characteristics. All Stevenage schools will be encouraged to seek Artsmark status and to become accredited centres for Arts Award. The Arts and Heritage Forum will play a role in encouraging organisations and individual artists/practitioners to achieve accreditation to deliver Arts Awards and to support Artsmark development as Artsmark Partners. A number of other Key Aims in this Strategy will support an increase in opportunities for children and young people, including the development of Outdoor Festivals and events, the development of artworks in the

Aim	Themes and SBC Corporate Plan Goals supported	Activity and Outcomes
		<p>public realm and a commitment to increasing volunteering opportunities.</p> <p>Stevenage Arts Guild will be proactive in seeking to increase membership from young people and Young Champions will be sought from each school to play an active role in promoting culture to their peers. The support for children with Special Educational Needs will be focused through encouragement of visiting work from companies such as Anjali, Mind the Gap and Headway Arts, potentially creating a focused mini-Festival at Valley School.</p>
<p>10. Create a Borough-wide Arts and Heritage Forum to act as a platform for communication and cultural advocacy, encompassing professional, amateur and community sectors</p>	<p>Themes - 2 and 3 Goals B and E</p>	<p>Local cultural organisations highlight a tendency towards silo activity and a lack of connectivity across the sector. There is also an absence of joined-up marketing of cultural activity which means opportunities to more effectively promote the cultural offer are lost. Absence of connectivity also means that collaboration is not explored and new ideas emerging from regular communication and sharing of aspirations are not identified and developed. A new Arts and Heritage Forum will be established in Stevenage, with a formal Terms of Reference, meeting on a quarterly basis, and providing an accessible platform for representatives from across all parts of the cultural sector.</p> <p>The Forum will create an opportunity for effective communication, for training and skills development, for collaborative working (supporting for instance the challenges of meeting new event legislation and logistic requirements) and for connected marketing. Participation will be open to all organisations involved or with an interest in culture and to individual artists and practitioners. It will primarily be self-led (with volunteers sought through the Forum to coordinate its agenda and activities), though initially supported by an appropriate SBC Officer, a new Cultural Enabler post.</p>

Resources and resource requirements

Big Ideas are important, but they do need resourcing. Implementation of the aims in this Strategy requires:

- Some personnel expertise and support to help drive Strategy implementation (an early priority)
- Funds for public art commissioning
- Provision of space for artist and creative industry studios
- Funds and personnel to develop the Festivals offer
- Support-in-kind time and space from schools to build cultural entitlement for children and young people
- Funds to enhance participatory opportunities as part of HCEP initiatives
- Funds to facilitate Arts and Health initiatives
- Support-in-kind time from arts and heritage sector organisations to facilitate a Stevenage Forum
- Capital funds for theatre redevelopment, museum relocation, music facility enhancement and for any space refurbishment or new build to make a creative hub

In a time of reducing public finances the aspirations to undertake new initiatives need to be informed by robust identification of funding opportunities. Stevenage Borough Council recognises that it cannot resource these initiatives alone. In the spirit of co-operative working the Council will work with local organisations and partners, including the business community, to actively seek external investment.

The resources to initiate the Big Ideas highlighted in the Stevenage Re-Imagined Strategy can be sourced through the following:

- A. Partnership working
- B. Commercial business contributions
- C. Collaborative fundraising
- D. Regeneration funds
- E. Lottery applications

A. Partnership working

Stevenage Re-Imagined is dependent on partnership working. Key local partners include:

- Stevenage Borough Council
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Hertfordshire LEP
- National and local businesses based in the Borough
- Stevenage Leisure Ltd
- Stevenage Museum
- Hertfordshire Libraries
- All Stevenage schools
- Royal Opera House Bridge
- Hertfordshire Music Service
- North Hertfordshire College
- University of Hertfordshire
- Visit Hertfordshire
- Creative Hertfordshire
- Stevenage Arts Guild
- The Practice Roomz
- The Lytton Players
-

In addition, there are a range of partnerships that can be initiated or further developed in order to support implementation of this Strategy.

Potential partnerships include:

- Contracted developers
- Sustrans UK
- Digswell Arts Trust
- Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board
- East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust

- The Woodlands Trust
- ACME Studios

The role of partners in supporting resource development comprises:

1. Driving and delivering initiatives that are partner led but contribute to Strategy delivery
2. Contributing (with finance or support-in-kind) to the delivery of projects and programmes
3. Acting as applicants for funds that contribute towards projects and programmes (e.g. local community budgets from SBC and HCC)
4. Advocacy and promotion, including to business employees and potential visitors

B. Commercial contributions

The regeneration of Stevenage brings opportunity to secure contributions from contracted developers, including through CIL and Section 106 contributions, and associated businesses with an interest in the town.

The impact of regeneration and the positive effect on existing business located in the town (or relocating to Stevenage) means that there is an opportunity to source Corporate Social Responsibility and sponsorship sums to support projects, programmes and activities. Cultivation of business to access such contributions may be achieved through HLEP support and/or through contact initiated as part of regeneration planning. In particular there is alignment of the Cultural Strategy with enhancement of the science and technology sector.

C. Collaborative fundraising

Partnership working, as identified above, can involve a collaborative approach to fundraising. There are funds that are not accessible to a Local Authority (e.g. Charitable Trust and Foundation monies and Research Council funds) that can be the subject of applications from partners, sometimes through consortium bidding. One example is the local Follett Trust which might support new Arts and Health initiatives. In particular there is a need to have registered charity partners to apply to the Trust and Foundation sector and University support to access, for example, Arts and Humanities Research Council funds.

The NHS Trust may be in a position to seek funds for Arts and Health projects that are not accessible to creative sector applicants, as well as potentially providing resources in its own right through clinical commissioning. Currently there are still opportunities available through the European Union e.g. Creative Europe that require a collaborative approach. Access to European funds may change after March 2019 but until UK arrangements are clarified there remains a possibility of ongoing opportunity.

D. Regeneration Funds

Capital investment from Stevenage Borough Council and Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership is playing a key role in driving the regeneration programme.

Once delivery of initial projects (Stevenage Central) is underway, there is strong potential to engage further support to contribute towards complementary projects defined in this Strategy, especially focused on enhancement of the public realm through public art initiatives, and economic development through encouragement of creative industry relocation.

E. Lottery applications

A substantial opportunity continues to be available through the key Lottery distributors:

- Arts Council England
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- BIG Lottery
- UK Sport

The first three distributors identified above are the most relevant and all offer opportunities that can provide resources both at a smaller scale and upwards of £100,000. A number of the initiatives highlighted in this Strategy will be eligible for Lottery funding/applications, in particular – public art projects; Outdoor Festivals development; Artist Studio development; Museum relocation; Heritage Trail development; Arts and Health initiatives; music projects; and projects focusing on children and young people. Some resources may be achieved, in partnership with Stevenage Borough Council, to enable support to help drive this Strategy implementation e.g. with a cultural “enabler” position.

A Stage 2 project that is part of the process of initiating Stevenage Re-Imagined will involve funding applications (as defined in the Fundraising Strategy at Appendix B) to support immediate Strategy implementation.

Key milestones

Stevenage Re-Imagined will be the subject of endorsement by Stevenage Borough Council before the end of March 2018.

The first key milestone (June 2018) will focus on:

- Seeking support to contribute towards resources to initiate the strategy which includes specialist cultural “enabler” expertise
- Development of two funding bids to contribute to implementation of the Fundraising Strategy
- Establishment of the Arts and Heritage Forum for the town
- Advocacy to the business community to highlight the aspirations of the Strategy

Key milestones thereafter (looking to the first five years of the Strategy 2018- 2022) will include:

2019

- Putting a forward plan for a museum offer in place
- Definitive decisions on plans to upgrade the Gordon Craig Theatre
- Establishment of temporary artist studio facilities in empty space
- Stage One commissioning of Art in the Public Realm
- Pilot Arts and Health/Arts on Prescription programmes
- Stage One enhancement of the Stevenage Day, Stevenage Festival (25th anniversary) and Charter Fair events

2020

- Potential introduction of a new Outdoor event/festival in Fairlands Valley Park (50th anniversary of the Park)
- Enhanced programme of performance activity in the Valley School Theatre, Nobel Music Centre and Barclay School Drama Centre
- Focus on new initiatives to support cultural entitlement for children and young people – supporting a possible Hertfordshire Year of Culture
- Further enhancement of Stevenage Day and the Charter Fair
- Full programme of Arts and Health activity

- Revitalisation of existing sculpture trail and link to heritage, with the potential for heritage guided walks

2021

- Stage Two commissioning of Art in the Public Realm (including additional underpass artwork)
- Further enhancement of the Stevenage Festival
- Creation of more substantial and permanent/semi-permanent artist and creative industry spaces
- Development of music facilities in the town (including facilities for performance)
- Focused festival of work at Valley School from companies engaging learning disabled artists
- Enhanced arts and heritage programme to celebrate 75 years of the Borough

2022

- Progression of new Gordon Craig Theatre offer.
- Vibrant programme of theatre and music within other facilities to complement Gordon Craig delivery
- Review Strategy achievements over the first five years

Delivery responsibility

The Stevenage Re-Imagined Strategy belongs to the people of the Borough and the creative sector, as well as to Stevenage Borough Council and its partners. As such there is shared responsibility to ensure delivery, and this includes commitment to fundraising.

An Arts and Heritage Forum, open widely to the sector, and including professional, amateur and community organisations, will be initiated to launch the Cultural Strategy. It will subsequently be self-managed/coordinated by member groups, initially supported by an SBC Officer with specialist cultural expertise.

The Strategy implementation will be monitored by the appointed Officer at Stevenage Borough Council. Individual strands of activity, projects and programmes will be the responsibility of organisations as identified in the accompanying Action Plan.

The Action Plan will be reviewed and updated annually by the SBC Officer in dialogue with the established Arts and Heritage Forum.

Increasingly it is anticipated actions to implement projects and activities identified in the Strategy will be driven by partner organisations and by individual artists or practitioners, or by collaborative action.

Evaluation

The establishment of a Borough-wide Arts and Heritage Forum provides an opportunity, in addition to joined-up marketing and promotion, to collaborate on the development of standardised evaluation tools for arts, heritage and creative industries organisations, so that evaluation data can be effectively collated and compared. Social Return on Investment criteria will be used to analyse the benefit of Stevenage Re-Imagined implementation to local people and to the local economy.

A basic logic model has been created (attached as Appendix D) to summarise the benefits and outcomes that can be expected from delivery to this Strategy. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) can be used to measure progress and achievement for the arts, heritage and creative industries at key milestones during implementation of the Ten-Year Stevenage Re-Imagined Strategy, relating to the Themes and Key Aims identified.

KPIs will focus on:

- Quality of cultural infrastructure in Stevenage
- Membership of and engagement with the Arts and Heritage Forum
- Numbers of arts and creative industries organisations and artists/practitioners based in and operating from Stevenage
- Percentage of Stevenage residents effectively engaging with arts and heritage each year (using three engagements per annum as the benchmark)
- Number of cultural engagements experienced each year by Stevenage children and young people (aged 5-18)
- Numbers attending Festivals with an arts and heritage component
- Numbers participating in Arts and Health/Arts on Prescription programmes
- Achievement of Arts Awards
- Number of schools with Artsmark status
- Stevenage status in the national Active Lives survey
- Perceptions of local people towards Stevenage as a place to live
- Visitor numbers attending arts and heritage events and activities in the town
- Level of engagement and support from the corporate sector in arts and heritage development and delivery
- Sums achieved for inward investment to support arts, heritage and creative industries activity

Ends

Stevenage Re-Imagined

2018-2028

Appendix B

Fundraising Strategy

Contents:

- 1. Context**
- 2. Summary of opportunities**
- 3. Priorities**
- 4. Implementing the Fundraising Strategy**

1. Context

This is a Fundraising Strategy to accompany *Stevenage Re-Imagined*, a Ten-Year Arts and Heritage (Cultural) Strategy for Stevenage 2018-2028, with the aspiration “making Stevenage a destination creative town”.

Currently Stevenage benefits from:

- Investment by Stevenage Borough Council in the operation and programme delivery of the Gordon Craig Theatre and Stevenage Museum
- A range of festivals, facilitated and funded by a range of partners and organisations.
- Investment commitment from Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to support the Stevenage Regeneration Plan
- Investment from The Practice Roomz in facility development to support opportunities for young bands and musicians
- Heritage Lottery funding to support one-off initiatives from Stevenage Museum
- Arts Council England Grants for the Arts support for specific activity, such as development of the town’s Arts and Heritage (Cultural) Strategy

Stevenage Re-Imagined adopts a pragmatic approach to resourcing, with the knowledge that the Local Authority is unlikely to be in a position where it can make substantial financial commitments to activity delivery. The Strategy is a partnership approach to cultural development and so this is not a supporting Fundraising Strategy to be delivered by one organisation, but rather a guide to highlight opportunities that can be pursued by the arts and heritage sector in order to facilitate delivery of the ambitions in *Stevenage Re-Imagined*. In order to realise the appropriately ambitious aims additional external resources will need to be levered and secured and this Fundraising Plan identifies how that may be achieved.

In particular resources are needed for:

1. Early work through specialist Cultural “Enabler” support to kick-start Strategy implementation, and especially to effectively establish an Arts and Heritage Forum
2. Stage 1 activity to implement the Vision for a new interactive public art “trail”, including installations in the town centre
3. Revitalising the original high profile sculpture trail that was such a creative feature of Stevenage from its early days as the first New Town
4. Development work to identify and prepare potential buildings/spaces as artists/artisan studios and new emerging creative industry hubs
5. Festivals development, to enhance the arts and heritage elements of Stevenage Day, the Charter Fair and the Stevenage Festival, and also to facilitate the development of a new Outdoor Arts Festival at Fairlands Valley Park
6. Initiation of Arts in Health and Arts on Prescription/Social Prescription projects
7. Capital project support to help facilitate the upgrade of the Gordon Craig Theatre and Stevenage Museum
8. Feasibility and any subsequent potential development work in creating new music facilities in Stevenage (additional recording/rehearsal spaces and performance venue)
9. A longer term Stage 2 public art programme that gives Stevenage a unique selling point (USP) in developing its vision to be a destination creative town.
10. New programme initiatives that support cultural opportunities for children and young people - activities that may be associated with Festivals, with development of Stevenage Museum, or with initiatives such as specialist programming of work involving artists with special education needs in conjunction with the Valley School.

The Fundraising Strategy has immediate opportunity for implementation, as the Consultant contracted to support development of *Stevenage Re-Imagined* is also commissioned to undertake some bid writing as a stage 2 ingredient of its contract. Priorities for this work are indicated within this Plan.

2. Summary of opportunities

This section of the Strategy identifies and explores the fundraising opportunities widely available to arts and heritage organisations. Opportunities fall into the following categories:

- Public sector
- Lottery (including the Arts Council and Heritage Lottery Fund)
- European Union
- Private charitable trusts and foundations
- Corporate sponsorship and philanthropy
- Individual philanthropy

The following is a brief overview of these opportunities with some highlighting of where energy may be best directed from Stevenage in order to achieve success. There are some early priorities and some opportunities that may be more appropriate for the medium and longer term.

Public sector

In the current economic climate, and for the foreseeable future, there will be limited resources available to support cultural project activity (other than potential capital support) through either the Local Authority or other public-sector agencies. The Local Growth Fund remains an ongoing option for capital support, to be accessed through HLEP. Creative Industries may be a strong focus for support. From time to time new discreet opportunities may be available (e.g. the new Cultural Development Fund - £2 million cultural investment to turn round communities, announced in the autumn 2017 budget). The development of a joined-up Arts and Heritage Forum, in time facilitated and enabled by member participants, should provide a vehicle for sharing opportunities that become available.

Commissioning can provide a route for securing resources that are directed at meeting specific targets around community cohesion, health and well-being. As plans for Arts and Health and Arts on Prescription/Social Prescription projects are developed, commissioning opportunities will be explored by the arts and heritage partners engaged in those areas of work/activity, working with the Public Health Authority and NHS Trust.

Lottery

Lottery continues to offer substantial opportunities to support delivery of arts and heritage programmes through Arts Council England (ACE), Youth Music, Heritage Lottery Fund, BIG Lottery and UK Sport (the latter in particular with respect to projects involving movement and dance).

ACE National Lottery Project Grants (new model to be opened in March 2018) offers opportunities both at small-scale level (under £15,000) and higher-level awards (up to £100,000). There will also be a new strategic strand offering more substantial support from April 2018 (this may be an option to seek support for the ambitious Stevenage public art aspirations), replacing Ambition for Excellence and the Strategic Touring Fund. There are also other opportunities through ACE Strategic Funds e.g. Strategic Capital Fund.

Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) actively welcomes applications for projects involving the arts as well as heritage, provided that outcomes meet heritage criteria. HLF are currently consulting on their future strategic direction and future funding programmes. Under their current programmes there is a small-scale opportunity for heritage activity, Sharing Heritage (under £10,000) and a larger scale Our Heritage programme (up to £100,000) with a specific stream, Young Roots, directed at involvement of young people. There is considerable opportunity to achieve HLF support, including for relocation and/or upgrade of Stevenage Museum. However, a creative approach should also be adopted to ensure other potential initiatives and projects e.g. activity within Fairlands Valley Park, also benefit from funding through this Lottery distributor.

BIG Lottery offers a “quick-win” funding opportunity through Awards for All (under £10,000) which although not focused on arts and heritage projects can easily be accessed for such activity where community and individual benefits (to meet need) are clearly shown to be the priority. There is considerable potential for community arts organisations within Stevenage Guild and for schools to benefit through this stream. The application process is simple and does not require substantial time input, so the capacity issue should be less of a problem than other fundraising opportunities for participating voluntary groups and schools. It will also not be an issue if several schools are seeking support through this route.

More ambitiously there is also great potential for substantial Reaching Communities support through BIG, possibly through a partnership/consortium approach. Arts and Health projects are particularly appropriate for this source which can provide multi-year funding (of circa £100,000 per annum) for up to five years. Reaching Communities would be a fundraising option to explore for the longer term, once pilot Arts and Health activity had been initially piloted and impact tested. BIG is currently in the process of revisiting and relaunching Reaching communities with more information expected in early April 2018.

Youth Music provides an opportunity via three strands of funding to support music development initiatives, which may present a means to support development of The Practice Roomz activity to utilise daytime capacity for participative and music education programmes.

European Union

Whilst the full impact of BREXIT on opportunities to secure European funds is still unclear, there currently remain a number of live opportunities through:

- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
- European Social Fund (ESF)
- Creative Europe
- Erasmus+

ERDF funds (whilst they are available) are relevant to capital initiatives and to projects that support training and skills development. Stevenage has been identified as a regeneration priority for HLEP, with substantial funds already committed. Dialogue with HLEP indicates that some of the ambitions for cultural and creative industries development in Stevenage align with current priorities e.g. development of the creative and cultural economies, place-making, and enhancement of the public realm to support and stimulate economic growth.

European Social Fund support is less easy to access under co-financing arrangements, but nevertheless remains an option for support where focused training in response to need and demand can be evidenced. Training is also an important ingredient of the Erasmus+ programme which continues to offer opportunities for European partnership with a focus on grass roots activity.

Of particular relevance to the arts, cultural and creative industries sector is Creative Europe, which is directly focused on supporting arts and media projects. Despite BREXIT there would be at least one more round to which UK organisations can apply as lead (deadline date provisionally October 2018, though it may be deferred until January 2019). Latest intelligence indicates that UK organisations will be eligible to apply at least until the current Creative Europe programme ends in 2020. However, thereafter, and despite BREXIT, UK organisations will almost certainly be welcomed as partners in applications generated from EU countries. Establishing strong partnerships with European organisations is the appropriate route to ensure future potential can still be maximised. There is also the possibility that UK Govt funding schemes will be introduced to replace EU funding after BREXIT.

Private charitable trusts and foundations

There are many national and local charitable trusts (e.g. the Follett Trust) actively keen to support the arts and heritage sector. Organisations need to be formalised as not-for-profit to access these sources and with some there is a requirement for registered charity status. Whilst competition is keen, there is huge value in being able to demonstrate need, and given some of the challenges being confronted in Stevenage (changing demographic, health issues, low wage economy) professional, community and amateur organisations are in a strong position to show this. As with Awards for All there could be regular

success in attracting trust and foundation awards to support arts and heritage activity through local organisations and schools. A priority will be following up local Trust opportunities.

Key national trusts (amongst many others that offer potential) are:

- Esmee Fairbairn Foundation
- Paul Hamlyn Foundation
- The Steel Charitable Trust
- The Ernest Cook Charitable Foundation
- The Rayne Foundation
- The Tudor Charitable Trust
- The Foyle Foundation
- The Clore Duffield Foundation
- The Henry Moore Foundation
- The Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation
- The Garfield Weston Foundation
- Sir Siegmund Warburg Charitable Trust
- The Eranda Foundation
- The Cameron Mackintosh Foundation
- The John Ellerman Foundation

These trusts are able to support a mixture of revenue, project and capital funding.

Corporate sponsorship and philanthropy

The endorsement of *Stevenage Re-Imagined* by Stevenage Borough Council and the arts and heritage sector will provide a formal Strategy that can be shared with a wide range of local and locally based businesses. There is a significant opportunity through the substantive business community based in Stevenage (e.g. international organisations such as GSK, MBDA, Airbus and Fujitsu) to seek support, and advocacy. The LEP is committed to helping broker relationships and to promoting the value of cultural development to the business community. Some of the proposed activity, e.g. public realm art projects and public art development, has close synergy with needs of major employers to provide enhancements to their employment contracts and to improve the way-find between Gunnels Wood and the town centre. In particular there is a need to ensure arts and heritage activity, including longer-term aspirations,

are actively promoted to developers and potential developers, maximising Section 106 and CIL commitments. A formal Launch for *Stevenage Re-Imagined*, with engagement from HLEP may be appropriate to provide a connected and comprehensive initial cultivation opportunity.

Individual philanthropy

Increasingly there is a need to harness individual donation and support to facilitate cultural activity. Individual philanthropy may be achieved through support from high net worth individuals or through wider, smaller donations achieved through targeted activity such as bucket collections at Festivals or crowdfunding. Individual organisations with a strong membership/user base are in the best position to maximise individual support, especially through crowd funding initiatives. Celebrities with Stevenage connections/roots and any high net worth individuals (HNWI) living locally, might be a target for invitations to any launch cultivation event using a similar approach to corporate sector cultivation.

3. Priorities

The analyses of need and of opportunities have been assessed in order to highlight best match opportunities and potential routes/challenges to accessing funds, both in the short and longer term.

The key challenge for the partners and stakeholders committed to *Stevenage Re-Imagined* is capacity for fundraising. Capacity is about personnel time, but also about experience and skills. The appointment to a fixed term Cultural Enabler post that can support initial fundraising would significantly improve the capacity position. Some capacity is bought through the extended contract of the consultant delivering the Arts and Heritage (Cultural) Strategy. In the longer term the role of the Arts and Heritage Forum may be critical in addressing this challenge. The Forum can be a vehicle for disseminating information about funding options, and for providing training and skills development opportunities. Importantly it can also broker and encourage collaborative working so that capacity issues are reduced by joining-up and sharing responsibility (a joined-up approach may also be more attractive to potential funders).

Taking account of this challenge the best match opportunities (which might be accessed by different constituents of the Stevenage arts and heritage sector) are:

1. Arts Council England support (through G4A until 1 March and the new National Lottery Project Grants Scheme, commencing 5 March 2018) to:

- Facilitate partnership funds enabling specialist Cultural Enabler support
- Partner resources towards public art initiatives
- Potentially support development of empty space to create artist/artisan studios

ACE Strategic Capital funds may be a longer term option to support capital initiative aspirations around upgrading the Gordon Craig Theatre and developing new music performance space

2. Heritage Lottery funding as a priority source to support Stevenage Museum upgrading/development. Heritage Lottery Fund is also a strong match for:
 - Development of specific pop-up or participatory Museum initiatives to create enhanced volunteering opportunities and skills development for local residents
 - Supporting the revitalizing of the original New Town sculpture trail
 - Developing activity to draw greater engagement with Fairlands Valley Park, potentially through activity associated with a new Festival initiative
 - Supporting greater engagement of children and young people through schools and youth group initiatives (Young Roots)
3. Youth Music funds to support partnership working involving The Practice Roomz, Hertfordshire Music Education Hub and Stevenage members of Hertfordshire CEP.
4. Awards for All to support a range of schools and community arts initiatives (providing the focus is on people benefit). Pilot Arts and Health programmes might be funded through this route. Subsequently Reaching Communities may become a strong option (depending on the revised guidelines and criteria), but an application to that source does require experience and capacity.
5. Hertfordshire LEP as both a direct source of potential support for some initiatives – public realm art, creative industry hub space, facilities upgrade/development – and as a broker to encourage corporate involvement and support, which may take the form of Corporate Social Responsibility support or sponsorship. There are also opportunities for support through employee advocacy and engagement. It is likely that Stevenage Borough Council would need to lead on requests to HLEP in the wider context of the Stevenage Regeneration Plan
6. Public Health and/or the NHS Trust to provide partnership support towards pilot Arts and Health or Arts of Prescription projects, and in the longer term towards sustainable ongoing initiatives.
6. Developers engaged with, or aspiring to engage with the Stevenage Regeneration Plan (CIL and Section 106), and corporate organisations with a significant presence in and commitment to Stevenage, or indeed smaller, local businesses with a commitment to Stevenage.
7. A hit list of Trusts and Foundations that should each be targeted in response to their individual priorities and criteria. Suggested priorities are:
 - The Follett Trust as a potential supporter of Arts and Health initiatives
 - The Foyle Foundation to seek support for artist/artisan studio space development and potential Festivals development
 - The Rayne Foundation and The Tudor Trust as potential supporters of a focused programme creating a Festival of work involving learning disabled artists

- The Henry Moore Foundation to support new sculpture commissioning as part of a developed public art trail
- The Ernest Cook Foundation to support initiatives leading to increased Artsmark engagement from local schools and Arts Award achievement
- The Steel Trust to support engagement projects that increase participation and longer term commitment to involvement in arts and heritage activity
- The Garfield Weston Foundation as a potential capital supporter to contribute to theatre or museum development aspirations

It is important to highlight that many different existing organisations in Stevenage may need to be applicants for the opportunities identified. There is also the option that the Arts and Heritage Forum, in due course, is established as a formal, constituted organisation, enabling it to be a funding applicant.

4. Implementing the Fundraising Strategy – a plan of action

Some initial capacity to support fundraising activity is provided through ArtReach, as the consultant responsible for leading the development of the Arts and Heritage (Cultural) Strategy. This support is available through to the end of June 2018.

In the period through to the end of June the following actions are anticipated:

1. Strategy Launch which may provide an early opportunity for a business cultivation event
2. An early application to the Arts Council for sums to support appointment of a fixed term Cultural Enabler
3. Initiation of the Arts and Heritage Forum, bringing together key representatives from Stevenage Museum, the Gordon Craig Theatre, Stevenage Arts Guild, The Practice Roomz, Hertfordshire Music Education Hub, the wider education sector (including local schools, North Hertfordshire College and University of Hertfordshire/UH Arts), local Festivals and individual artists and practitioners
4. Facilitated group meetings for the purpose of stimulating and supporting funding applications that might assist Festival development, artist workspace development, arts and health initiatives, and schools extra-curricular work/activity. These meetings may also help to broker new national and international partner meetings to support collaborative future projects (inspiring Go and See visits)
5. Delivery of a funding application for public realm public art activity

Thereafter a more detailed and longer term Plan of Action will be developed by the appointed Cultural Enabler, working with partners and stakeholders in the town.

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Stevenage Re-Imagined

Appendix C - Action Plan

Some of the Objectives identified are common between more than one aim.

Aim	Objectives	Delivery Responsibility
1. Create an extensive new trail of public art, with a focus on interactive artwork, to draw residents and visitors to the cycle network and to Fairlands Valley Park and to enhance the regenerated town centre, also helping to revitalise the existing heritage sculpture trail	<p>1.1. During 2018 plan to incorporate public art within the Stevenage Central regeneration programme, including work complementary to the Mondrian heritage, commissions that allow for public engagement and participation in their development, and work that pilots an interactive approach.</p> <p>1.2. Seek inward investment resources in 2018, including from the business community to facilitate the subsequent development and delivery of new, interactive public art to enliven cycle paths and key routes from the town centre (e.g. Gunnels Wood Rd).</p> <p>1.3. From 2019-2023 facilitate and promote the opportunity for artists, artisans and creative industry organisations (including new media organisations) to utilise under productive/empty buildings in Stevenage town centre.</p> <p>1.4. Revitalise and re-profile the existing sculpture trail.</p> <p>1.5. Facilitate the involvement of children, young people and the wider community in the development of Stevenage art in the public realm</p>	<p>SBC Regeneration Team/ Communities & Neighbourhoods</p> <p>Cultural Strategy Consultant and appointed Cultural Enabler</p> <p>SBC</p> <p>Local arts and heritage organisations through the Arts and Heritage Forum</p> <p>Arts and Heritage Forum and Stevenage members of Hertfordshire Cultural Education Partnership (CEP)</p>

Aim	Objectives	Delivery Responsibility
2. Facilitate new creative spaces for artists (studios), musicians (practice rooms/recording facilities) and creative/digital industry SMEs to build the local pool of artists, practitioners and creatives	<p>2.1. In 2018 and 2019 undertake an audit of potential spaces for use as studios and creative industry hubs.</p> <p>2.2. By 2019 review potential site opportunities for additional recording studios and music performance space.</p> <p>2.3. From 2019-2023 facilitate and promote the opportunity for artists, artisans and creative industry organisations (including new media organisations) to utilise under productive/empty buildings in Stevenage town centre.</p> <p>2.4. Explore the potential for Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) support to establish a bespoke new creative industries hub</p>	<p>SBC</p> <p>The Practice Roomz and partners</p> <p>SBC</p> <p>SBC</p>
3. Develop existing Outdoor Festivals and events to increase the cultural offer, and develop new Outdoor Arts and heritage offers that together create volunteering and other opportunities for local people and added value attraction for visitors	<p>3.1. By September 2018 have initiated a new Arts and Heritage Forum for Stevenage that engages a wide cross section of organisations and practitioners engaged in the sector.</p> <p>3.2. By December 2019 have enhanced the arts and heritage offer at the Stevenage Festival, Stevenage Day and Charter Fair, with at least two new arts participation opportunities and at least one additional new performing arts presentation at each.</p> <p>3.3. Create a pool of Festival volunteers, building to 100 by 2023, to support added value arts and heritage delivery at Stevenage Festivals and providing a personal and skills development opportunity for participants, potentially leading to paid employment.</p> <p>3.4. Initiate a new Festival with a strong arts and heritage component in Fairlands Valley Park in 2020 to encourage increased family use of the Park.</p>	<p>Appointed Cultural “Enabler”</p> <p>Members of the Arts and Heritage Forum and Stevenage Arts Guild</p> <p>Arts and Heritage Forum</p> <p>Arts and Heritage partners supported by SBC and Stevenage Leisure Ltd</p>

Aim	Objectives	Delivery Responsibility
4. Maximise skills and personal development opportunities for Stevenage residents through engagement with cultural activity	<p>4.1. By December 2019 have enhanced the arts and heritage offer at the Stevenage Festival, Stevenage Day and Charter Fair, with at least two new arts participation opportunities</p> <p>4.2. Create a pool of Festival volunteers, building to 100 by 2023, to support added value arts and heritage delivery at Stevenage Festivals and providing a personal and skills development opportunity for participants, potentially leading to paid employment.</p> <p>4.3. Facilitate the involvement of children, young people and the wider community in the development of Stevenage art in the public realm</p> <p>4.4. Seek funding support from Public Health and the local NHS Trust to initiate pilot Arts in Health projects in 2019 with the aspiration to deliver a fuller programme from 2020</p>	<p>Members of the Arts and Heritage Forum and Stevenage Arts Guild</p> <p>Arts and Heritage Forum</p> <p>Arts and Heritage Forum and Stevenage members of Hertfordshire CEP</p> <p>A partnership between University of Hertfordshire with Stevenage Arts Guild and the Arts and Heritage Forum, supported by a Cultural Enabler.</p>
5. Upgrade the Gordon Craig Theatre and maximise other performance spaces to meet the 21 st century needs of the Stevenage community	<p>5.1. By 2019 further decisions made on the upgrade plans for the Gordon Craig and timeline determined.</p> <p>5.2. With the establishment of the Arts and Heritage Forum in 2019, and development of the Cultural Education Partnership, a joined-up approach will be agreed to utilising, marketing and maximising existing smaller scale performance spaces both for local groups and visiting companies.</p> <p>5.3. Develop a cohesive and joined-up programme of presentations at smaller performing arts spaces in 2020 and review opportunities to build the programme beyond.</p>	<p>SBC and Stevenage Leisure Ltd</p> <p>Arts and Heritage Forum and CEP members with support from an appointed cultural "Enabler"</p> <p>Organisations (including schools) with performing arts spaces and Arts and Heritage Forum Members</p>

Aim	Objectives	Delivery Responsibility
6. Relocate and revitalise the Stevenage Borough Museum to widen access and increase footfall, incorporating a USP as the First New Town Museum	<p>6.1. By 2019 finalise plans for the upgrade of the Museum as part of the Stevenage Central development.</p> <p>6.2. By 2020 develop plans and seek funding for further development of the Museum offer, incorporating focused interpretation of the role of Stevenage as the country's first New Town.</p> <p>6.3. Facilitate increased school visits to and engagement with Stevenage Museum. By 2022 all schools in Stevenage will be engaging with the Museum offer.</p> <p>6.4. Maximise Festival activity to create opportunities for pop-up heritage activity and associated participative engagement and volunteering, with a focus on a new Fairlands Valley Park Festival in 2020</p> <p>6.5. By 2022 the completion of the Stevenage Central regeneration will make the town centre environment into an open-air heritage/museum location with supporting public art and interpretation.</p>	<p>SBC Regeneration Team and Museum Team</p> <p>Stevenage Museum Team</p> <p>Hertfordshire CEP Members, Arts and Heritage Forum Members, Stevenage schools and Museum Team</p> <p>Arts and Heritage partners supported by SBC and Stevenage Leisure Ltd</p> <p>SBC Regeneration Team and Arts and Heritage Forum Members</p>
7. Increase provision of music making, recording and performance facilities and activity	<p>7.1. By 2019 review potential site opportunities for additional recording studios and music performance space.</p> <p>7.2. With the establishment of the Arts and Heritage Forum in 2019, and development of the Cultural Education Partnership, opportunities will be explored (including funding opportunities) to maximise existing studio facilities for daytime education and participation activity.</p> <p>7.3. Alongside development of additional capacity for music rehearsal and recording space an initial review will be undertaken in 2020 to explore potential for establishing a bespoke and flexible music performance space in Stevenage.</p>	<p>The Practice Roomz and partners</p> <p>Hertfordshire CEP Members, Stevenage schools and The Practice Roomz</p> <p>The Practice Roomz and partners, including SBC</p>

Aim	Objectives	Delivery Responsibility
8. Support development of new focused Arts and Health initiatives and programmes (supporting the Borough Plan for Health and Well-Being)	<p>8.1. Convene a meeting of key stakeholders in 2018 – Public Health, NHS Trust, SBC Health and Well-Being Team, the Healthy Hub, University of Hertfordshire (Art Therapy Programme Team) and Stevenage Arts Guild to develop a plan of action as Arts and Health Partners.</p> <p>8.2. Facilitate the involvement of children, young people and the wider community in the development of Stevenage art in the public realm</p> <p>8.3. Develop project/funding proposals for a pilot project(s) in 2019 to test ideas for Arts and Health initiatives.</p> <p>8.4. Seek funding support from Public Health and the local NHS Trust to initiate pilot Arts in Health projects in 2019 with the aspiration to deliver a fuller programme from 2020</p> <p>8.5. Establish one or more “offers” for an Arts on Prescription scheme in 2020 and implement through GP surgeries.</p> <p>8.6. Create a pool of Festival volunteers, building to 100 by 2023, to support added value arts and heritage delivery at Stevenage Festivals and providing a personal and skills development opportunity for participants, potentially leading to paid employment.</p>	<p>Appointed Cultural “Enabler”</p> <p>Arts and Heritage Forum and Stevenage members of Hertfordshire CEP</p> <p>Appointed Cultural Enabler working with all identified Arts and Health partners</p> <p>A partnership between University of Hertfordshire with other Arts and Health partners, supported by a Cultural Enabler.</p> <p>Arts organisations and Healthy Stevenage Partnership Arts and Heritage Forum</p>
9. Deliver the Cultural Education Challenge by supporting and enabling cultural opportunities for all children and young people	<p>9.1. Stevenage partners play an active role in development of an Action Plan for the Hertfordshire Cultural Education Partnership in 2018.</p> <p>9.2. Pilot activity delivered in Stevenage through the Hertfordshire Cultural Education Partnership</p>	<p>Stevenage partners in Hertfordshire CEP</p> <p>Stevenage partners in Hertfordshire CEP</p>

Aim	Objectives	Delivery Responsibility
	<p>9.3. 2018-2022 Stevenage schools encouraged to seek Artsmark status and to become accredited centres for Arts Award.</p> <p>9.4. 2018-2022 Arts organisations and individual artists/practitioners encouraged to achieve accreditation to deliver Arts Awards and to support Artsmark development as Artsmark Partners.</p> <p>9.5. Stevenage Arts Guild members develop offers and promotional activity to increase engagement of children and young people in local arts activity</p> <p>9.6. Develop a cohesive and joined-up programme of presentations at smaller performing arts spaces in 2020 and review opportunities to build the programme beyond.</p> <p>9.7. Development of a focused “festival” of work with learning disabled artists for 2021, centred on Valley School</p>	<p>Hertfordshire CEP and Stevenage schools</p> <p>Hertfordshire CEP and Arts and Heritage Forum</p> <p>Stevenage Arts Guild supported by Arts and Heritage Forum</p> <p>Organisations (including schools) with performing arts spaces and Arts and Heritage Forum Members</p> <p>Valley School, Stevenage Arts Guild and Arts and Heritage Forum members</p>
<p>10. Create a Borough wide Arts and Heritage Forum to act as a platform for communication and cultural advocacy, encompassing professional, amateur and community sectors</p>	<p>10.1. Seek inward investment resources in 2018 to enable support to be provided e.g. through a Cultural “Enabler” position to kick-start the Arts and Heritage Forum and other Stevenage Re-Imagined initiatives</p> <p>10.2. Hold a launch event for the Strategy that facilitates business engagement and cultivates potential ongoing business support</p> <p>10.3. By September 2018 have initiated a new Arts and Heritage Forum for Stevenage that engages a wide cross section of organisations and practitioners engaged in the sector.</p> <p>10.4. By December 2019 the Arts and Heritage Forum firmly established and operating as a</p>	<p>SBC/Cultural Strategy Consultant</p> <p>SBC Officers</p> <p>Appointed Cultural “Enabler”</p> <p>Arts and Heritage Forum</p>

Aim	Objectives	Delivery Responsibility
	<p>vibrant and well-attended self-led network that engages a full cross section of the Stevenage arts and heritage sector (organisations and practitioners).</p> <p>10.5. Use the enhancement/development of Festival activity in 2020 to initiate a cohesive and connected plan for training and skills development, volunteering and marketing and PR to raise the profile of Stevenage as a cultural destination.</p> <p>10.6. Review the effectiveness of the Arts and Heritage Forum in 2022 and create a Development Plan for the next five years of the Stevenage re-Imagined Strategy.</p>	<p>Members</p> <p>Arts and Heritage Forum Members</p> <p>Arts and Heritage Forum Members</p>

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Part I – Release to Press



Meeting EXECUTIVE
Portfolio Area Resources
Date 13 MARCH 2018



3RD QUARTER MONITORING REPORT GENERAL FUND AND HOUSING REVENUE

KEY DECISION

Authors Anita Thomas x 2430
Contributor Finance Team and Budget managers
Lead Officers Clare Fletcher x 2933
Contact Officer Clare Fletcher x 2933

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The Council undertakes a review of all revenue and associated budgets on a quarterly basis. This is the 3rd quarter monitoring report for 2017/18.
- 1.2 To update Members on the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) projected 2017/18 net expenditure and seek approval for the revisions to the 2017/18 revenue budgets.
- 1.3 To update Members on the General Fund and HRA savings and growth items approved for 2017/18.
- 1.4 To update Members on the Council's reserves and balances available to support revenue expenditure and to seek approval for revisions to the allocated reserves.
- 1.5 To update Members on any financial security savings that contribute to the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account savings target.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

General Fund

- 2.1 That the 2017/18 3rd quarter General Fund projected net decrease in expenditure of £367,280 be approved.
- 2.2 That it be noted that the cumulative changes made to the General Fund net budget remain within the £400,000 (increase) variation limit delegated to Executive.

- 2.3 That the progress of the 2017/18 approved savings, growth bids and carry forwards be noted.
- 2.4 That the 2018/19 ongoing net savings of £56,800 that will contribute to the General Fund Financial Security target for future years be approved.
- 2.5 That the transfer of £4,730 to the town centre allocated reserve be approved.
- 2.6 That the new carry forward requests (£405,000) be approved.

Housing Revenue Account

- 2.7 That the 2017/8 3rd quarter increase in the net HRA surplus of £230,370 be approved.
- 2.8 That the progress of the 2017/18 approved savings, growth bids and carry forward requests be noted.
- 2.9 That the new carry forward request of (£217,870) as listed in table six be approved.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 General Fund Working Budget

- 3.1.1 Since the General Fund net revenue budget of £9,382,220 was approved by Council on 28 February 2017 Members have approved net budget changes as detailed in table one below.

Table One – 2017/18 General Fund Working Budget	Working Budget £
Original Budget	9,382,220
3rd Quarter 2016/17 net decrease	(60,600)
3rd Quarter Carry forwards	347,150
4th Quarter 2016/17 net decrease	(155,550)
4th Quarter Carry forwards	449,950
Compliance service (Exec 24-5-17)	6,500
Legal Services	174,870
1st Quarter 2017/18	(55,060)
Budget setting (Council 28-2-18)	404,240
Total Net Budget Approved to Date	10,493,720

3.2 Housing Revenue Account Working Budget

- 3.2.1 The HRA revenue budget of £2,790,940 surplus was approved at Council on 31 January 2017. Subsequently Members have approved 2017/18 budget changes as detailed in table two following.

Table Two – HRA Working budget	Working Budget £
Original Budget	(2,790,940)
3rd Quarter 2015/16 net decrease	(62,970)
3rd Quarter Carry forwards	317,250
4th Quarter 2015/16 net decrease	(112,600)
4th Quarter Carry forwards	273,720
Legal Shared Services	47,210
1st Quarter 2017/18	203,410
Budget setting (Council 28-2-18)	(677,330)
Total Working Budget	(2,802,250)

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 General Fund Budget Review

- 4.1.1 As a result of the 3rd quarter budget monitoring review the General Fund net expenditure is projected to decrease by £367,280. This includes carry forward requests of £405,000 meaning that the net change in the General Fund projected expenditure is an increase of £37,720 once carry forward requests are excluded.
- 4.1.2 Pressures and savings identified during the 3rd Quarter are listed in table three below.

Table Three - Budget Alerts - General Fund		Status	Budget change £	Carry forward request £	Ongoing impact on 2018/19 budget £
	Service Area:				
Income	Commercial rent	GREEN	(78,330)		(71,500)
	Other Income	RED	(2,100)		10,000
Expenditure	Employee training programme	GREEN	(20,000)	20,000	
	Employee costs and transitional vacancy	RED	62,780		
	CSC event and workforce planning	GREEN	(64,710)	60,000	
	Apprentices & Domestic abuse/no more project (NHB funded 2nd year)	GREEN	(325,000)	325,000	
	Compliance contract	RED	60,000		
	Telephony contract	RED	27,450		
	Vehicle & fuel cost	GREEN	(27,680)		
	Car park systems	RED	13,090		11,000
Other			310		(6,300)

Table Three - Budget Alerts - General Fund	Status	Budget change £	Carry forward request £	Ongoing impact on 2018/19 budget £
TOTAL BUDGET CHANGES REPORTED THIS QUARTER		(367,280)		
TOTAL CARRY FORWARD BUDGET REQUESTS			405,000	
TOTAL BUDGET NET OVERSPEND AFTER CARRY FORWARD REQUESTS			37,720	
TOTAL ON-GOING BUDGET CHANGES				(56,800)

(red=overspend/under recovery of income Green= underspend/over recovery of income)

4.2 3rd Quarter variances

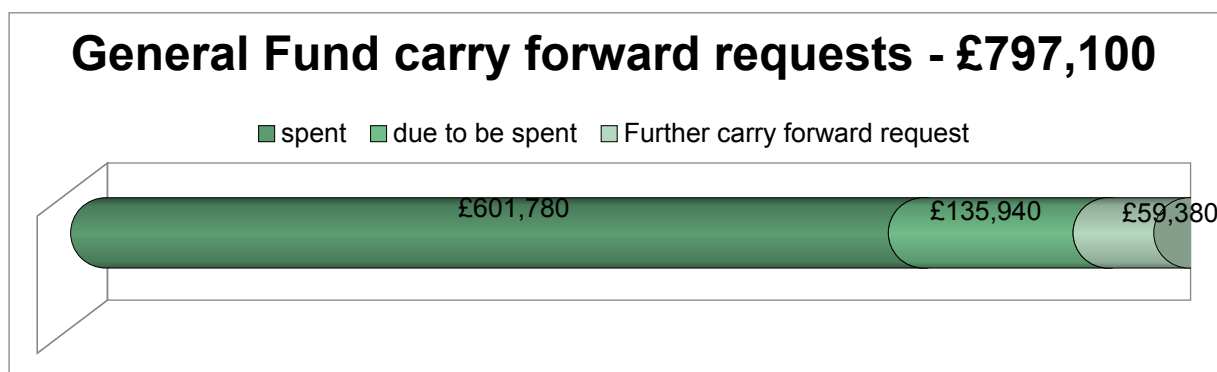
- 4.2.1 **Commercial Rent** – occupancy rates at Business Technology Centre and commercial shops and offices across the borough and reduction in bad debt provision has resulted in higher than projected rental income (£78,330). This trend is expected to continue and the income budget for 2018/19 has been increased by £71,500.
- 4.2.2 **Employee Training Programme** – a request has been made to **carry forward £20,000** to cover ongoing Senior Management training.
- 4.2.3 **Employee Costs** – In setting annual budgets a 4.5% estimate (transitional vacancy target) is made to allow for salary savings arising from vacancies, recognising the time it takes for the recruitment process. The 2017/18 target for the General Fund was £558,080. During the year the target is reduced as vacancies arise and to date £337,960 has been realised. There is £157,340 (28%) still to be released in the final quarter and a further **£62,780** estimated not to be found and is reported as a pressure.
- 4.2.4 **Customer Service Centre** – a request has been made to **carry forward £60,000** to cover a one year fixed term contract for a workforce planning officer and to hold a customer services training event. Over the last few years there have been difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff in this service and this proposal seeks to help address this issue.
- 4.2.5 **New Homes Bonus projects** – some projects funded from this year's (2017/18) new homes bonus grant are scheduled to be completed over two or more years and as such some of the grant monies received in year are being requested for **carry forward** (apprentice scheme - £180,000 and domestic abuse/no more project £145,000).
- 4.2.6 **Compliance contract** – Due to both ageing building stock and plant and equipment more reactionary works are arising and being dealt with under the compliance contract. An overspend of £60,000 is projected, £34,000 of this is from unplanned essential works required to keep buildings operational. This has included roof repairs, plumbing, heating and electrical systems and flooring repairs. Also a greater number of security works have been required this year to sites prone

to vandalism and damage. In addition, communication difficulties and delays in the provision of key data from the contractor's administration team has resulted in missed accruals at the end of 2016/17 (£26,000) contributing to the 2017/18 in year pressure and increases the complexity of budget forecasting. No impact on 2018/19 budgets has currently been identified until a review of compliance works is completed.

- 4.2.7 **Telephony contract** – the telephony provider has significantly increased prices for old copper line technology systems. There is a projected pressure of £27,450. In 2018/19 as part of the digital telephony improvement plan these lines will be decommissioned reducing the cost of telephony and generating a net saving. Therefore this has not been treated as an ongoing pressure.
- 4.2.8 **Vehicle and Fuel costs** – Within the Cavendish depot site is a licenced transfer station that enables waste to be held prior to onward transportation to recycling centres and/or landfill. Officers have negotiated with Hertfordshire County Council (the disposal authority) the use of this transfer station for trade and domestic waste instead of taking waste directly to the disposal site. This has enabled savings to be made on vehicle and fuel costs for the trade waste service (£27,680).
- 4.2.9 **Car Park Systems** – a new software system to run monthly health checks on car park statistics has been purchased and has resulted in most of the £13,090 pressure, the associated ongoing pressure is £11,000.

4.3 Approved Carry forwards 2017/18 (General Fund)

- 4.3.1 Members have already approved total carry forwards request of £797,100



- 4.3.2 Two carry forward projects are due to be completed in 2018/19 and are requested for a further carry forward:
- £20,000 (original carry forward £33,930) Senior Officer training (para 4.2.2)
 - £39,380 (original Carry forward £68,740) No more project (para 4.2.5)

4.4 Financial Security Options and growth proposals approved for 2017/18

- 4.4.1 As part of the 2017/18 budget setting process Financial Security savings of £226,190 were approved and implemented. Of these options two were

implemented later than estimated so the full saving was not achieved in year (£24,790) – 11% of the total financial security options approved.

- Recovery of running costs from the Arts Centre has now been agreed but due to the delays in the negotiation with the Arts Centre the saving will commence from April 2018 £3,790
- The £21,000 Engineering Services saving has been delayed by one year and will commence from April 2018.

4.4.2 Growth proposals totalling £143,700 were approved for the General Fund in 2017/18 and these are on target to be spent.

4.5 2017/18 General Fund Out turn position

4.5.1 Following the 3rd quarter review the General Fund balance as at 31 March 2018 is projected to be **£5,250,668** as detailed in table four.

Table Four: General Fund Balances	£
Original Net General Fund Budget	9,382,220
Approved budget changes	1,111,500
Net Working budget approved to Date	10,493,720
3rd Quarter review	(367,280)
Total Net Expenditure post Q3 review	10,126,440
less core resources	(8,950,125)
Transfer (to)/from General Fund balances	1,176,315
General Fund balance 31/3/17	(6,426,983)
Transfer (to)/from General Fund balances	1,176,315
Projected General Fund balance 31/3/18	(5,250,668)
Allocated Revenue Reserves 31/3/18	(1,801,386)
Allocated Capital Reserves 31/3/18	0
Total General Fund balances (estimated 31/3/18)	(7,052,054)

4.6 2018/19 General Fund Budget

4.6.1 The 3rd quarter General Fund review has identified a net ongoing saving of £56,800 which will contribute to the Financial Security target which is £1.5Million over the next four years (2018/19 ongoing net changes are listed in table three)

4.7 Allocated Reserves

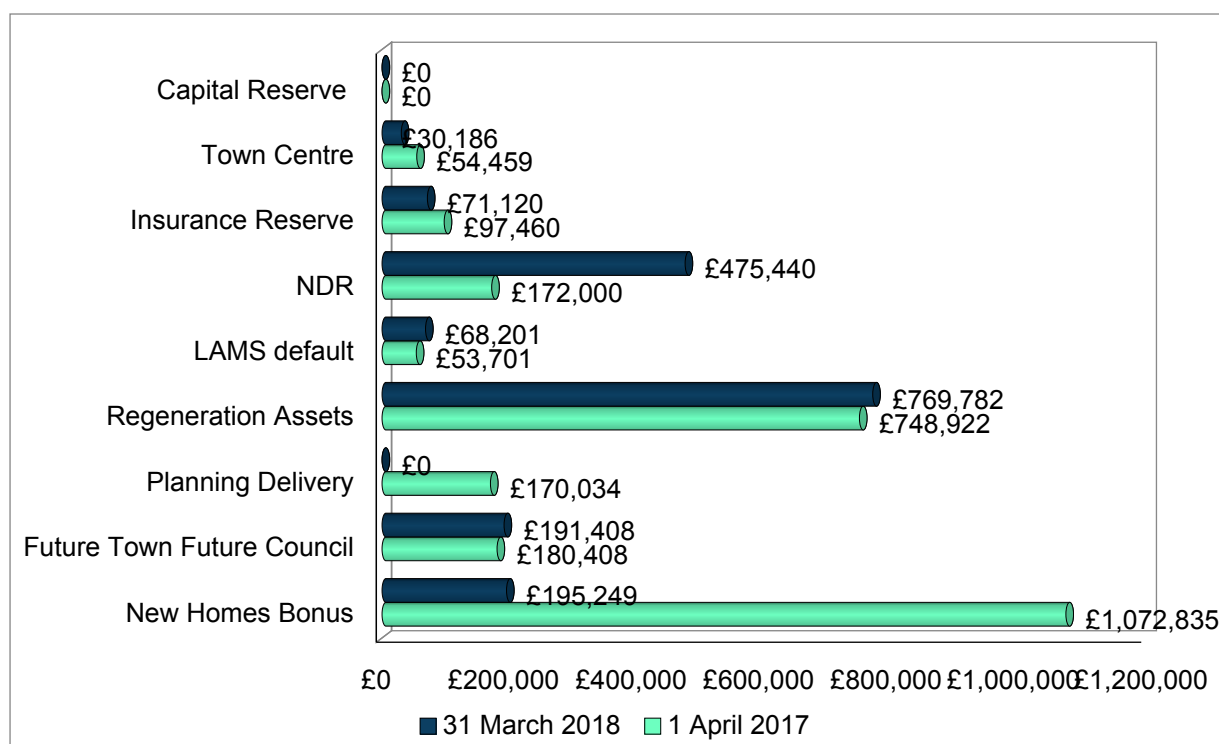
4.7.1 The total value of allocated reserves as at the 1 April 2017 was £2,549,819

4.7.2 Total allocated reserves as at the 31 March 2018 are forecast to be £1.801Million compared to £1.796Million in the 2018/19 budget report.

- Revenue £1.801Million

- Capital £0 (fully allocated to fund 2017/18 capital schemes)

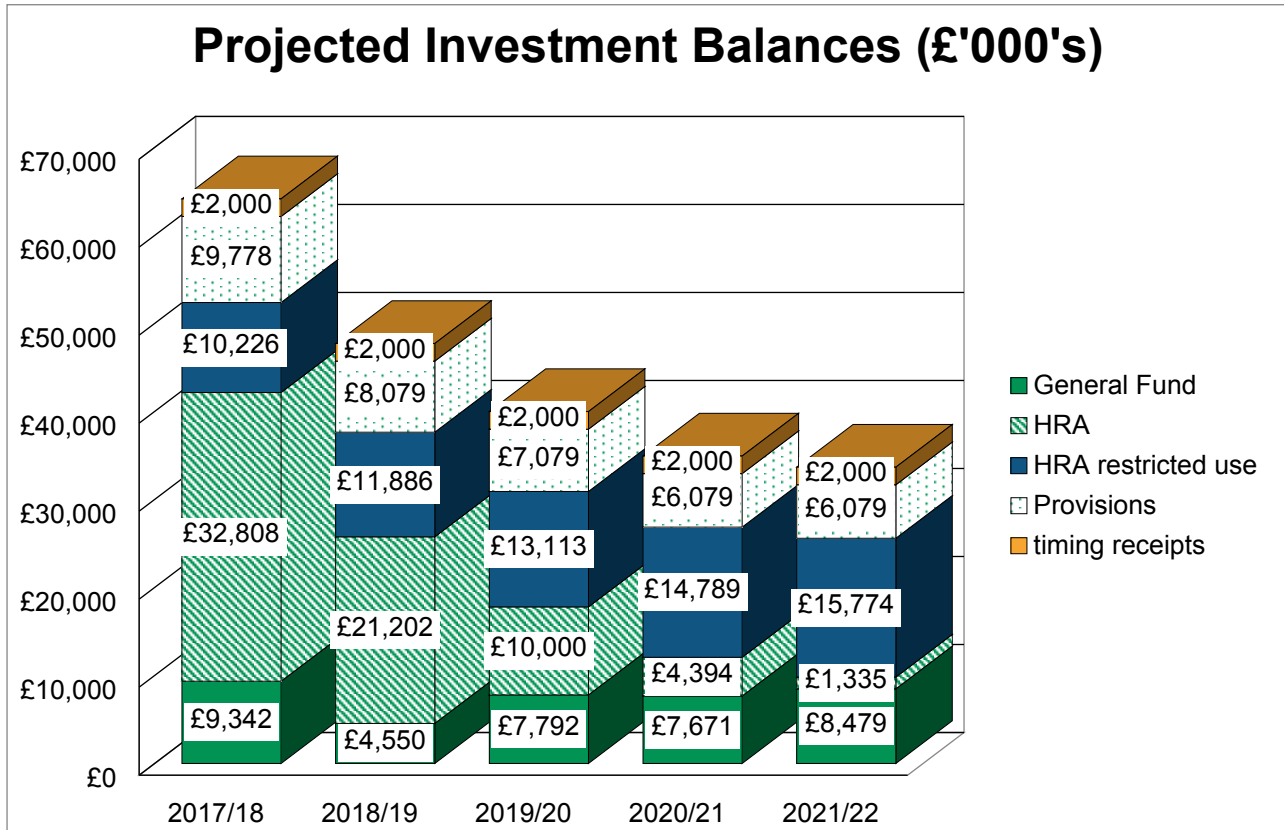
- 4.7.3 As part of 3rd quarter monitoring a surplus on the town centre management account of £4,730 is anticipated and Members are asked to approve this transfer to the town centre reserve to help fund future town centre promotional events.
- 4.7.4 As Members have previously approved General Fund underspends up to £350,000 identified at year end transfer into the capital reserve, with any in excess of this transferring into the town centre regeneration allocated reserve. This transfer will be confirmed once the actual 2017/18 spend is known and reported to Members in July.
- 4.7.5 The chart below shows the movement between opening and closing allocated reserve balances.



4.8 Investments and Loans

- 4.8.1 Cash balances as at 31 December 2017 were £73.03Million and are forecast to be £64.2Million as at 31 March 2018. The average investment rate achieved to the 3rd quarter was 0.55%. The Council's balances are made up of cash reserves e.g. HRA and General Fund balances, restricted use receipts e.g. right to buy one for one receipts and balances held for provisions such as business rate appeals.
- 4.8.2 In considering the Council's level of cash balances, Members should note that the HRA Business Plan, General Fund MTFs and the Capital Strategy have a planned use of these resources which means, while not committed in the current year, they are utilised in future years. This means that the Council's cash for investment purposes is projected to reduce from £64.2Million by 31 March 2018 to £33Million by 31 March 2022. In essence £31.2Million of investment balances is going to be

used in the next four years for revenue and capital plans approved by Members. This impact on cash available to invest is shown in the following chart.



4.8.3 The Council's loan portfolio totals £209.6Million with the majority (£207.9Million) with the public works loan board. New borrowing has not yet been taken in 2017/18 for the HRA and General Fund and borrowing is being monitored by Officers in light of projected cash balances and anticipated interest rate rises.

4.9 Housing Revenue Account – Budget review

4.9.1 As a result of the 3rd quarter budget monitoring review the HRA net surplus is projected to increase by £217,870 (reduction in expenditure). However new carry forward request also total £217,870.

4.9.2 Pressures and savings identified during the 3rd Quarter are listed in table five below

Table Five - Budget Alerts - HRA		Status (red=overspend/under recovery of income Green= underspend/over recovery of income)	Budget change £	Net Carry forward request £	Ongoing impact on 2018/19 budget £
	Service Area:				
Income	Rent and service charges	RED	43,570		
Expenditure	Private contractors	GREEN	(175,920)	40,000	

	FTFC Excellent Homes	GREEN	(126,940)	126,940	
	Housing Development (consultancy advice)	GREEN	(49,230)	49,320	
	Unoccupied council tax	RED	44,450		
	Employee costs and transitional vacancy	RED	39,110		
	Decant costs	RED	12,500	(12,500)	
Repairs and Voids service		GREEN	0		
Other			(5,410)	14,110	
TOTAL BUDGET CHANGES REPORTED THIS QUARTER			(217,870)		
TOTAL CARRY FORWARD BUDGET REQUESTS				217,870	
TOTAL BUDGET NET OVERSPEND AFTER CARRY FORWARD REQUESTS				0	
TOTAL ON-GOING BUDGET CHANGES					0

- 4.9.3 **Rent, Service Charges, and HRA Income** – Income has been revised downwards by £43,590, this is due to a combination of lower rental income (£38,390 - see table six below) due, mainly to new build delays verses budget (Twin Foxes development site), and higher void properties, partially offset by lower than forecast Right To Buy sales (reduced by four from 42 to 38), together with lower administration income associated with Right to Buys £5,200.

Table Six Reason for Rent Movement	Decrease/ (Increase) £
New Build Delays	39,620
Open Market Acquisition	2,540
Void Loss	3,870
Out of management properties – rent loss (redevelopment sites)	1,810
Lower RTBs	(9,450)
Total Rents	38,390

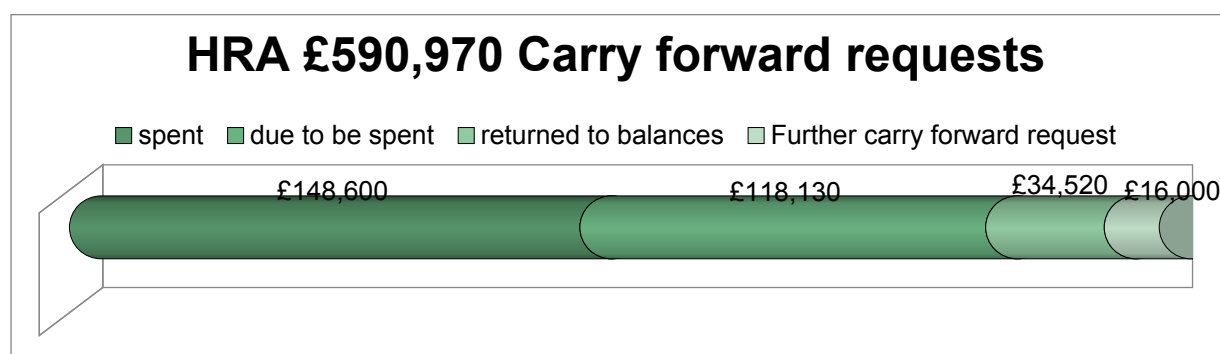
- 4.9.4 **Private Contractors** - Expenditure has reduced by **£175,920**, of that £135,920 is relates to gas and quality checks now being undertaken under a new better value contract that has resulted in a lower unit cost per repair/service. This contract is being monitored for any savings that can contribute to the financial security target for 2018/19 onwards. A further £40,000 underspend is due to the delayed start of the five year Electrical Testing contract, in order to complete the set price contract over five year the £40,000 is required to be carried forward into 2018/19.
- 4.9.5 **FTFC Excellent Homes** – Members approved a transformation budget for the HRA service of £1,500,000 over 3 years (2017/18 to 2019/20). The phasing of the transformation has been revised to reflect the appointment of the project team. Of

the £500,000 allocation for 2017/18 the underspend of **£126,940** is requested to be carry forward to fulfil the aims of the project.

- 4.9.6 **Housing Development (Consultancy advice)** – To help facilitate and progress housing development options an underspend of **£49,320** for specialised consultancy is requested to be carried forward. This funding is to support necessary schemes with bespoke development advice. The funding is needed over a number of years to reflect the timing of projects.
- 4.9.7 **Unoccupied Council Tax** – An overspend of **£44,450** has been reported mainly in relation to out of management properties due to decants in connection with site redevelopments.
- 4.9.8 **Employee costs and transitional vacancy** – The 2017/18 transitional target for the HRA was £252,550. During the year the target is reduced as vacancies arise, to date £183,870 has been realised. There is £68,680 (27%) still to be released in the final quarter and a further **£26,610** estimated not to be found and has been reported as a pressure.
- 4.9.9 **Decant costs** – The decant process associated with site redevelopments has been re-phased resulting in earlier than originally anticipated decant costs of £12,500 in 2017/18 thus will reduce costs in 2018/19.
- 4.9.10 **Repairs and voids services** – The Repairs and Voids services is projected to be in line with 2nd quarter projections (with only minor variations to the improvement plan as reported earlier). There are no projected variance identified at this point.

4.10 Approved Carry forwards 2017/18 (HRA)

- 4.10.1 Members have approved already HRA carry forwards budgets totalling £590,970



- 4.10.2 One carry forward project is due to be completed in 2018/19 and is requested for a further carry forward:
- Housing Development Consultancy, £16,000 (original carry forward £23,490) included in total in table five above.
- 4.10.3 In total £34,520 of carry forward requests can be returned to HRA balances for the following projects:
- Advertising campaign delayed whilst awaiting Housing and Planning Act guidelines - £7,555

- Appointment of a Welfare Reform worker delayed as provision is being reviewed - £4,520
- Landlord lighting (electrical) testing no longer required as part of a larger contract (see para 4.9.4) - £13,500
- Multiskilling operatives completed at a lower cost than anticipated - £9,000

4.11 HRA Financial Security Options and growth proposals approved for 2017/18

- 4.11.1 As part of the 2017/18 budget setting process financial security savings of £31,900 were identified all of which are on schedule to be achieved.
- 4.11.2 Growth proposals totalling £42,500 (in addition to the £500,000 Housing Transformation Fund) were approved for the HRA in 2017/18 and these are on target to be spent.

4.12 2017/18 HRA Outturn position

- 4.12.1 Following the 3rd quarter review the HRA balance as at 31 March 2018 is projected to be **£22,769,691** as detailed in table seven.

Table Seven – Housing Revenue Account Out-turn Position	£
Original Budget	(2,790,940)
Approved budget changes	(11,310)
3rd Quarter adjustments	(217,870)
Projected net surplus post 3rd Quarter review	(3,020,120)
HRA balance brought forward 1/4/17	(19,749,571)
Surplus in year	(3,020,120)
Projected HRA balance 31/3/18	(22,769,691)

4.13 2018/19 HRA Budget

- 4.13.1 The 3rd quarter budget review has identified no additional budget changes for 2018/19.

5.1 Financial Implications

- 5.1.1 This report is financial in nature and consequently financial implications are included above.

5.2 Legal Implications

- 5.2.1 The objective of this report is to outline the projected General Fund and HRA net expenditure for 2017/18 and the impact on the General Fund and HRA balances. While there are no legal consequences at this stage Members are reminded of their duty to set a balanced budget.

5.3 Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.3.1 This report summarises external and internal factors that impact on approved budgets and recommends changes to those budgets in year. Budget changes identified for future years that could adversely impact on groups covered by statutory equality duties will be incorporated into the budget setting process which includes Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA). None of the budget changes reported will change any existing equalities and diversity policies.
- 5.3.2 The service department has been asked to look at the equalities and diversity implications in the increase in void re-let times and any potential impact on protected groups.

5.4 Risk Implications

- 5.4.1 A risk based assessment of General Fund balances is undertaken and reported to Council as part of the General Fund Budget setting process. The required level of 2017/18 General Fund balances was calculated at £2,656,938. This report forecasts General Fund balances of £5,250,668 and allocated reserve balances of £1,801,386 which is above the minimum balances required.
- 5.4.2 The HRA balances are projected to be £22,769,691. The level of HRA balances or revenue reserves risk assessed for 2017/18 is £1,947,740. The projected HRA balance is above the risk assessed level, however it should be noted that the HRA holds balances for future debt repayments and the capital programme for throughout the 30 year business plan.

5.5 Policy Implications

- 5.5.1 The budget framework represents a development of a policy led budgeting approach across Council services and the overall Medium Term Financial Strategy.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- BD1 FINAL GENERAL FUND AND COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2018/2019 Council 28th February 2018
<http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/content/committees/182083/182095/182099/Council-28-Feb-2018-Item5A.pdf>

BD2 FINAL HRA RENT SETTING AND BUDGET REPORT 30th January 2018

<http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/content/committees/182083/182095/182099/Special-Council-30-January-2018-Item-2.pdf>

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Investment and Loans Portfolio

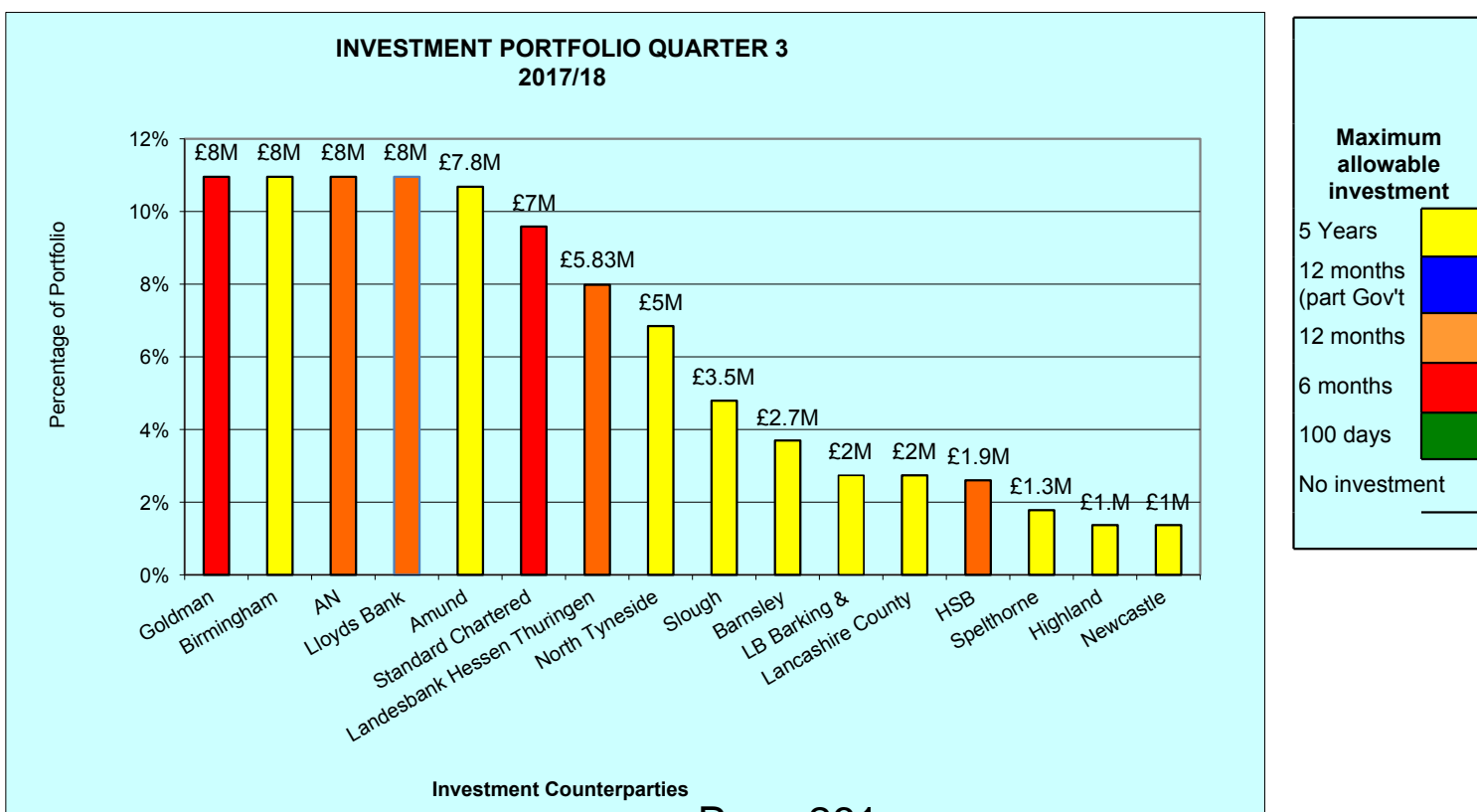
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INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO QUARTER 3 (31st December 2017)

Appendix A

Average interest rate for 2016/17	0.57%
Average interest rate for 2017/18 (Quarter 3)	0.55%
Bank Rate increased 2-11-18 by 0.25%	0.50%

<u>Borrower</u>	<u>Nation</u>	<u>Sovereign Rating (Fitch)</u>	<u>Amount £'s</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Rate %</u>
Money Market Funds (Instant Access)						
Amundi	UK	AA	7,800,000			0.44
95 Day Notice						
Standard Chartered Bank	UK	AA	7,000,000			0.78
Fixed Term Deposit						
HSBC	UK	AA	1,900,000	29-Dec-17	02-Jan-18	0.35
Landesbank Hessen Thuringen Giroze GER		AAA	3,830,000	22-Dec-17	03-Jan-18	0.40
Goldman Sachs	UK	AA	1,700,000	19-Oct-17	19-Apr-18	0.65
Landesbank Hessen Thuringen Giroze GER		AAA	2,000,000	10-Jul-17	10-Jan-18	0.38
Goldman Sachs	UK	AA	2,300,000	17-Jul-17	17-Jan-18	0.68
Lloyds/Bank of Scotland	UK	AA	3,000,000	24-Jul-17	24-Jan-18	0.36
Birmingham C.C.	UK	AA	5,000,000	24-Apr-17	24-Jan-18	0.58
Goldman Sachs	UK	AA	4,000,000	14-Aug-17	14-Feb-18	0.53
Highland Council	UK	AA	1,000,000	14-Apr-16	16-Apr-18	0.98
Australia & NZ Banking Group	AUS	AAA	3,000,000	24-Nov-17	24-May-18	0.59
Slough B.C.	UK	AA	3,500,000	20-Dec-17	20-Jun-18	0.55
Australia & NZ Banking Group	AUS	AAA	5,000,000	05-Sep-17	05-Sep-18	0.50
Lancashire County Council	UK	AA	2,000,000	06-Sep-16	06-Sep-18	0.58
Lloyds Bank	UK	AA	5,000,000	24-Nov-17	23-Nov-18	0.90
North Tyneside MBC	UK	AA	5,000,000	18-Dec-17	17-Dec-18	0.75
Birmingham C.C.	UK	AA	3,000,000	24-Apr-17	24-Apr-19	0.80
Spelthorne B.C.	UK	AA	1,300,000	22-Jun-17	21-Jun-19	0.70
LB Barking & Dagenham	UK	AA	2,000,000	09-Jan-17	09-Apr-20	0.98
Newcastle C.C.	UK	AA	1,000,000	03-Apr-17	03-Apr-20	0.98
Barnsley MBC	UK	AA	2,700,000	15-Sep-17	15-Sep-21	0.98
			73,030,000			



LOAN PORTFOLIO QUARTER 3 (31st December 2017)

Decent Homes Borrowing

<u>Lender</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Rate %</u>	<u>Amount £'s</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Life of Loan</u>
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	4.11	2,500,000	24/03/2011	24/03/2018	7 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	4.11	1,241,000	31/03/2011	31/03/2018	7 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	4.75	2,000,000	04/03/2010	04/03/2035	25 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	4.28	1,800,000	25/05/2010	25/05/2035	25 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	4.24	963,000	17/08/2010	17/08/2035	25 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	4.65	3,000,000	25/03/2010	25/09/2035	25 1/2 years
			11,504,000			

Self Financing Borrowing

<u>Lender</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Rate %</u>	<u>Amount £'s</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Life of Loan</u>
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	2.92	500,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2026	14 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	3.01	8,000,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2027	15 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	3.08	8,700,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2028	16 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	3.15	9,600,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2029	17 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	3.21	10,600,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2030	18 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	3.26	11,000,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2031	19 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	3.30	16,000,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2032	20 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	3.34	17,500,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2033	21 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	3.37	17,600,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2034	22 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	3.40	17,300,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2035	23 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	3.42	15,300,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2036	24 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	3.44	21,000,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2037	25 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	3.46	18,200,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2038	26 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	3.47	19,611,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2039	27 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/Maturity	3.48	4,000,000	28/03/2012	28/03/2040	28 years
			194,911,000			

Prudential Borrowing

<u>Lender</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Rate %</u>	<u>Amount £'s</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>Life of Loan</u>
Lancashire C.C.	Fixed Rate/Maturity	1.98	1,500,000	03/07/2013	03/07/2018	5 years
PWLB	Fixed Rate/EIP	2.37	1,447,368	19/08/2013	19/02/2022	9 1/2 years
			2,947,368			

Total Borrowing	209,362,368
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Meeting: EXECUTIVE

Portfolio Area: Resources



Date: 13 MARCH 2018

**3RD QUARTER MONITORING CAPITAL PROGRAMME - GENERAL FUND AND
HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT
KEY DECISION**

Authors – Anita Thomas Ext. 2430
Contributor – Lee Busby Ext. 2730
Finance team and budget managers
Lead Officers – Clare Fletcher Ext. 2933
Contact Officer – Clare Fletcher Ext.2933

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide Members with an update on the Council's 2017/18 and 2018/19 capital programme and seek approval for the revisions to the General Fund capital programme
- 1.2 To update Members on capital resources available to fund the capital programmes.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the 2017/18 General Fund capital programme net decrease in expenditure of £269,030 be approved as summarised in paragraph 4.1.1.
- 2.2 That a virement from the deferred works Budget of £20,000 to Town Centre Toilet refurbishment works be approved.
- 2.3 That the 2017/18 Housing Revenue Account capital programme remains unchanged.
- 2.4 That the 2018/19 General Fund increase in capital expenditure of £57,500 (slippage from 2017/18) be approved, as summarised in table one and para 4.5.1.

**Part 1 –
Release to Press**

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The 2017/18 updated capital programme was approved at Council on 28 February 2018 as part of the capital strategy for the period 2017/18 – 2022/23. The 2017/18 programme totals for each fund were;

- General Fund £20,932,190
- Housing Revenue Account £17,525,250

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

4.1 2017/18 General Fund Capital Programme

4.1.1 The 2017/18 General Fund capital programme (detailed in backing document BD1) is projected to reduce by £269,030 due to:

- £145,000 scheme costs re-profiled to 2018/19
- and £124,030 net reduction in scheme costs/ scheme withdrawn.

Table 1: Capital Programme Change to 2017/18 Working Budget & 2018/19 Projected Budget	Increase (Decrease) to 2017/18 Working Budget £	Increase (Decrease) to 2018/19 Budget £	Reason
Working Budget	20,932,190	21,707,910	
Slippage identified at 3rd Quarter			
Electrical works to Daneshill House	(17,000)	17,000	Slippage. Project funds committed but completion and final invoicing will be in 2018-19
Community Centres	(32,000)	32,000	
Indoor market toilet refurbishment	(23,000)	23,000	
Corey's Mill additional car parking capacity	(24,000)	24,000	
Arts and Leisure centre	(49,000)	49,000	
	(145,000)	145,000	
Net reductions in budget			
Town Centre toilet refurbishment works	20,000		Urgent works to improve poor condition of toilets
Deferred works budget	(20,000)		Requested funding for above
Park Pavilions	(12,000)		Works completed under budget
Fairlands Valley Farmhouse	(53,280)		Budget removed pending decision on future use
Energy conservation schemes (buildings to be included in SG1 redevelopment)	(38,260)		Works not required as buildings subject to regeneration
Housing Renovation grants	(18,000)		No applications pending

**Part 1 –
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Table 1: Capital Programme Change to 2017/18 Working Budget & 2018/19 Projected Budget	Increase (Decrease) to 2017/18 Working Budget £	Increase (Decrease) to 2018/19 Budget £	Reason
Other minor changes to final costs of scheme	(2,490)		
Oval Re-roofing		(87,500)	Completed 2017/18. 2018-19 budget not required
	(124,030)	(87,500)	
Total General Fund Changes Q3	(269,030)	57,500	
Revised Budget Q3	20,663,160	21,765,410	

4.1.2 Slippage:

Orders have been placed to complete a number of schemes but it is unlikely that contractors will complete the works by the end of the financial year. As such, these costs will be accounted for in the next financial year and budgets are requested to be slippage to meet the contractual obligations (£145,000).

4.1.3 Reductions in Expenditure:

The revised capital programme has identified a net reduction of £124,030 of existing schemes. Included within this sum is £53,280 relating to Fairlands Valley farm house. This scheme has been removed from the capital programme until the future use of this site is known.

4.1.4 Virements from the Deferred Works Budget:

Refurbishment works to the town centre public toilets have been identified and it is requested that a virement of £20,000 from the deferred works budget is made to facilitate these works.

4.1.5 Commercial Property Portfolio:

Members approved £15million investment in a commercial property portfolio to support the Financial Security work stream. A second site is in final negotiation stage with exchange of contracts due in March.

4.2 2017/18 Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme

4.2.1 Changes to the HRA capital strategy were reported as part of the Final Capital Strategy in February (Council 28/2/2018). No further changes have been identified in the March update (as detailed in backing document BD2).

4.2.2 Other Updates: As mentioned in the 2nd quarter review, two major contracts had been let for 2017/18 for external works and internal decent homes works. Initial delays in mobilisation of these contracts required works to be rescheduled to the 3rd and 4th quarters of 2017/18. Although officers consider the delivery of the programme is still achievable and no slippage has been identified, there continues to be risks in delivering the planned works. For example, should there be a delay in the programme of one month, it would

Part 1 – Release to Press

result in slippage of approximately £800,000, with works re-profiled for delivery in 2018/19.

4.3 Capital Resources General Fund

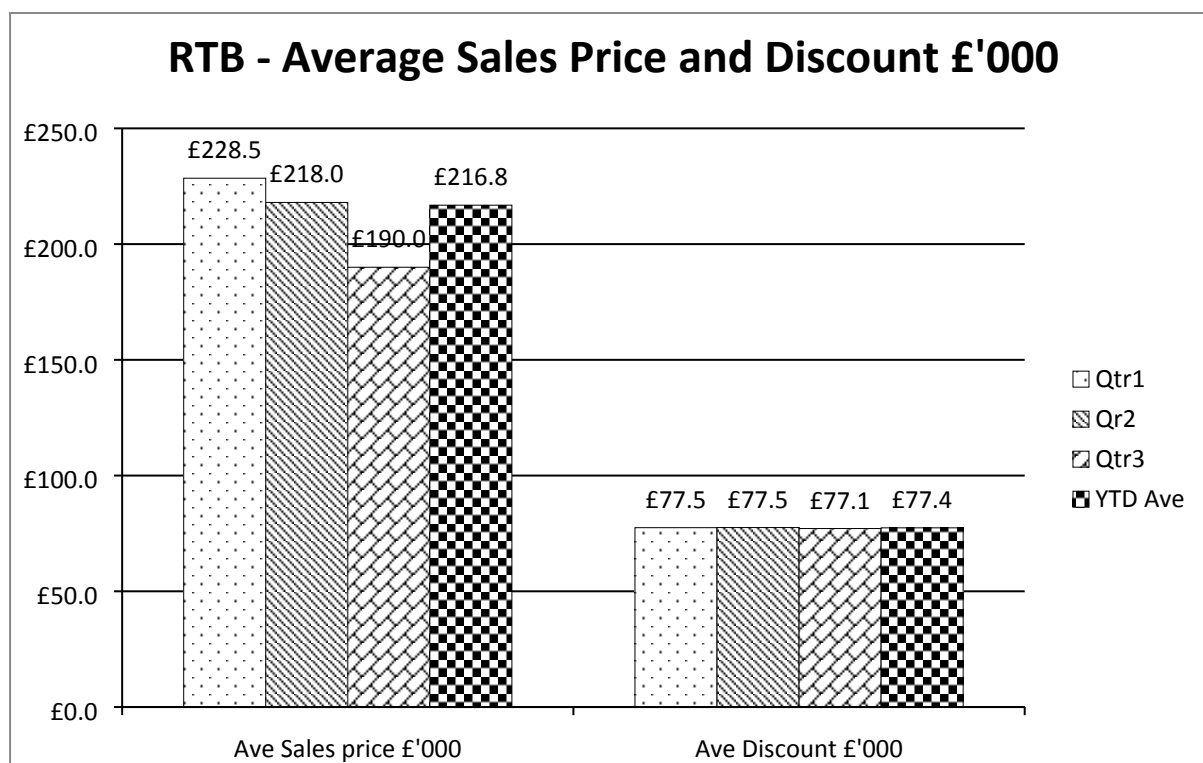
- 4.3.1 Projected capital receipts for the current year have been reviewed with capital receipts projected to be £1.012Million, a reduction of £111,500 to that forecast in the February capital strategy. The 2018/19 in year receipts will increase by £150,000.

Site disposal	Estimated value
Land adjacent to Jessops Road – sale completion expected in 2018/19	£150,000
Land at Bedwell Crescent (small site disposal)	(£35,000)
Total identified changes to General Fund capital receipts	£111,500

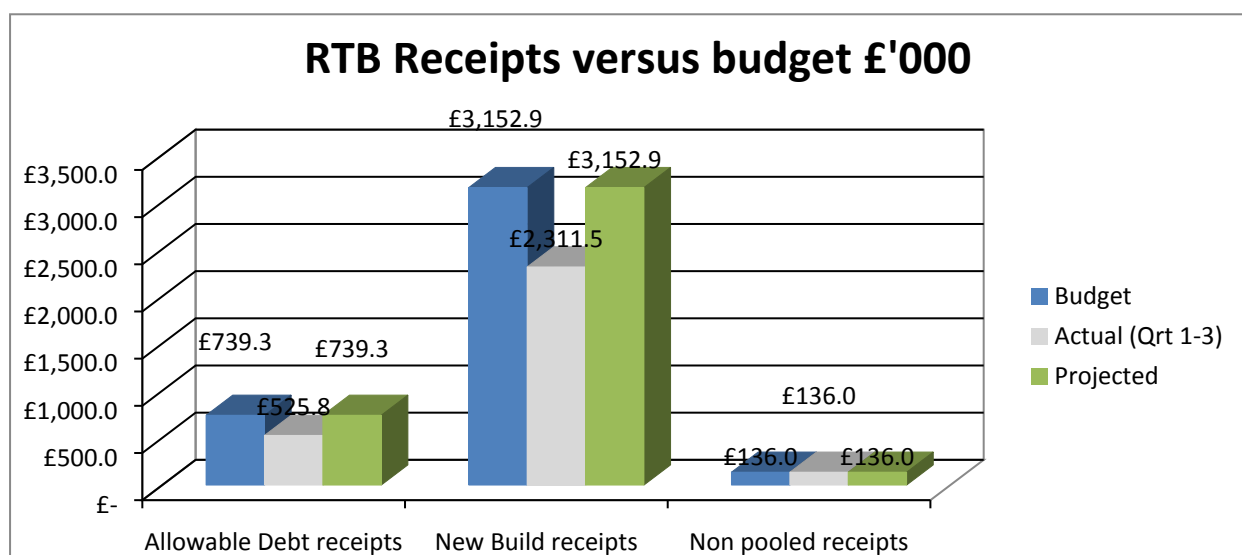
- 4.3.2 Prudential borrowing identified for the Garage asset review programme and commercial property portfolio will be a treasury management decision as to when external borrowing is actually taken. Officers will consider the forecast cash flows (as reported in the quarterly revenue budget report presented to this Executive) and the forecast interest rate rises when deciding on the optimal time to take external borrowing.

4.4 Capital Resources Housing Revenue Account

- 4.4.1 The HRA had 27 right to buy (RTB) sales to the end of the 3rd quarter,(one of which is exempt from pooling). As at 15 February 34 RTB sales had been completed, one of which is exempt from pooling, and the projection for the full year is estimated 38 RTBs. Average sale prices and average discount given is shown in the following chart.



4.4.2 The projected RTB receipts are in line with the projections included in the Capital Strategy to the February Executive as shown in the chart below.



4.5 2018/19 capital programme for General Fund and HRA schemes

4.5.1 Slippage of General Fund schemes to 2018/19 has been incorporated into this report (para 4.1.2). In addition the roofing scheme at the Oval has been completed and the 2018/19 budget allocation is no longer required (£87,500). There are changes to the 2018/19 General Fund programme of £57,500.

4.5.2 No further changes have been identified for the HRA 2018/19 programme.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

- 5.1.1 This report is of a financial nature and financial implications are contained within the body of the report.
- 5.1.2 The cumulative changes made to the original General Fund and HRA capital budgets remains within the £250,000 (increase) variation limit delegated to the Executive for each fund.

5.2 Legal Implications

- 5.2.1 None identified at this time.

5.3 Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.3.1 Spending departments complete EqlA where appropriate. This report has not identified any changes to the capital programme which would trigger a review of existing EqlAs.

5.4 Risk Implications

- 5.4.1 The Capital programme is funded from a number of sources including capital receipts and borrowing. The timing and value of the capital receipt cannot be known with certainty.
- 5.4.2 HRA new build programme is funded 30% by 1for1 RTB receipts. These receipts need to be applied to eligible schemes within three years of receipt. If spend is incurred after the three year time frame it is no longer eligible and the receipt has to be returned to government with interest calculated at base rate plus 4%.
- 5.4.3 The capital programme includes numerous external contracts and third parties which can influence the deliverability of the programme. Any delays to contract procurement and/or mobilisation can cause planned expenditure to slip. Regular procurement meetings are held with Officers to mitigate the risks of the procurement process.
- 5.4.3 While cash balances are high the treasury management policy is to use internal borrowing. When actual borrowing is taken interest rates may be higher than those prevailing now. The Council manages this risk by reviewing and updating its cash flow forecast and Treasury Management strategy regularly.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

BD1 – General Fund Capital Strategy

BD2 – Housing Revenue Account Capital Strategy

BD3 - Capital Strategy 2017/18 – 2022/23 – Council 28 February 2018

<http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/content/committees/182083/182095/182099/Council-28-Feb-2018-Item5B.pdf>

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Meeting: EXECUTIVE
Portfolio Area: Community Safety
Date: 13 MARCH 2018

COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY 2018-21

BUDGET & POLICY FRAMEWORK

Author – Sarah Pateman Ext. 2458
Lead Officers – Rob Gregory Ext. 2568
Contact Officer – Sarah Pateman Ext. 2458



1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider the draft strategy which outlines the emerging priorities of the SoSafe partnership for the next three years which was considered by the Responsible Authorities Group (RAG) at its meeting on 5th February 2018.
- 1.2 The Council's Constitution includes the Community Safety Strategy as a Budget and Policy Framework item and as such the draft document, post consideration by the Executive, will then be reviewed by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The final report, incorporating comments made by that Committee will be submitted to the Executive for recommendation to Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That subject to the approval of the Executive the draft Community Safety Strategy accompanying this report be referred to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee before the final recommendations Council are approved.
- 2.2 That the draft Community Safety Strategy accompanying this report be approved noting its focus on the work of the SoSafe partnership.
- 2.3 That implementation of the strategy will be achieved through co-operative working with communities and key partners via the activities of the Joint Action Group and overseen by the Responsible Authorities Group.

3. BACKGROUND

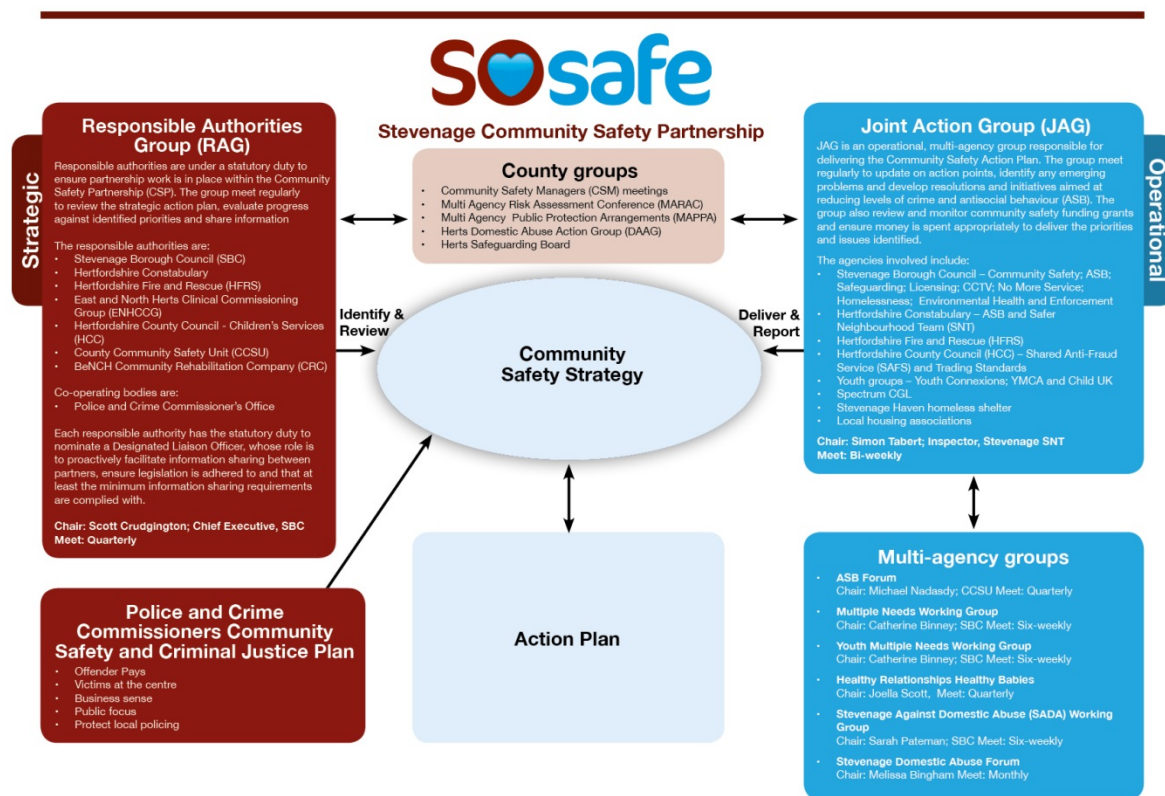
- 3.1 The town is rapidly changing and with a preferred developer now on board to help take forward the town centre regeneration ambitions there will be much more change to come over the coming months and years. The population is growing and a broad cross-section of people have chosen Stevenage to live

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and work in. Stevenage continues to be a safe place to live and work. There are however, peaks in crime and anti-social behaviour, often through the sudden occurrence of a criminal activity, or a spate of connected incidents. The council is aware through the most recent Residents Survey that people in some parts of the town feel troubled by youth nuisance and that they are concerned about going out after dark. The Community Safety Partnership - SoSafe will work to address these issues working co-operatively with local communities.

- 3.2 The development of a strategy is central to the overall purpose of the Community Safety Partnership and is summarised in the diagram below.



- 3.3 This strategy will ensure that Stevenage, as a co-operative council, utilises its available resources in the most effective manner possible to deliver meaningful crime reduction outcomes. SoSafe is committed to building on progress achieved in recent years, and will strive to continue to drive down crime and disorder in Stevenage. In his most recent visit to the partnership in February 2018 the Police and Crime Commissioner recognised the strength and effectiveness of SoSafe as a community safety partnership.
- 3.4 Between 2015-2018 the partnership secured £132k of external funding to help it deliver on priorities and initiatives. This funding resulted in the delivery of some innovative projects including the SoSafe Youth Ambassadors, the Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) Traveller Project and various community reassurance events. In addition to this, the No More Service allotment successfully secured a £1,000 grant from the Tesco Bags for Help scheme and in February 2018 SADA won the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) Excellence in the Community award.

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- 3.5 The ASB Team managed a number of complex cases that resulted in successful enforcement action being taken. This included re-possession of a nuisance property on the Absolute Ground for Possession, as well as a Property Closure Order on an address where drugs were being dealt that resulted in a high level of ASB for the residents.
- 3.6 Numerous partnership operations with the Police were undertaken such as regular residents' surgeries in tower blocks where there were reports of ASB and crime, have helped to reassure residents and encourage them to report ng nuisance behaviour.
- 3.7 During the year the partnership has engaged with residents on a number of occasions including the Domestic Abuse 16 Days of Action and Operation Night Owl which targeted drinking and the night time economy. The partnership has been instrumental in arranging training for front line staff, partners and volunteers; including tackling extremism, DA Awareness, Hate Crime Awareness Training, Safeguarding and Child Sexual Exploitation Training.
- 3.8 By properly engaging with the local community and working with them to shape the service offer it has been possible to increase the profile of the partnership and highlight the benefits of co-operative through the work of volunteers and partners and through mechanisms like the ASB forum. It has also been possible to highlight what can be achieved when resources are co-ordinated and strategically aligned in particular the outcomes achieved through SADA.
- 3.9 During November and December 2017, the SoSafe Partnership worked with local partners to shape the draft strategy. The themes for the strategy were further developed at consultation events in the town centre and via surveys shared with customers. There are a number of differences between the 2015/17 and 2018/20 community safety strategies. Notably, the overall aims have changed to focus on helping people to feel safe and to tackle perceptions of ASB and crime. This will be achieved by empowering residents to get involved and encouraging them to learn more about actual levels of crime and disorder in Stevenage. The 2018/20 strategy aims to safeguard the broader spectrum of vulnerable people beyond those who are victims of domestic abuse. ASB will be tackled with partners and the local community, working co-operatively. In the 2015/18 strategy, the No More Service set out to reduce harm to the individual/client, whereas the 2018/20 strategy is seeking to motivate clients to break the cycle of addiction themselves by understanding the impact their substance misuse has on the community, not just the individual.
- 3.10 The proposed strategy accompanies this report. It is suggested that, subject to Members approving the strategy for implementation, it should be adopted by the Responsible Authorities Group on 23 April 2018.

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- 3.11 Members of the Community Select Committee, in their Policy Development role, were consulted on this report at a meeting with the Portfolio Holder held on 5 February 2018.
- 3.12 There are a number of key points that require consideration. These are set out in the following sections of the report and formulate the rationale upon which the recommendations are presented.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

4.1 Local priorities for Stevenage

- 4.1.1 The draft Community Safety Strategy has been compiled based on evidence obtained from Police Performance Reports, the 2017 Residents Survey results, consultation with members of the public and partners and surveys completed by service users. The priorities identified are those that ranked highest, following the consultation.

From 2015-2018 the identified priorities were:

1. Helping to make People feel Safe
2. Reduce Crime and Disorder
3. Provide a Co-ordinated Response to Domestic Abuse
4. Tackle antisocial behaviour (ASB) with partners
5. Reduce harm caused by drugs and alcohol

The five key priorities identified for 2018-2021 are:

1. Helping to make People feel Safe
2. Reduce crime and Disorder
3. Protect and Safeguard Vulnerable People
4. Tackle antisocial behaviour (ASB) Co-operatively with partners
5. Break the cycle of substance misuse and offending

These priorities are underpinned by two overarching objectives to:

- Build Resilient Communities
- Work co-operatively with communities to help reduce fear of crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

4.2 Rationale for priorities

- 4.2.1 This strategy provides a framework for the activities and initiatives that the partnership delivers to improve community safety and community confidence in the town. Following consultation with members of the public and partners, this strategy identifies the priorities that SoSafe will focus on over the next

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three years. Whilst many of the priorities remain the same as in previous years there is a broadening focus on the wider safeguarding agenda. Domestic abuse remains a key area of focus within this arena, but alongside issues such as child sexual exploitation and human trafficking. The council also remains committed to a cooperative approach of working with communities across the town and this remains an underlying theme across all objectives.

- 4.2.2 Alongside the strategy, a detailed action plan is produced each year, which shows how SoSafe will achieve its aims and objectives. It contains specific targets and is monitored, updated and reviewed regularly.
- 4.2.3 As the Co-operative Neighbourhood Management Programme progresses, there will be further opportunities to develop localised approaches to support delivery of the Community Safety Strategy at a neighbourhood level. For example it may be possible to deliver more targeted intervention in neighbourhood hot-spots, and/or to work with colleagues to design-out crime in planned neighbourhood improvement works. There will also be further opportunities to develop interventions with local neighbourhood-based community and voluntary organisations.
- 4.2.4 The Community Safety Strategy has been developed with due regard to the following:
- Public Consultation
 - National Developments and Changes to Legislation
 - Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) plan *Everybody's Business*
 - Annual Strategic Assessment for Stevenage 2016/17
 - County Community Safety Unit (CCSU) domestic abuse strategy and the Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse Strategy
 - CCSU drugs and alcohol strategy
 - National Probation Service Reducing Offending Strategy
 - Historical and Current Crime Data.
 - Residents Survey.
- 4.3 **Strategic fit and context**
- 4.3.1 The profile of the SoSafe partnership is of growing importance and it is increasingly being called upon to share best practice and co-operative ways of working. The responsibility to make Stevenage a safe place to live, work and visit is paramount to all SoSafe partners.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

- 5.1.1 The council will utilise existing resources to help tackle some of these issues, including its communications functions, its continued investment in CCTV and the work of its own community safety team. There is also recognition that a

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number of existing activities that are having a positive impact are reliant on time-limited funding, such as New Homes Bonus and other external funding resources. Decisions on the future of some of these services will need to be considered in relation to this. These funding challenges are also being considered through the Communities and Neighbourhoods Business Unit Review. The community safety strategy remains a partnership strategy for the town and the council will continue to work with other commissioners and funders such as Herts County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner, Government Departments and other funders to help lever in investment where possible.

- 5.1.2 There may be some match-funding or pump priming requirements related to progressing certain initiatives and projects. The SoSafe partnership Action Plan is developed annually as part of the final strategy and will highlight where resources will be required to support delivery of specific projects.

5.2 Legal Implications

- 5.2.1 Production of the strategy is a legal requirement of the community safety partnership. The Crime and Disorder Act 1988 (as amended by the Police and Justice Act 1996) requires the responsible authorities for an area to formulate and implement a strategy for the reduction of crime and disorder (including anti-social behaviour adversely affecting the local environment); combatting the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances and for the education of re-offending in the area.

5.3 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.3.1 The council is committed to providing high quality services that are relevant to the needs and responsive to the views of all sections of the local community, irrespective of their race, gender, disability, culture, religion, age, sexual orientation or marital status. The General Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) requires the council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in the exercise of its functions.
- 5.3.2 There is recognition that crime and ASB can disproportionately impact upon those with protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act. The 2017 Hate Crime Conference hosted by the council highlighted the potential for this to happen at a local level. SoSafe will strive to involve the community in the design and delivery of the interventions which tackle crime and drive down disorder and anti-social behaviour. Relationships will continue to be built with groups around the town, including those from different faiths, BME groups and the traveller community, LGBT communities, women, girls and older people. It will be essential to ensure interventions meet specific needs for different parts of the community and are delivered in a meaningful and empowering way.

5.4 Risk Implications

- 5.4.1 The strategic commitment of key stakeholders in the development of the strategy has helped to mitigate key risks such as focussing on the wrong priorities or those over which the partners have little impact or influence. Risks will continue to be considered as interventions develop through the ongoing work of RAG.

5.5 Policy Implications

- 5.5.1 The strategy links into other key SBC policies including the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and the health and wellbeing strategy.

5.6 Staffing and Accommodation Implications

- 5.6.1 Posts within the Community Safety Team will be realigned to fit the strategic aspirations within the strategy through the Communities and Neighbourhoods Business Unit Review.

5.7 Human Rights Implications

- 5.7.1 The development of the strategy has taken into account human rights including a person's right to defend their rights in the courts and compels public organisations (including local authorities and the police) to treat everyone equally, with fairness, dignity and respect.

5.8 Service Delivery Implications

- 5.8.1 The strategy will influence and shape the work of the SoSafe Partnership and its delivery strands are clearly aligned back to the outcomes that are sought. This will also apply to the function of the Responsible Authorities Group that will oversee delivery of the strategy reporting to Stevenage Together.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

BD1 - Community Safety Strategy 2015/18

<http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/content/committees/117036/117040/117104/Council-25-Feb-2015-Item13-AppA.pdf>

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Draft Community Stevenage Strategy 2018/21

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Community Safety Strategy 2018/21

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Working Together to Make Stevenage Safer

Community Safety Strategy
2018-21



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Monitoring and measuring performance

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- Working Co-operatively with partners – **The Tower Blocks Action Plan**

Objective two – Reduce Crime and Disorder including Criminal Damage

- Being a volunteer - **What it means to be a Volunteer**

Objective three – Protect and Safeguard Vulnerable People

- Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse – **“The Safe Space”**

Objective four – Tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) co-operatively with Partners

- Intensive Family Support – **Sustaining Tenancies**

Objective five – Drugs and alcohol

- No More Service – **Sustaining Change**

Appendix One – (SADA) Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse Strategy 2017-2020

Appendix Two – Anti social Behaviour Promise

Appendix Three – No More Service Report

Foreword

I am pleased to present SoSafe's Community Safety Strategy for 2018/20. It outlines some of our successes, our priorities over the next three years and the actions we will take to address them.

Stevenage is a co-operative council that prides itself on collaborative working with partners and the community. SoSafe will continue to address the issues the residents, visitors and those that work in our town see as a priority, by involving you in the decision making and by consulting with you.

In future years, as in the past three years, our priorities are what the people of the town have told us they want to see us focusing on, including tackling crime such as domestic abuse and crime associated with drugs and alcohol.

The town is rapidly changing and is a growing, exciting, vibrant place with planned regeneration that is attractive to new businesses and new homes. Our population is growing and the town has a broad cross-section of people who have chosen Stevenage to live and work in. Stevenage continues to be a safe place to live and work, with lower the lowest dwelling burglaries in the County. There will naturally be peaks in crime and anti-social behaviour and we are aware that people in certain parts of the town feel troubled by youth nuisance and are concerned about going out after dark. SoSafe will work to address these issues and involve the communities in order to solve these problems.

There continues to be unprecedented pressures on public sector funding. This strategy will ensure that as a co-operative council we are utilising all available resources in the most effective manner to achieve value for money. SoSafe is committed to building on progress made in recent years, and will continue to drive down crime and disorder in Stevenage. Our partnership is unique, and encourages other partners to be part of SoSafe which is passionate about its people, the town, and creating safe environments for our communities.

Our aim for this strategy is to build safer, stronger and more confident communities. We will do this by decreasing crime and improving community safety. Over the following pages, we have captured actions that we have already completed, are doing, and will do in order to achieve this. I hope that by reading this strategy, you will see how SoSafe is working towards this aim for the benefit of all who live, shop and work in the town.

Scott Crudgington, Chair of SoSafe

Councillor Jackie Hollywell, Executive Member for Safer Communities

Introduction to SoSafe

SoSafe (Stevenage Community Safety Partnership (CSP)) is a strategic partnership, working to reduce crime and offending in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. It is made up of the following organisations:

- Stevenage Borough Council (SBC)
- Hertfordshire Constabulary
- BeNCH Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) (formerly Hertfordshire Probation)
- East and North Herts Clinical Commissioning Group (E&NH CCG)
- Hertfordshire County Council (HCC)
- Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS).

SoSafe is made up of key agencies that each bring their own unique specialism to the partnership. By working collaboratively with partners and our local communities, we have been able to make significant changes to the lives of those people who need support, guidance and advice, whilst tackling crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour.

This strategy provides a framework for the many activities and initiatives that the partnership deliver to improve community safety and community confidence in the town. Following consultation with members of the public and partners, this strategy identifies the priorities that SoSafe will focus on over the next three years.

Alongside the strategy, a detailed action plan is produced each year, which shows how SoSafe will achieve its aim and objectives. It contains specific targets and is monitored, updated and reviewed regularly.

The Community Safety Strategy has been developed with due regard to the following:

- Public Consultation
- National Developments and Changes to Legislation
- Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) plan *Everybody's Business*
- Annual Strategic Assessment for Stevenage 201/17
- County Community Safety Unit (CCSU) domestic abuse strategy and the Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse Strategy
- CCSU drugs and alcohol strategy
- National Probation Service Reducing Offending Strategy
- Historical and Current Crime Data.
- Residents Survey.



SoSafe could not achieve its objectives without help from the public. It is the duty of *all* citizens to play their part in making their communities safer. People can contribute by reporting crime and disorder, supporting criminal justice agencies, and by taking responsibility for their personal safety and the safety of others.

For ideas on other ways to get involved, please visit our website: <http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/about-stevenage/so-safe/>



Stevenage Community Safety Partnership



Findings from Stevenage Borough Council 2017 Residents Survey

Almost 9 in 10 (88%) residents feel safe when outside in their local area during the day, and more than half of residents (52%) say that they feel very or fairly safe when outside in their local area after dark. Both of these figures, while still below the national average, are 5 percentage points higher than in 2015 – a statistically significant increase.

Residents who said that they felt very or fairly unsafe outside in their local area were presented with a list of potential issues and asked to select the issue that concerns them the most. Almost 9 in 10 (87%) residents selected 'Youths causing crime/disruption'.

Residents were then asked to rank their top three most important priorities from the previous list from 1 to 3, with 1 being the most important, 2 the second most important and 3 the third most important. A rank analysis of responses show that the top three priorities of Stevenage residents are:

1. A regenerated Town Centre and leisure park
2. A range of housing including affordable housing to buy or rent, and
3. Reducing current levels of crime and anti-social behaviour.

In 2015, the top three priorities of residents were very similar, although ordered differently:

1. Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour
2. A regenerated town centre, and
3. A range of housing including affordable housing to buy or rent.

These findings together with talking to residents and visitors to the town at our various events have helped us to determine what our SoSafe Aims and objectives are for the next three years.

Differences between 2015/17 and 2018/20 strategies

In comparison to the community safety strategy of 2015/18, the SoSafe aims have changed to improve our co-operative working with partner agencies and the community. As a partnership we want to empower the community to get involved and learn more about the actual levels of anti-social behaviour and crime in Stevenage, and give them the chance to get involved and be a part of the SoSafe partnership. The aim for the 2018/20 strategy is to change people's perception of youth crime and inform the community including schools and businesses what the facts are regarding crime and disorder, in comparison the 2015/18 strategy stated we wanted to help people feel safe at home, and while this is true we aim to involve members of the community and help them to feel safer in the town, especially after dark.

The 2018/20 strategy aims to protect and safeguard vulnerable people, including support for those who have experienced domestic abuse, but also our work to protect children and older vulnerable people. This has changed from the 2015/18 Strategy where the aim was to provide a coordinated response to domestic abuse. Through this work we have learnt that survivors of domestic abuse are key to the shaping the service, we need to ensure we continue to give them a voice. The multiple needs working group takes a coordinated approach to safeguarding clients, including those that would normally not be supported and the award winning Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse strives to deliver and share best practices.

Unlike the 2015/18 strategy, we aim to tackle anti-social behaviour co-operatively with partners, rather than the community alone. This will give us the ability to communicate with partners, problem solve with the community, share important information, and act early to prevent crime and disorder. The aim is to have positive activities to divert attention away from hotspot areas. By using our community safety ambassadors we will be able to look at problematic areas and find new ideas that will help reduce levels of youth crime. Since August 2016 we have been using the Public Space Protection Order to allow us to educate those causing anti -social behaviour and nuisance and where appropriate take proportionate enforcement action.

The aim for the next two years is to continue to offer support to break the cycle of substance misuse and offending. The No More Service offers 1 to 1 support to motivate clients to break the cycle themselves; resulting in a reduction of harm that substance misuse has on both the individual and the community. This is similar to the 2015/18 strategy however the aim is to work with clients to help them realise the impact that substance misuse and offending has on them as well as the community. By working co-operatively with clients, partners and the community we can make a real impact to the lives of those who have been affected by alcohol, drugs or offending.

SoSafe Aims

We have established two overarching aims for the 2015/18 strategy:

- **Building Resilient Communities**
- **Working co-operatively with communities to help reduce fear of crime and Anti-Social Behaviour**

SoSafe Objectives

Within SoSafe's overarching aims, we have established five key objectives:

1. Helping to make People feel Safe
2. Reduce crime and Disorder including Criminal Damage
3. Protect and Safeguard Vulnerable People
4. Tackle antisocial behaviour (ASB) Co-operatively with partners
5. Break the cycle of substance misuse and offending.



Monitoring and measuring our performance

The SoSafe Action plan and the commitment of the partners including volunteers is the key to delivering this strategy. As a co-operative council we are aware that we can achieve more by working together to deliver all of the activities that ensures SoSafe achieves its objectives and delivers the needs of the town.

The SoSafe partnership has to rely on existing resources and making additional funding applications.

Below is a list of Successful External Funding Bids:

Date Received	Monetary Value and who is delivering the project	How the Funding is used
February 2017	£107,000 (Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse)	A domestic Abuse Safe Space in Stevenage
April 2017	£3,000 (Community Safety & SoSafe partners)	Community Reassurance
October 2017	£3,000 (Community Safety)	Community Safety Ambassadors Program
January 2018	£10,000 (Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse)	Traveller Engagement Project
January 2018	£1,000 (No More Service)	The No More Service Allotment
March 2018	£9,000 (Community Safety Fly Tipping Task Force)	To tackle fly tipping in the town

How we will measure performance

Performance indicators are agreed annually and reflect the agreed priorities and outcomes whilst taking into account the views of our customers from their engagement with us. We will set SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely), challenging targets and measure these four times a year to check that we are making progress, and report on the progress at out four weekly JAG (Joint Action Group) meetings with partners.

How we will monitor performance

To understand crime and associated disorder the partnership need to work together to address the underlying problems, effective crime reduction relies on the partnership working with our communities and listen to what and where our problems are. This helps us to direct partnership resources efficiently and effectively, to deliver services in the right place at the right time.

Crime trends are monitored regularly, and performance against our targets is reported to the Responsible Authorities Group (RAG). This group includes SoSafe's most senior managers and the elected councillor with responsibility for community safety. Additionally, elected councillors sit on a scrutiny committee which challenges SoSafe's performance. Hertfordshire's PCC is the public's elected representative for policing matters. As such, the PCC maintains strong links with the county's CSPs.

Objective One – Helping to make People feel Safe

What will we do?

A key focus in this strategy is engagement with Communities and groups who sometimes don't have the opportunity to get involved. Engagement will take place across the town at events and in other ways, including our different customer forums, residents meetings, through our partner agencies, surveys, social media, street meets and surgeries.

Crime and anti-social behaviour (which includes youth nuisance) remains one of the most widely perceived problems across Stevenage, although youth nuisance only made up 20% of the reported crime/ASB in the town for period July – September 2017, which incorporates the summer months, the perception is that the problem is a lot higher. With the help of our partner agencies, we want to keep people informed about the actual statistics relating to crime and ASB and address their perceptions. In a recent residents survey, members of the public were asked to rank their top three priorities for the town, one being the most important to three being the third most important. The public placed reducing current levels of crime and anti-social behaviour as the third most important. This being a massive change from the 2015 survey where tackling crime and anti-social behaviour was the most important priority.

We will target those areas that have told us that they have concerns for their safety we will engage with the community and the local businesses to change the perceptions regarding feeling secure when they are out and about in Stevenage. High visibility policing and co-operative working in neighbourhood centres, will continue and key operations such as Operation Night Owl, PSPO events and Street Meets will be promoting feeling safe at night.

To help with this, SoSafe is piloting a new programme for enthusiastic individuals to become Community Safety Ambassadors for Stevenage. The programme will provide a new and unique opportunity for young people to act as 'ambassadors' by delivering key community safety messages in Stevenage, whilst gaining valuable training and experience with a variety of agencies who work together to keep Stevenage safe. As an ambassador, successful applicants will be given the opportunity to:

- Take part in community safety, crime prevention and awareness projects
- Gain experience and training on a wide range of community safety issues
- Gain valuable work experience with a variety of public sector agencies
- Develop knowledge of how local services work together to keep the public safe
- Develop professional networks and enhance CV and employability skills

We will monitor our performance using these measures:

- perception surveys about the perception of crime and ASB
- feedback from Silver Street Meets, Operation Night Owl and other community engagement events
- Reaching different communities and groups of people for their views
- Raise awareness of success through our partnership.



What have we been doing?

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<p>Community Engagement Events</p> <p>The partnership holds a number of events in and around the town including stalls in the town centre. We have held many engagement events to get people's views including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Safety Events • Neighbourhood Watch • Operational Night Owl 	<p>Street meets and surveys</p> <p>As a partnership we organise regular multi-agency street meets in the community. Surveys with members of the community take place on a regular basis. Neighbourhood surveys help the partnership to understand the priorities of our customers;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silver Street Meets • Satisfaction Surveys • Neighbourhood Surveys • Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) 	<p>Customer Forums</p> <p>The partnership is actively encourages local residents to get involved to help shape our services;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) D A Forum • Anti-Social Behaviour(ASB) Forum • Residents Meetings • Resident Inspectors/volunteers
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From January 2017 to December 2017, we have carried out surveys with 56 complainants of anti-social behaviour regarding the service they received.

We have **supported 122 victims/survivors** of domestic abuse through Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse (SADA). Since June 2016

The No More Drugs, Alcohol & Offender Service was nominated for a national award and attended an awards ceremony on 8th November 2017.

Working Co-operatively – The Tower Block Action Plan

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Following complaints of drug use at The Tower Blocks during the summer months a problem solving partnership Action Plan was produced.

By working co-operatively with internal, external partners and the residents we were able to identify the property that was causing most of the issues. A number of regular surgeries were held, and residents were able to report their concerns to the Tenancy Advisor, local Police Officer, ASB Officer or the Wardens.

Since the introduction of the Action Plan and the co-operatively working reports of drug use in the area has ceased, and the property closed under a Closure Order.

Surgeries and street meets are continuing in the area and are principally around increasing reassurance and gathering any further intelligence from the residents of the Tower Blocks.

During the surgeries and street meets officers visit and leave questionnaires at addresses with no response.

Objective two – Reduce crime and disorder including criminal damage

What will we do?

We will use our partnership powers to deter and reduce all types of crime. We aim to disrupt and shut-down criminal individuals and groups who negatively impact on our communities, including those involved with drug dealing, child sexual exploitation (CSE) and serious organised crime (SOC). We will take a multi-agency approach to these crimes, appropriate to the level of threat.

We will manage persistent offenders, ensuring that appropriate interventions are provided to them and help them to access local services in order to prevent reoffending. We will deter potential offenders from entering the criminal justice system and support restorative justice (RJ), to ensure that criminals take responsibility for the harm caused to victims and the community.

We will monitor crime data for increases and emerging patterns. This will allow us to target specific locations and individuals, and coordinate appropriate preventative or enforcement action.

We will build relationships with health related agencies such as Lister Hospital, Mental Health services and local GPs, in order to help them identify the correlations between crime and health and allow all agencies to undertake their statutory duties effectively.

We will monitor our performance using these measures:

- **Rate of all crime**
- **Crime rates for burglary dwelling**
- **Crime rates for robbery**
- **Violent crime rate including Domestic Abuse**
- **Customer satisfaction surveys**
- **Outcomes for offenders subject to the integrated offender management (IOM) programme and SBC's No More Service.**

What have we been doing?

Information Sharing	Co-operative Working	Volunteering and work experience
We have devised partnership Action Plans to help tackle hot spots areas of anti-social behaviour. The Action Plan provides an excellent way of building up intelligence, and preventing situations from becoming more serious. We have used the professionals meeting and the Action Plans to identify vulnerable people quickly, and use our partnership networks to work co-operatively with partner agencies and the community	We have been actively encouraging cross - boundary working with other housing providers and local authorities. We have carried out training with North Herts, East Herts and Stevenage Football Foundation. PREVENT (Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015) training has been carried out internally and offered to partners agencies. A public meeting was held at SBC by Trading Standards on Scams and Fraud	Community Safety has a number of various roles which have been undertaken by volunteers including, being a resident inspector, a member of the ASB Forum or the SADA Domestic Abuse Forum

Information sharing has been instrumental to tackling crime, disorder and ASB in our town.

We have created a SoSafe partnership child sexual exploitation/modern slavery action plan in January 2018 following a Police priority setting meeting on December 4th 2017.

We are empowering volunteers to be part of the SoSafe partnership and represent us at events.

Being a Volunteer – What it means to be a volunteer

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Being a volunteer and a member of the ASB Forum has meant that I get more of an insight into what is happening in my town. I have been part of the forum for a number of years after being involved in an ASB case. As a group we review the ASB in the town and work with the team to find solutions to stop nuisance. It is important that the residents have a say in what happens and that we feel empowered to be involved in developing the service and reviewing its policies and procedures. As a member we have attended various events and even visited the local courts to hear how cases are heard. This has given the group even more knowledge on how cases are processed and the other agencies that are involved. Members of the forum are from many different backgrounds and ages, this means we can look at things from different people's perspectives.

Objective three – Protect and safeguard vulnerable people

What will we do?

We will continue to raise awareness, informing the public about how and where they can report domestic abuse; empowering victims to come forward and seek advice from our dedicated Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) Team and the volunteers from the SADA Forum.

The SADA Working Group has been encouraging organisations to have a consistent approach to domestic abuse through training and attendance at the various SADA led groups. SADA has a multi-agency approach to tackling domestic abuse, focusing on the importance of having the appropriate measures in place to stop escalation by working with medium, standard or low-level cases.

Work has also been focused around changing the behaviours of perpetrators, either by working with partners including the Change Project which provides appropriate rehabilitative support. The No More Service which offers 1-1 support and focuses on offenders that may also have drug and alcohol problems, working closely with Families First and the For Baby's Sake team.

As an organisation, safeguarding is an essential part of our day- to-day role. We refer people to the Single Point of Access for support when they are in crisis including self-harm and suicide, request Welfare checks from the Police when we are concerned for their safety as well as hold emergency professionals meetings to create a multi-agency action plan. The Community Safety team have 5 Designated Safeguarding Officers, 1 Strategic Safeguarding Officer and 1 Family Intervention Worker. Co-operative working in this area has helped us to use the whole family approach to help sustain tenancies, get people back into training or work, improve school attendance and manage behaviour at home.

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The Multiple Needs Working Group allows partner agencies to refer vulnerable clients, or cases with safeguarding concerns to a panel of partner agencies from areas such as Mental Health, Families First, the Police, CAB, Probation, Housing, Adult Care Services, Children Services and Supporting Herts. The panel share information and look for ways to support the referee.

We will monitor our performance using these measures:

- Rates of domestic abuse
- Outcomes for clients referred to Herts Change perpetrator programme and the No more Service
- Outcomes for clients referred to the SADA Domestic Abuse Panel, referred to the service for support, crisis intervention and referrals to the Safe Space
- Monitoring outcomes of any domestic homicide reviews (DHR), especially in relation to the CAADA (Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse) DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking & Honour Based Violence) risk assessment and its use by partners.

What have we been doing?

Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse (SADA)

Following the introduction of the service in 2012, SADA has completed some ground breaking work including the introduction of a domestic abuse forum managed, by survivors of domestic abuse in Stevenage and a SADA Panel meeting which discusses medium, standard and low-risk cases of domestic abuse with partner agencies. The SADA strategy, which was collated by the partners of SADA working group, is supported by a local and county-wide Action Plan (appendix Two).

For Baby's Sake

For Baby's Sake is a programme for expectant parents, whether they are together as a couple or not, who want to bring an end to domestic abuse and create the best possible start in life for their baby.

They also help both mums and dads to create a positive future for their baby and any other children in the family.

Herts Change

We have secured the Change Project for Stevenage for a further twelve months and have clients from the No More Service that are due to commence training to help deliver the programme. Referrals from agencies or a self – referral can be made to the programme which helps to break the cycle of offending, helping them to develop a better understanding of the detrimental long-term impact that their actions have on their families.

The SADA DA panel discussed 76 medium/low cases since April 2017.

Rebecca Butterworth from Baby's sake received one of the No More community awards for the Outstanding Contribution to the Community Award in December 2017.

The Herts change project runs weekly in Stevenage and funding has been applied to continue until March 2019.

Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse – “The Safe Space”

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Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse set up the fully equipped flat where victims can rest and seek advice and help while they work out how to go forward with their lives.

One of the first women to use the flat told the Comet her story:

She said: “I was referred through work because I had concerns about a family member with mental health problems.

“The police were involved and it got to the point where it felt unsafe in the property.

“Having that bit of time out gave me a chance to get out of the situation with my daughter and get my own thoughts together without fear of violence.

“SADA talked to me about the problems I had and showed me to the flat.

“It gives you that place to go when there is nowhere else.

“You can get a decent night’s sleep and feel safe.

“My situation has now improved with the support of other services

“SADA are still there if I need them. It’s a lot better knowing there is someone there to talk to if something happens.

“The staff were very helpful and the flat was absolutely brilliant, a really lovely place where you can have a break from things.”

Objective Four - Tackle Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Co-operatively with partners

What will we do?

We will communicate with our partners and share information; we will act early and prevent problems from escalating, taking the proportionate enforcement action where problems persist. We will target hotspot areas and repeat offenders of all ages, working co-operatively with partners to divert young people away from anti-social behaviour. As a partnership we will support positive activities away from hot spot areas and encourage our youth ambassadors to get involved in problem solving, encouraging new ideas for diverting young people away from causing a nuisance in the community.

As part of the Families First initiative we, support the needs of the whole family; this could include working with schools, local police, Youth Offending Team, YC in Herts, Children Services, this is necessary to address bad behaviour and supporting positive activities instead. As a partnership we support the whole families and those individuals whose behaviour affects the wider community.

We will tackle alcohol and drug fuelled ASB, making full use of our ASB tools and powers such as Community Protection Notices, Property Closure Orders and Fixed Penalty Notices. Within the Community Safety Team, there are 5 police accredited officers who have the designated power to issue notices. SBC also has 3 accredited neighbourhood wardens and an Environmental Enforcement Officer.

We will plan at the Joint Action Group with our SoSafe partners specific operations around seasonal fluctuations in ASB, especially around Halloween, Bonfire Night and the summer holidays; utilising multi agency bicycle patrols and high visibility partnership patrols.

We will use our powers to enforce against environmental crime offenders, including on the spot penalty notices, and will proactively investigate and prosecute perpetrators of fly tipping.

We are currently updating our mobile CCTV cameras which the partnership has available to help with stopping and prosecuting offenders that are causing ASB, committing crime, or fly tipping in our town.

We will monitor our performance using these measures:

- **rates of ASB incidents**
- **rates of criminal damage**
- **rates of deliberate fire**
- **customer satisfaction surveys and consultation**



What have we been doing?

PSPO Public Spaces Prevention Order

Stevenage's PSPO came into force on the 15 August 2016. The PSPO replaced Existing Designated Public Place Orders (DPPOs) in Bedwell/Town Centre and The Hyde (Shephall), with the addition of zoned areas around The Oval (Pin Green) and the Old Town High Street. These areas were identified by partners from SoSafe as problematic areas for anti-social behaviour in Stevenage.

Family Intervention (Families First)

Within the team is a FIP worker who is part-funded by SBC and Families First. The worker supports families, some that may be at risk of losing their homes because of ASB, rent arrears, or other circumstances. The Key worker, coordinate a unique team of individuals to work closely with all members of the family. The positive impact on the community, due to this intervention, can be significant. Family members feel empowered and some have gained training, sustained their tenancies and found work.

The Youth Ambassadors Project

The youth ambassadors were interviewed and recruited from North Herts College and John Henry Newman School, they will help to promote information and offer advice on how to report crime and increase feelings of safety for residents and visitors to Stevenage. Following their training they are able to give tailored information for people with complex needs.

Partnership events take place every quarter in the designated PSPO areas. We have held events every quarter since 15th August 2016.

The Family Intervention worker is co-funded by Families First and Hertfordshire County Council. The pilot project started in 2009 and is now co-funded until 2020.

The ambassadors are running their first event on 21st February 2018.

Intensive Family Support – Sustaining tenancies

This tenant was originally known to the ASB team due to nuisance in the area where she resided. The nuisance caused a problem in the street, with parties in the garden, friends shouting, loud music, dog nuisance and visits from the police concerning her partner at the time. The residents in the street made visits to the council offices and the local police to lodge complaints on a daily basis. Initially we worked with the police and the residents to gather evidence for the case and the tenant was served with an Acceptable Behaviour Agreement and a Notice of Seeking Possession. The tenant attended meetings on a weekly basis with the ASB Team and family Intervention worker; we put in strategies to help her manage her tenancy and helped her to put in boundaries for her son and stopping her ex-partner and friends from causing a nuisance. The tenant has worked hard to implement the strict guidelines and began to meet her goals; the nuisance complaints slowed down and eventually stopped.

The tenant has made positive changes to turn her life around and has been attending a 6 week parenting programme; she has attended all of her appointments with her support worker from the family intervention and has taken responsibility for her own actions, by working with all the agencies including the police and the school.

Objective Five – Break the cycle of substance misuse and offending.

We will continue to support people to break the cycle by putting practical solutions in place to tackle issues that cause or exacerbate substance misuse or offending. By the No More Service (NMS) helping clients to do this, we will reduce the impact of drugs, alcohol and crime have on the individual and the community. We work alongside enforcement agencies to take a collaborative approach to stop reoffending, through deterrents and reintegration to the community, including attending Prolific and Priority Offender meetings and MAPPA meetings (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements). The ethos of the No More Service is by improving the person's self-worth and helping them to earn something positive such as housing or a role in the community, this will enable and motivate them to break the cycle of crime or substance use.

Page 300 We will publicise the work and successes of the Service to other agencies, in order to increase knowledge of the service and number of referrals. We produce an annual report on the service, demonstrating the humanistic impact of the service to the community and case studies from clients to show the improvement to their own lives. We also calculate the predicted saving to services including the Council, Police, Probation and HFRS. We are going to be calculating the predicted saving to the NHS, Children's services, prison and the courts. We continue to apply for funding to be able to continue to provide the service, as we demonstrate the cost effectiveness of assisting people to make sustainable changes to their lifestyle, rather than short term solutions to manage their risk.

We will continue to seek innovative approaches to reduce the harm of drugs and alcohol on the community. This includes looking into the application of the initiatives to reduce the availability of cheap, high strength alcohol. We will continue to support clients to overcome the barriers created by crime and substance use, including pathways out of homelessness,

We will monitor our performance using these measures:

- Assessing the reduction in risk to the individual and the community
- Calculating the predicated cost saving made to the public by engaging clients
- Number of referrals and agencies providing these.

What have we been doing?

Engaging people

We continue to adapt our practices to meet and engage hard to reach clients, that may have 'fallen through the net' or been deemed as 'entrenched and unchanging'. We meet with people whilst in prison, so they can set their goals for what they want to do when they are released and understand how they can achieve these. We also offer to attend joint appointments with other professionals they are already working with. We also offer same day appointments to people, so they can get access to help as soon as possible, once they have decided they want to make a change to their life.

Celebrate client success

NMS hosted the community awards ceremony in December 2017 which celebrated the success and achievements of our clients. This included some of our clients who have gone onto start volunteering, abstained/reduced their drug and alcohol use and a prolific burglar who hasn't been arrested for almost two years.

Develop innovative approaches

By listening to our client's needs, we aim to develop new ways of engaging them to overcome barriers.

The stick with us project encourage clients to express their goals and life experiences by making collages within a group setting.

475% increase in No More referrals from September 2012 – August 2013 to April 2016 – March 2017

£129,863.11 is the predicted saving to SBC, Police and HFRS for the clients referred for intensive support between April 2016-March 2017.

96% of clients sustained housing or gained housing after being of no fixed abode.

88% of clients have no ASB case following closure from NMS.

In May 2014, I was still on a methadone programme with CRi, using as much heroin as I could get hold of on top of this and I had to move out of my partner's Council flat. At this point I was referred to the No More Project.

I had previously thought about following my partner when she passed away, especially when I was faced with being made homeless again (having given up my room to move in to become my partner's carer). However, my No More support worker helped me by looking at all my options to prevent this from happening and I was able to move into my own council flat.

My support worker never lost their temper, was pig stubborn, understood my grieving and was always there when I needed them. They spent time to explain things, in terms I could understand, like explaining letters I got sent from the Council and other agencies. When they said they were going to do something, they would make the time to actually do it. They came back to help me even when I got annoyed. Whilst working on the No More Project it was the first time I had seen two agencies speak to each other, it had previously taken me ages to get the GP to speak to Cri but it only took my support worker ten minutes.

I have not used heroin since October 2014, since working with the Project. I finished my methadone programme in November 2015 and I have no desire to use drugs.

I still get texts from dealers but I just ignore them. I have completed grief counselling and I am taking my anti-depressants. Stopping heroin and methadone was easier to cope with than dealing with the pains of everyday life that came back once I stopped using drugs. My flat has no rent arrears and has had no reports of anti-social behaviour since I moved in. I have plans for the future and want to get a motorbike so I can visit my boys, as I have a good relationship with them now.

Appendix

- No More review report
- Domestic abuse strategy
- Our Achievements

List of acronyms

ASB	Anti-social Behaviour
A&E	Accident & Emergency
BeNCH CRC	Bedfordshire, Norfolk, Cambridge and Hertfordshire Community Rehabilitation Company (formerly Hertfordshire Probation)
BME	Black and minority ethnic
YC in Herts	Youth provision in Stevenage
CAADA DASH	Coordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse: domestic abuse, stalking and honour based violence (risk assessment tool)
CCSU	County Community Safety Unit
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
Class A drugs	Heroin, methadone, cocaine, crack, ecstasy, LSD and amphetamines
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CSP	Community Safety Partnership
DA	Domestic Abuse
SADA	Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse
DHR	Domestic Homicide Review
E&NH CCG	East & North Herts Clinical Commissioning Group
FIP	Family Intervention Project
HBV	Honour Based Violence
HCC	Herts County Council
Herts Change	Domestic abuse perpetrator rehabilitation programme
HFRS	Herts Fire and Rescue Service
IOM	Integrated Offender Management
JAG	Joint Action Group
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
LIFE	Local Intervention Fire Education

LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
NMS	No More Service
NPS	New Psychoactive Substances
NTE	Night Time Economy
OPCC	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
OWL	Online Watch Liaison
PCC	Police and Crime Commissioner
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
RAG	Responsible Authorities Group
RJ	Restorative Justice
SADA	Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse
SARA	Scanning, analysis, response and assessment
SBC	Stevenage Borough Council
SMART	Specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, timely
SNT	Safer Neighbourhood Team
SOC	Serious Organised Crime
SoSafe	Stevenage community safety partnership
SoStevenage	Stevenage local strategic partnership

Meeting: EXECUTIVE

Portfolio Area: Housing Health & Older people

Date: 13 MARCH 2018



HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY REVIEW 2018

KEY DECISION

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To advise Members of the consultation outcomes and subsequent recommendations of the Allocations Policy review.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the following changes to the Housing Allocations Policy be approved* –
- 2.1.1 That those at risk of Homelessness¹, who present themselves to SBC, who subsequently self-source alternative accommodation outside of the Borough retain their local connection for up to 2 years.
- 2.1.2 That the 5 year local connection rule is amended to 5 years out of the last 7 years.
- 2.1.3 That those who are under-occupying are given a priority banding allowing them to bid for properties themselves via the Choice Based Letting system process. For households under-occupying by 2 bedrooms a band B to be applied and for those under-occupying by 1 bed for a Band C to be applied.

*NOTE: Appendix 3 outlines the changes to the current policy that are proposed. Recommended changes are indicated in Section 13.2 (Local connection), Section 24 (The banding system, see band B, C, E & F) and Section 25 (Local lettings policy) and Section 35 (Re-housing guarantee scheme).

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The current Allocations Policy was implemented in January 2015 and subsequently reviewed in July 2015 and January 2016.
- 3.2 The Community Select Committee (CSC) have been undertaking a review of the current Allocations Policy during 2017/18.
- 3.3 An Allocations review scoping group was formed consisting of the Housing Health & Older people portfolio holder, Interim Housing Advice and Homelessness Manager, Corporate Strategy Manager, Scrutiny Officer, Interim Operations Manager. It was chaired by the Empty Homes Manager who considered original recommendations put forward by CSC together with recommendations coming out of the Allocations review scoping group. A scoping document was presented to CSC for approval.
- 3.4 This report provides an update on changes recommended to the current policy following the scope agreed by the CSC and the reasoning behind these recommendations.
- 3.5 Non-key minor changes continue to be agreed through the Assistant Director's delegated authority.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

- 4.1 **Recommendation 2.1.1** - That those at risk of Homelessness ¹, who present themselves to SBC, who subsequently self-source alternative accommodation outside of the Borough retain their local connection for up to 2 years:
- 4.2 **Current policy:** SBC administer an unbroken 5 year local connection rule. Consequently as soon as a resident leaves Stevenage Borough, in theory they lose their local connection.
- 4.3 This recommendation is aimed at encouraging any household who faces the risk of homelessness to self-source private sector accommodation out of the borough to allow SBC to work on homelessness prevention ¹ over this period. The aim is that there will be less of a demand of temporary or emergency accommodation. This will assist SBC in achieving its objectives in meeting the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act to be implemented in April 2018. Stevenage is not incentivising those at risk of Homelessness to self-source alternative accommodation whilst officers work on other prevention options. The current process encourages this group to rely on Stevenage Borough Council and wait until Homelessness is no longer a risk but a reality. These clients are unfairly been penalised for moving into properties in neighbouring areas.

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- 4.4 **Recommendation 2.1.2** - That the 5 year local connection rule is amended to 5 years out of the last 7 years:
- 4.5 **Current Policy:** Stevenage Borough Council operates a 5 year local connection rule which does not allow for long-standing Stevenage residents who move out of the Borough, either for a short-term work contract or for other genuine reasons (which have subsequently failed). This proposed change allows for those who need to return to the Borough.
- 4.5.1 Under section 34 of the current Allocations Policy (Re-housing Guarantee), there is a provision to extend the Local Connection rule to allow those who have moved out of the Borough for up to 2 years. However the onus is placed on the tenant to apply for the guarantee before they move out and is restricted to Stevenage Borough Council tenants only. Therefore this rule can only apply to a current tenant who has pre-existing knowledge of the date of their return, is aware of the guarantee and has made a formal application before-hand.
- 4.5.2 The current Re-housing Guarantee does not make allowances for long-standing Stevenage residents, current applicants who are not tenants or household members of current tenants to benefit from this rule. This group is currently being penalised where a need to leave the Borough temporarily or where a need to leave the Borough fails by not allowing access to the register upon their return.
- 4.5.3 Where an appeal is made on the 5 year local connection ruling (in cases where this has been broken by a few months) it is often the case that the appeals are upheld, through the Housing Panel. See case studies in Appendix 1. However unless an appeal is made it can be the case that this group is excluded at the point of original application.
- 4.5.4 Benchmarking within Hertfordshire, highlights differing local connection criteria: North Herts 3 out of last 5 years; East Herts no local connection criteria, although an additional 50 points are awarded if they have lived in the area in the last 12 months; Dacorum 10 years at some point; St Albans 3 years; Watford 5 out of last 6 years; All the other Hertfordshire authorities have a 5 year local connection rule
- 4.6 **Recommendation 2.1.3** - That those who are under-occupying are given a priority banding allowing them to bid for properties themselves via the Choice Based Letting system process. For households under-occupying by 2 bedrooms a band B to be applied and for those under-occupying by 1 bed for a Band C to be applied:
- 4.5.1 **Current Policy:** Stevenage Borough Council does not apply a banding priority to households who are under-occupying their homes. Currently any household under-occupying (with no other priority banding) is placed in band F and are excluded from bidding. Under-occupiers are unable to 'self-serve' by bidding on properties, in order to meet their needs. The current process is undertaken through direct lets ² and manually offering properties when a need has been

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highlighted. Consequently Stevenage Borough Council are missing out on potential under-used family accommodation.

4.5.1 The recommendation of applying a banding is intended to be an enhancement to the current direct let process and not as a replacement. Where required officers will continue to work with tenants who have specific needs and where direct lets are required or are more appropriate to achieve the best use of stock.

4.5.2 At the last date of reporting (September 2017) there are 115 (band F) Stevenage Borough Council applicants seeking to downsize that are unable to bid; There are a further 70 Stevenage Borough Council applicants in other bands seeking to downsize who have received no additional priority and 270 Stevenage Borough Council tenants in overcrowded conditions on the Housing Register.

4.5.3 Of current under-occupiers registered there are in the region of 150 who are over the age of 55, which would indicate a potential client group for sheltered accommodation.

The aim of Recommendation 2.1.3 is to increase the number of under-occupiers being rehoused, releasing a valuable resource and increase the mobility of households requiring larger properties.

4.5.4 The Band B and band C priority recommendations have been based on the level of demand of those currently under-occupying and their housing need: Of those under-occupying by 2 beds or more (110) 109 require a 1 bed, as a result the vast majority of this group will be giving up a family unit for a non-family unit, whilst those under-occupying by 1 bed (75) 48 will be given up a family unit for a non-family unit. Subsequently the 2 beds plus under-occupying category, proportionally, will be giving us a greater asset and expecting less, then the other group, hence the higher priority banding recommendation. Industry standard is to apply same principle as per over-crowded, the more over-crowded the higher the priority.

	Total	Number requiring 1 bed	Number requiring family accommodation
Under-occupying by 2 beds or more	110	109	1
Under-occupying by 1 bed	75	48	27

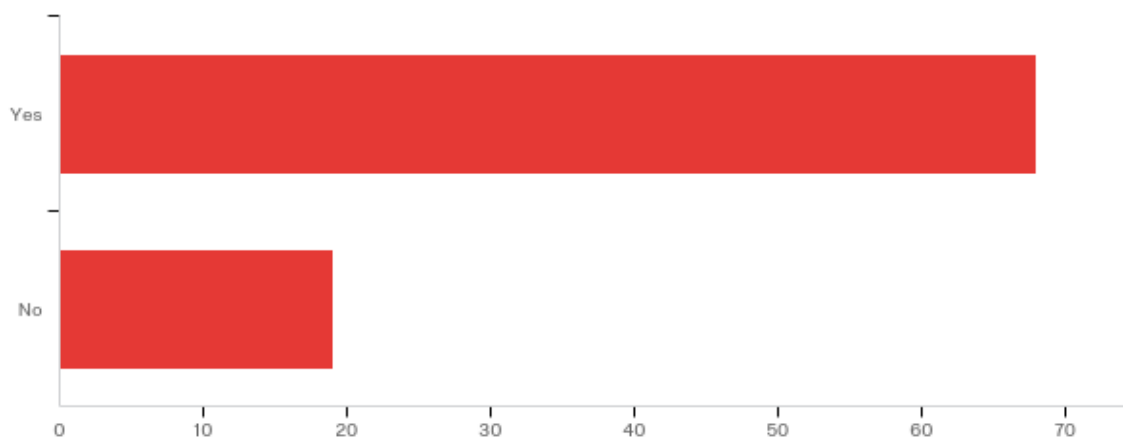
4.6 The Future Town Future Council priorities of Stevenage include 'Excellent Council Homes'. These recommendations if approved meet this objective in regards to best use of council housing stock.

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4.7 Consultation

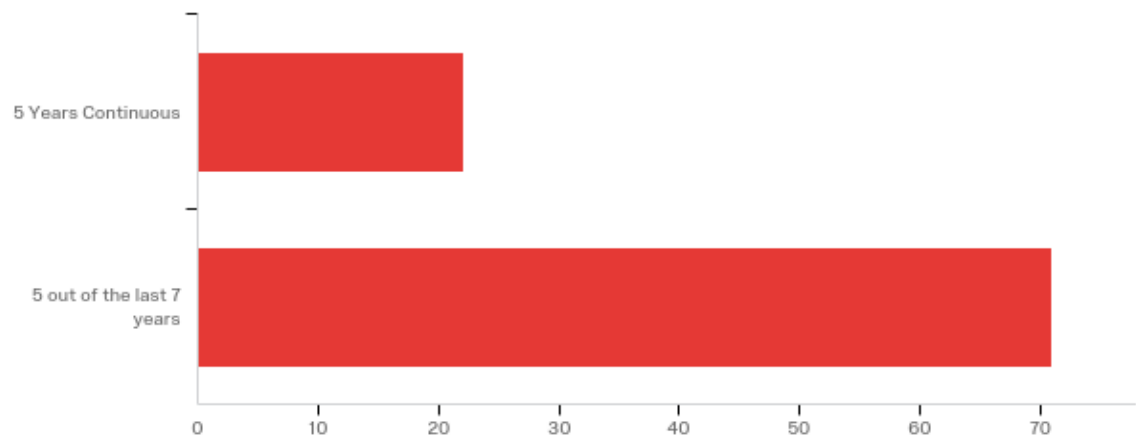
- 4.7.1 HMAB - Minutes from the Housing Management Advisory Board are recorded as 'Following discussion the HMAB agreed to the proposals.
- 4.7.2 The recommendations have also been presented and approved by the Community select Committee and the Customer Scrutiny Panel. CSC commented that all 3 recommendations were a positive step and are to be incorporated into the final recommendation document.
- 4.7.3 Consultation questions were approved by the Consultation panel and issued for consultation on the 11th December 2017. See Appendix 2
- 4.7.4 An advert was placed in the Chronicle and further advertised via the Stevenage Borough Council website. Members, CAB and partner RSL's were included in an e-mail out to advise of the consultation and provided details to the link on Stevenage Borough Council's website. In addition hard copies of the survey were available at the Customer Service Centre. The survey was also advertised internally in the Housing & Investment monthly newsletter.
- 4.7.5 Consultation closed on the 31st January 2018.
- 4.7.6 Recommendation 1 received 87 respondents, 68 agreed with the recommendation, an approval rate of 78.16%



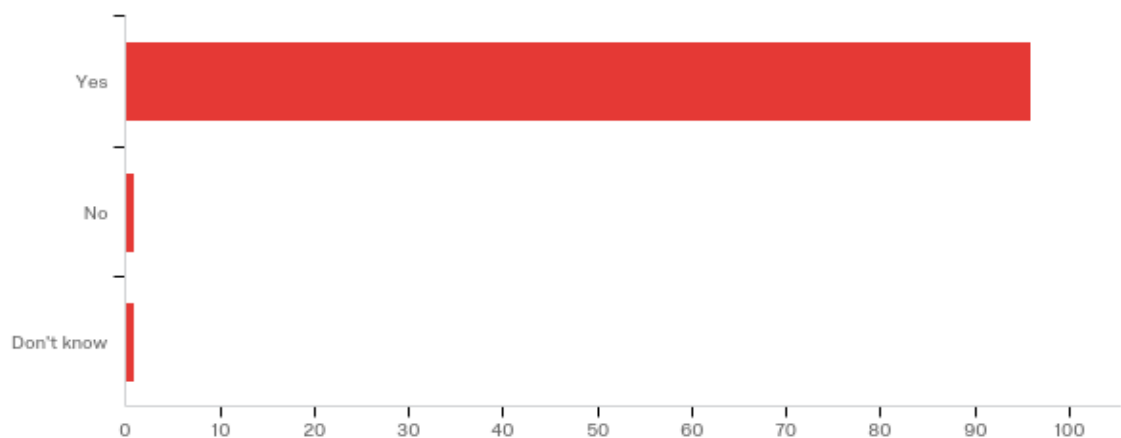
- 4.7.7 Recommendation 2 received 93 respondents, 71 agreed with the recommendation, an approval rate of 76.34%

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4.7.8 Recommendation 3 received 98 respondents, 96 agreed with the recommendation, an approval rate of 97.96%



5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

5.1.1 Currently any Council tenant who down-sizes receives an incentive of £750 per room (not withstanding and rent arrears or recharges). The budget for 2017/18 is £15,000, as at the 31 December £11,333 had been spent. It is anticipated that the budget will be fully spent by end of year.

5.1.2 As part of the 2018/19 budgeting process a growth bid of £30,000 was approved at Council in January 2018 to increase the amount of money available to incentivise tenants and reduce the amount of under-occupation.

5.2 Legal Implications

The requirements for an allocation scheme and for “reasonable preference” to be given to certain classes of people are contained in Part VI Housing Act 1996. Section 166A(3) provides that:

“As regards priorities, the scheme shall... be framed so as to secure that reasonable preference is given to—

- (a) people who are homeless (within the meaning of Part 7);
- (b) people who are owed a duty by any local housing authority under section 190(2) , 193(2) or 195(2) (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any such authority under section 192(3);
- (c) people occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions;
- (d) people who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including any grounds relating to a disability); and
- (e) people who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others).”

In certain circumstances additional preference must also be given to persons with urgent housing needs who fall within one or more of paragraphs (a) to (e) and who are current or former members of the armed forces.

Qualification criteria cannot be applied to exclude from the housing register anyone who is owed reasonable preference. However, 'reasonable' is not be equated with absolute preference and all such applicants should be banded according to their housing needs. If no other such need is identified, they may be placed in the lowest band.

From April 2018, as a result of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, s195(2) will be amended to include eligible persons threatened with homelessness who do not have priority need and, by virtue of s.166A(3)(b), such persons will be owed reasonable preference.

- 5.2.2 Section 159 (4A) and (4B) provide that the provisions of Part VI of the Act do not apply to existing tenants unless they fall within the “reasonable preference” categories in s166A(3). However, in formulating their Allocation policies, councils can take wider housing management considerations into account and the DCLG Guidance states at para 4.19 that “The Secretary of State would encourage authorities to consider the scope to take advantage of this flexibility to meet local needs and local priorities”. The Council can therefore decide in its Allocation policy to give priority to existing tenants who wish to transfer but do not fall within one of the categories for reasonable preference, provided

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that overall the Allocation Scheme gives preference to people who do fall within those categories.

- 5.2.3 The same result can be achieved by creating a 'local lettings policy' within the main scheme. Section 166A(6) of the 1996 Act provides that 'subject to subsection (3) [reasonable preference], the scheme may contain provision about the allocation of particular housing accommodation ... (b) to persons of a particular description (whether or not they are within subsection (3))'.

According to para 4.21 of the DCLG's guidance, this section "enables housing authorities to allocate particular accommodation to people of a particular description, whether or not they fall within the reasonable preference categories, provided that overall the authority is able to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of s.166A(3). This is the statutory basis for so-called 'local lettings policies' which may be used to achieve a wide variety of housing management and policy objectives."

5.3 Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.3.1 A brief Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken. See appendix 4.

- 5.3.2 No negative impacts have been identified. A positive impact has been identified in regards to increasing access to housing and equal opportunity to accessing housing for the elderly.

5.4 Risk Implications

- 5.4.1 'There are no significant risks to the Council in agreeing the recommendation(s).

- 5.4.2 It is anticipated that there will be a minor increase in Band B and Band C applications as under-occupiers re-apply. However the expectation is that this will be for a 6 to 12 month period and will stabilise as more family accommodation becomes available increasing mobility.

5.5 Information Technology Implications

- 5.5.1 Some changes to Northgate will be required in regards to adding the additional priorities. Due to end of year requirements and the implementation

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of new modules to Northgate it is likely that changes will not take place until May 2018.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 - Case studies of Local Connection appeals
- Appendix 2 - Consultation proposal form
- Appendix 3 - Allocations policy with recommended changes
- Appendix 4 - Equalities impact assessment
- Appendix 5 – Glossary of terms

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Local connection case studies

It is important to note that central admin team do not record declined Housing applications (other than through the post log). Consequently case studies of the impact of the 5 year local connection rule are highlighted through the appeal process; therefore the impact is likely to be greater, as many applicants may not appeal:

Case study 1

A long standing local connection, renting privately, left the family home removing his child due to safety concerns, moved into his father's home temporarily as an emergency solution, in Welwyn, application refused as address was not in Stevenage.

Case study 2

Young single female, born and lived in Stevenage all her life. Moved into a flat share with her friend, this failed after 3 months, so she returned to her family home in Stevenage. Application refused due to this 3 month break.

Case study 3

Older couple with 40 years local connection, following failed home-ownership, moved in with son in Great Ashby for 4 months whilst sourcing a PRS property, then returned to Stevenage. Application denied due to 4 month break.

Case study 4

A teacher with a long-standing local connection, suffering with significant medical need, moved to Letchworth for 4 months due to work. Returned to Stevenage, application denied due to 4 month break.

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Appendix. 2 Consultation: **Proposal Form**

Please provide the following information and send to consultation@stevenage.gov.uk. If agreed, you will then be invited to a [Consultation Champions](#) meeting to discuss.

*denotes information that will be made public on our website

Responsible service	Housing Services
*Lead officer	Walter Ogline
Manager agreeing the consultation	
Consultation Champion	Maureen Herdman
*Subject of consultation e.g. Views on play services	Views on the recommendations in regards to changes to the Allocations Review
*Title e.g. Have your say on play	Allocations Policy Review
*What are the key objectives of your consultation? e.g. need to save money from the play service budget and find out which proposals residents prefer.	To review the Allocations Policy in light of recommendations from the Community Select Committee, Members, Officers and the Housing Management Advisory Board.
Is this with staff or the public?	Public
*Who do you need to consult? e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • council housing tenants • under 18s • 19-64 • over 65 • service users – state service • all residents • staff • people who visit the town • people in adjoining areas 	All Stevenage residents and partner organisations (RSL's/CAB). All Council Members
Target number of participants	All
*Geographic area covered	Stevenage
*Start date	11 th December 2017
*End date	31st January 2018
*Method(s) proposed, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online survey • Postal survey • Telephone survey • Face to face survey • Letter / leaflet / newsletter • Suggestion form • Public meeting • Focus group • Event 	Website Paper survey (at CSC) Members via e-mail

Appendix. 2 Consultation: **Proposal Form**

Have you checked to see if an EqlA is required? Click for Toolkit	Yes, to be carried out once consultation has taken place and final recommendations are signed off
How will you boost participation from minority or seldom-heard groups such as BME residents, young people etc.?	Via voluntary groups
Where will you advertise your activity? List all that apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook • Twitter • Can You Hear Me? • Chronicle • The Comet • The Advertiser • Bob FM • Posters in community buildings • Internal (please explain) • Other (please explain) 	SBC Website and The Chronicle
*How will you feed back the results and how they will / have been used to participants?	SBC Website and The Chronicle
*When will the results be published on the website?	Summer 2018
Who will the results be reported to internally?	CSC, Review scoping group, Assistant Director and Portfolio Holder
*Qualtrics Survey link – to be entered once survey designed (only public for E-survey method)	

Questions for Consultation:

Currently the Allocations Policy requires that anyone applying to join the Housing Register must demonstrate 5 years continuous residency, without any break during this period, in Stevenage (apart from where we are legally required to house people). We are looking to make some minor changes to this '5 year rule':

1. Currently when households who are facing homelessness come to us for advice and then subsequently find their own private accommodation outside of the Borough they lose their local connection. We are considering that these households keep their local connection for up to 2 years to reflect the household's efforts and reducing demand on SBC resources and our housing stock.

Where clients are at risk of homelessness have made their own arrangements outside of the Borough and not relied on Stevenage Housing stock do you think they should keep their local connection for up to 2 years. Yes or No.

2. The current local connection rule (5 years) affects households who have lived in Stevenage for a number of years that have moved out of the area for a short period of time (i.e. for work, study or a relationship), if this fails then they lose their local connection and have to wait a further 5 years before they can apply Stevenage for housing. We are considering that the local connection rule is amended to 5 years out of the past 7 so that Stevenage residents who move out for a short period of time can apply for Council housing.

Please choose your preferred local connection: 5 years continuous or 5 out of the last 7 years.

3. Currently households who are under-occupying their properties do not get a priority. They are placed in a Band that does not allow them to bid for properties. This has resulted in Stevenage not releasing under-occupied properties to other households who may be over-crowded or in temporary accommodation, as much as we would like to. We are recommending that under-occupiers are given a priority (Band B for under-occupying by two bedrooms or more, Band C for under-occupying by 1 bedroom), allowing them to bid on smaller properties and make available family accommodation for other households that may be overcrowded.

Should households who live in properties that are too big for them be allowed to bid for smaller properties. Yes or No

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ALLOCATIONS SCHEME 2014

**Implemented 15th January 2015
Reviewed July 2015 & January 2016**

PREFACE

The Housing Allocations Scheme was implemented on 2 March 1998 and replaced the Housing Waiting List with a new Housing Register.

The Housing Allocations Scheme has been amended periodically and this current Housing Allocations Scheme has been formulated in accordance with the requirements of:

- the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002
- the Localism Act 2011
- the *Allocation of Accommodation – Code of Guidance for local housing authorities in England*, published by CLG in June 2012
- *Providing housing for local people – Statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England*, published by CLG in December 2013

The periodic amendments and the current Allocations Scheme have been approved by Stevenage Borough Council's Housing, Health and Community Services Committee or the Executive Committee through the following reports:

Report	Date Agreed
1. Review of the Implementation of the Allocations Scheme	19 January 2016
2. Housing Allocations Scheme Review	22 July 2014
3. Housing Allocations Scheme -Review of Implementation	18 November 2009
4. Housing Allocations Scheme Review	29 October 2008
5. Housing Allocations Scheme Review	18 July 2007
6. Allocations Policy Review	5 October 2005
7. Allocations Policy	17 November 1999
8. Transfer Policy Review	16 March 1999
9. Housing Allocations Policy	6 February 1998
10. Allocations Policy	4 June 1997
11. Housing Allocations Policy	19 March 1997
12. Transfer Policy	20 November 1996
13. Re-housing Guarantees	12 August 1996

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1) ***Introduction***

Stevenage Borough Council is a housing stock owning local authority. This allocations scheme explains who may or may not join the council's housing register, how to apply for social housing by joining the housing register and how decisions are made about allocating homes. This document, and a summary document, are available on request from the council and can also be downloaded from the council's website www.stevenage.gov.uk

2) ***Aims and objectives***

This allocations scheme aims to:

- meet the council's statutory duties with regard to homeless households
- offer a simple, fair and transparent process
- offer applicants realistic options and informed choice
- make best use of the council's housing stock
- meet the wider objectives of the council's housing strategy, homelessness strategy, tenancy strategy and tenancy policy
- promote sustainable and mixed communities

3) ***The legal framework***

The Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authorities to make all lettings of their own homes and nominations to registered provider homes in accordance with a published allocation scheme.

Section 167(2) of the Housing Act 1996 as amended, requires local authorities to give 'reasonable preference' in their allocation scheme to certain groups of people with high levels of assessed housing need. The Act also requires local authorities to state within the scheme what its position is on offering applicants a choice of housing accommodation, or offering them the opportunity to express preference about the housing accommodation to be let to them.

The council operates a choice based lettings scheme called Home4U to allocate available homes. Home4U gives applicants the opportunity to express an interest both in available council owned homes (subject to the terms of this allocations scheme and the individual property size and type), and in nominations to available local registered provider landlords homes (subject to the terms of this allocations scheme and the individual property size and type and to the terms of those registered providers own lettings policies - see paragraph 39.10)

This allocation scheme complies with the requirements of Section 167(2) of the Housing Act 1996 as amended and also the changes to allocation legislation brought about by Sections 145-147 of the Localism Act 2011. The allocations scheme also takes into account the *Allocation of Accommodation: code of guidance for local housing authorities in*

England, published by CLG in June 2012, which replaces all previous statutory guidance on social housing allocations; and additional guidance, *Providing housing for local people – Statutory guidance on social housing allocations for local authorities in England*, published by CLG in December 2013

This allocations scheme has been written with due regard having been paid to the council's housing strategy, homelessness strategy, tenancy strategy and tenancy policy. These documents can be found on the council's website www.stevenage.gov.uk

4) *Equality and diversity*

This allocations scheme is drafted and framed to ensure that it is compatible with the council's equality duties including the Equality Act 2010 and has been subject to a full published Equalities Impact Assessment.

The council will make sure that all people have equal access to services and are not treated less favourably on grounds such as age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion or belief, pregnancy or maternity or marital status.

5) *False or misleading information*

Section 171 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 makes it an offence for anyone seeking assistance from a local authority to:

- knowingly or recklessly give false information to the authority; or
- knowingly withhold information which the authority has reasonably required them to give in connection with the exercise of their functions under Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002

A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable on summary conviction to a fine.

Legal proceedings may begin if:

- any false information is given, or information withheld, on an application form to appear on the housing register
- any false information is given, or information withheld, in response to subsequent letters or other update mechanisms
- any false information is given, or information withheld, by applicants during a review

If the council discovers an applicant has knowingly or recklessly given false or misleading information and/or has knowingly withheld relevant information, the application will be cancelled and legal proceedings may be initiated.

The council or a local registered provider can seek possession of a tenancy that they have granted as a result of a false statement by the tenant or a person acting for the tenant.

6) *Disclosure of information*

Section 166 (4) of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 does not allow the council to tell any other members of the public if a person is on the housing register, or to give any other information held about them.

The council may not confirm to a member of the public, other than the applicant, that the applicant has registered an application for housing. Officers are unable to discuss the details of any application with another member of the public, including members of the applicant's family.

An applicant may authorise another person to deal with and discuss their application with the council. Authorisation can be given by the applicant either in writing or in person. If given in person, authority must be recorded in writing by the officer responsible and retained on the applicant's file for future reference.

The council will take reasonable steps to make sure that any member of the public is indeed the applicant before dealing with their enquiry.

In certain circumstances disclosure will become necessary, for example where the sharing of information is sensible and can speed up the allocation process. For instance, this information could be disclosed to councillors, housing officers, occupational health officers, doctors, social services, the police, the probation service, other local authorities and registered providers on a 'need to know' basis or where applicants have particular needs for support without which they would not be able to maintain a tenancy. Information may also be disclosed for the prevention and detection of fraud.

By signing the application form, the applicant is agreeing that this may take place.

7) *Housing options*

The council believes that social housing should be seen as one of a range of options available to applicants to meet their housing needs and that applicants should consider other housing options, such as:

- low cost home ownership
- a mutual exchange
- renting in the private sector

The council's housing advice service offers free, impartial and independent housing advice on a range of housing issues, including homelessness, accessing housing in the private rented sector, and mortgage and rent arrears.

8) *Reasonable preference*

Part 6 (s.167(2)) of the Housing Act 1996 as amended requires local housing authorities to give reasonable preference for an allocation of accommodation to the following groups of applicant:

- homeless households

- people living in insanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions
- people who need to move on medical or welfare grounds including grounds relating to a disability. Welfare grounds could include those who need to move in order to provide or receive care and support, or in order to provide a secure base for a vulnerable person to build a secure life or to assist a vulnerable person who could not be expected to find their own accommodation
- people who need to move to a particular locality in the district when failure to do so would result in hardship to themselves or to others.

An applicant will not be given reasonable preference if their only qualification for reasonable preference is the presence in their household of a person who is a restricted person under the terms of Part 6 (s.166A(4)) of the Housing Act 1996 as amended.

9) *Additional preference*

Local housing authorities may also give additional preference to people who fall within the reasonable preference groups and who have urgent housing needs. Examples include:

- those owed a homeless duty as a result of violence or threat of violence
- witnesses or victims of crime who would be at risk of intimidation amounting to violence or threats of violence if they remain in their present home
- those who need to move for urgent medical reasons

10) *Additional preference for the armed forces*

The Housing Act 1996 (Additional Preference for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012 (effective 29 November 2012) places an additional requirement on local authorities to give additional preference to a person with urgent housing needs who falls within a reasonable preference group and who:

- i) is serving in the regular forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person's service
- ii) formerly served in the regular forces
- iii) has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of that person's spouse or civil partner who has served in the regular forces and whose death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service, or
- iv) is serving or has served in the reserve forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person's service

In addition to this regulation, the council will consider granting this additional preference to a person who fulfils the above criteria but whose illness or disability is not directly attributable to their service.

11) *The housing register*

Applicants must be aged 16 or over to apply to join the housing register. Applications will be accepted from those who are both eligible and qualified to join.

The housing register is a computer record of all applicants (including existing council or registered provider tenants in a reasonable preference category wishing to transfer) who are requesting:

- an introductory or secure tenancy of a Stevenage Borough Council property; and/or
- a nomination to a starter or assured tenancy of a local registered provider social landlord's property; and/or
- a nomination for shared ownership of a registered provider's property

12) *Who can join the housing register – Eligibility*

Certain people from abroad, including some who are excluded because of asylum or immigration legislation or who are British citizens who fail the habitual residence test, are not eligible for an allocation of social housing. This exclusion does not apply to existing secure, introductory or assured tenants. Decisions on eligibility will be made according to the legislation prevailing at the time of application; decisions may be amended or overturned if subsequent legislation demands it.

13) *Who can join the housing register – Qualification*

Any eligible applicant aged 16 or over can apply to join the housing register and will qualify to join **unless**:

13.1 They have given false or misleading information or withheld relevant Information in connection with their application

See paragraph 5 for more information on false or misleading information.

13.2 They do not have an established local connection to Stevenage

An applicant will be considered to have a local connection to Stevenage if they meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Currently resident in Stevenage and at the date of application has lived in Stevenage for five years out of the last 7, with no more than two separate occasions outside of Stevenage.
- Where a household has presented themselves to Stevenage being at imminent risk of homelessness and are engaging with a homeless prevention program (as confirmed by the Housing Advice Team), who then source themselves their own accommodation out of the Borough will retain their previous local connection for up to 2 years.
- a student living and studying outside Stevenage providing they were normally resident in Stevenage continuously for the five years prior to commencing their studies

- currently residing in a Stevenage Women's Aid refuge for a minimum of six months
- at the date of application is not currently resident in Stevenage but has lived in Stevenage continuously for the last five years and is temporarily living outside Stevenage whilst:
 - receiving medical or respite care
 - living in supported housing
 - serving a custodial sentence
 - adhering to bail conditions

An exception to the local connection rule may be made for older applicants who are willing to accept an offer of a hard-to-let sheltered property. See paragraph 29.4

An exception to the local connection rule may be made for social housing tenants who need to move to Stevenage for employment reasons and fulfil the criteria set out in the Right to Move Policy.

In addition, exceptions to the local connection rule apply to certain members or former members of the armed forces.

The Allocation of Housing (Qualifying Criteria for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012 (effective 24 August 2012) state that certain members or former members of the armed forces do not have to prove a local connection to an area in order to qualify to join the housing register. A qualifying person is one who:

- is serving in the regular forces or who has served in the regular forces within five years of the date of their application for an allocation of housing; or
- has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of that person's spouse or civil partner where the spouse or civil partner has served in the regular forces and their death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service; or
- is serving or has served in the reserve forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to that service.

Applicants who fulfil these criteria will not be required to prove a local connection in order to be accepted onto the housing register, although the other qualifying criteria will still apply. In addition, the council will consider applicants whose illness or disability is **not** directly attributable to their service.

Applicants **not considered to have a local connection** include the following (this list is not exhaustive, decisions on local connection will be made on a case by case basis):

- anyone on holiday or receiving hospital treatment in Stevenage
- anyone who has been temporarily housed in Stevenage by another council
- anyone living in supported housing in Stevenage but who does not otherwise have a local connection to Stevenage
- anyone living in hostel accommodation who does not otherwise have a local connection to Stevenage

Applicants with an identified need for sheltered accommodation but do not meet the local connection criteria may be considered for hard-to-let sheltered housing ONLY. See paragraph 29.4.

13.3 They are the owner of residential property

Applicants who are current home owners will not qualify to join the housing register.

If another member of an applicant's household –who is included in their application - is a homeowner the applicant will not qualify to join the housing register.

The council defines current homeowners as:

- people who have or are acquiring a freehold or leasehold interest in a residential property whether in sole or joint names. This includes properties purchased under the right to buy or the right to acquire, properties abroad, properties that have been sublet and properties where people have an interest via shared equity or shared ownership (but not those purchased under the Council's Low Start Shared Ownership scheme where only 5% equity is owned)
- people who own or part-own a sited mobile home or houseboat
- people who still have their names on the title deeds of a residential property which has been repossessed but not sold or who still have their names on the title deeds of a property that is for sale, or have an unresolved legal or financial interest in their home (for example through divorce or separation proceedings), will be considered as current home owners until such time as they can provide documentary proof that they no longer have a legal or financial interest in the property
- someone who has gifted their residential property, or equity from their property, to another person within the last ten years

The council will consider re-housing some owner-occupiers living in Stevenage into sheltered housing, (subject to the normal assessments) when they fulfil certain criteria and are willing to sell their existing property to the council at below market value, in accordance with the Council's Policy on the Purchase of Open Market Properties to Assist Vulnerable Homeowners to Move into More Suitable Accommodation and to Support the Prevention of Homelessness.

13.4 They are considered to be unsuitable to be a tenant because of unacceptable behaviour:

- they or a member of their household has committed anti-social behaviour in or around the vicinity of their home that has resulted in an ASBO, ABC, injunction or other legal deterrent being issued within the past five years
- they or a member of their household have a conviction for using their accommodation, or allowing it to be used, for illegal or immoral purposes such as drug dealing, within the past five years
- they have been evicted from a tenancy by a social landlord for a breach of tenancy conditions, including non-payment of rent, within the past five years

An applicant may re-apply to join the housing register after 12 months. During this time they will be expected to demonstrate behaviour that would make them suitable to be a

tenant, such as no further anti-social or criminal behaviour in or around the vicinity of their home; no further breaches of tenancy conditions; repayment of outstanding rent arrears. In the event of an offer of accommodation being made, it will be subject to a probationary period by way of an introductory tenancy, during which time the applicant will be expected to continue to demonstrate reasonable behaviour.

13.5 Exceptional circumstances

Any person who is not a qualifying person by reason of the above criteria may be deemed to be a qualifying person by a Senior Manager at Head of Service level or above, on the basis of (a) exceptional circumstances or (b) in order to ensure that the council is complying with its statutory duties such as under the Housing Act 1996, s166A(3), or under the Equality Act 2010, s149.

14) *Financial resources*

When deciding who should have priority for an allocation of housing, the council will take into account the financial gain (capital/equity) from former home ownership available to applicants to meet their own housing need. The council defines former homeowners as:

- people who in the past ten years have had any freehold or leasehold interest in a residential property whether in joint or sole names. This includes properties purchased under the right to buy or the right to acquire, properties abroad, sited mobile homes or houseboats, properties that have been sublet and properties where people had an interest via shared equity or shared ownership (but not those purchased under the Council's Low Start Shared Ownership scheme where only 5% equity was owned).

Capital/equity above the level set by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) that excludes a person from claiming housing benefit will be taken into account. The council will make enquiries into how the capital/equity has been disposed of and may decide to treat the capital/equity as still held by the applicant.

Capital/equity will be considered as still held by the applicant unless they can provide evidence that the funds were disposed of by:

- clearing priority debts (we will apply the Citizens Advice Bureau definition of a priority debt)
- paying rent in the private rented sector
- spending on the **essential** costs of setting up a home (such as a cooker and bed)

Where the council considers capital/equity to be still held by the applicant, the application will be placed in band F of the housing register. We will calculate the amount regarded as held as reducing monthly by the amount required to rent, in the private sector, a property of the size needed to meet the applicant's housing need. When the amount regarded as held by the applicant falls below the current DWP limit using this calculation, the application will be re-assessed and placed in the appropriate band.

15) *How to apply to join the housing register*

Applicants must complete a housing register application form and return it, together with all the proofs required, to the council's lettings team. Forms received incomplete or without all the necessary proofs will be returned to the applicant and will not be processed further. A housing register application pack is available from the customer service centre or an application form can be downloaded from the council's website www.stevenage.gov.uk

We are currently in the process of reviewing the application process and intend to introduce an on-line application process in due course.

When your application has been registered, the council will contact you by letter or email to tell you:

- the effective date of your application. This will normally be the date your application form was received by the council. However, if you did not provide all the requested information with your application form, the effective date will be the date that all requested information was received by the council
- the band in which your application has been placed
- the size/type of property for which you meet the criteria to bid under CBL

16) *Proof of circumstances*

Applicants must provide proof of their identity, residence, local connection and other circumstances when applying to join the housing register or updating their application details, and again before an allocation of housing can be made to them following a successful bid under CBL.

By completing a housing register application form applicants are authorising the council to contact other organisations or individuals as necessary in order to carry out checks on the information they have provided. This may include carrying out a credit reference check and accessing social media sites.

Up to date details of what information is needed and what proofs are acceptable will be provided as part of the housing register application pack and will also be available on the council's website www.stevenage.gov.uk

17) *Who will be considered part of an applicant's household?*

The council will decide in each case if people included by an applicant on their housing application will be considered as permanent members of their household when assessing what size and/or type of property they can be allocated.

17.1 The council will generally consider the following to be permanent members of a household:

- Spouses, civil partners or co-habiting partners residing with the applicant at the date of application

- dependant children under 18 and residing with the applicant at the date of application
- dependant children aged over 18 will be considered as part of the household if the council is satisfied they are permanently resident with the applicant
- other dependant adult relatives will be considered as part of the household if the council is satisfied they are permanently resident with the applicant and that this arrangement is reasonable
- permanent, full time, live in carers residing with the applicant at the date of application will be considered as part of the household if written confirmation of the applicant's need for a permanent, full time, live in carer is received from the relevant Social Services department

17.2 The council will not generally consider the following as permanent members of a household and they will not be included when assessing what size and/or type of property the applicant can be allocated.

- non-dependant adult children or other non-dependant adult relatives
- non-relatives
- non-resident carers
- lodgers
- live-in help
- children for whom the applicant or their partner has staying arrangements but who are not permanent members of the household.

Where residence of dependant child/ren under 18 has been agreed between the parents, by consent or by a Court Order, and the council is being asked to include them as part of an applicant's household, the council will verify their permanent and/or principal home by establishing the following:

- which parent/guardian receives benefits, such as child benefit/child tax credits; and
- which parent/guardian arranges and pays for any childcare arrangements; and
- the home address and next of kin which the child/ren's school **and** GP have registered for them

and by checking the identity of the parents/guardian shown on the birth certificate(s), and if necessary carrying out a home visit.

If an applicant can show that their child/ren has their permanent and/or principal home with them and are therefore dependent upon them, they can be included as part of the applicant household.

The council will not normally consider a dependant child/ren to have a permanent and/or principal home with more than one household.

18) *Joint applications*

The council will accept joint housing register applications from couples when both are aged 16 years or over and are married or civil partners; or have lived together for at least

six months; or have a child of their relationship, provided each applicant is eligible and qualifies to join the register in their own right.

19) ***Changes in circumstances***

The council expects applicants to manage their housing applications by keeping the lettings team informed of any changes to their circumstances that may affect their housing application. It is the **responsibility of the applicant** to inform the lettings team immediately should such changes occur.

Changes that must be notified include, but are not limited to, a change of address, email address or contact telephone number, an addition to the family, a person named on the application leaving the household or a change to the employment that gave rise to the applicant's local connection.

This is essential to ensure that the details we hold about an application are up to date and the application is placed in the correct band. It is particularly important that we have the correct contact details as any correspondence will be sent to the last notified address or email address on our records. If we become aware of a change to circumstances but the applicant fails to respond to a request to contact us to discuss the matter; or to update their application details on request, their application **will be cancelled**.

Where an applicant informs the lettings team of a change to their circumstances, their application may be reassessed (depending on the change) and the application may be placed in a different band. When this happens, we will notify them of:

- The new effective date of the application
- The band in which the application has been placed

20) ***Effective date of an application***

The effective date of an application is the date the original application was registered and placed into one of bands A to E. For applications that are registered and placed into band F, the effective date will be the date the application subsequently moves into one of bands A to E. If the council is advised of a subsequent change to circumstances that means an application moves into another band, the effective date of application may change:

- When moving to a **higher** band, the effective date of application will become the date the application moved into the higher band
- When moving to a **lower** band, the effective date of application will either:
 - remain the original date of application; or
 - if the application has previously been in that lower band, revert to the date previously assessed for that band

This is to ensure that within each band, the applicant who has been in housing need longest will be given the greatest priority for an allocation of housing

21) ***Worsening circumstances***

Social housing in Stevenage is an extremely scarce resource in demand from a very large number of applicants, the majority of who will never receive an offer of accommodation from the council. The council has a responsibility to make the best use of its housing stock by ensuring that allocations of housing are made only to those who are in genuine housing need and who, despite having made every effort to help themselves improve their housing situation, continue to have a housing need.

For this reason applicants who worsen their housing circumstances with the result that they would otherwise be placed in a higher band on the housing register will not benefit and their application will be placed in band E.

We will consider that an applicant has worsened their housing circumstances when we are satisfied that they have:

- acted or failed to act in a way which results in a deterioration of their housing situation when this could have been avoided; or
- failed to move within the private rented sector when suitable or more suitable accommodation was available and affordable; or
- otherwise failed to seek to improve their circumstances.

Worsening of housing circumstances can include but is not limited to:

- Transferring or otherwise disposing of part or full ownership of any residential property within the past ten years for less than its market value (except where the household has been assisted through a recognised Mortgage Rescue Scheme)
- Moving from accommodation that was available for occupation; suitable or more suitable than the accommodation they moved into; and reasonable for them to continue to occupy
- Moving family members or others into their accommodation, the outcome of which is that the accommodation becomes unsuitable or overcrowded or more unsuitable or more overcrowded, unless the addition to the household is considered to be unavoidable such as older relative requiring full-time care)
- Renting a property in the private rented sector that is too small or otherwise unsuitable for their needs.

This is not an exhaustive list, and each case will be considered individually.

22) *How we prioritise housing register applications*

We use a banding system to identify those in the greatest housing need. Once an application has been approved, we will decide in which band to place the application based on the information provided on the application form and any further enquiries we have made in connection with the application. If an applicant's circumstances change, their application may be moved to a different band

23) *Time-limited bidding*

Time limited bidding will apply to some applicants in the greatest housing need. Time-limited bidding applicants will be expected to bid for **all suitable properties** advertised

under choice based lettings as soon as they are placed in a band. The time limited bidding period will normally be three months. Where time limited bidding applies to a particular applicant group or situation this is clearly stated in this document.

A property will be considered suitable if it meets the primary housing need of the applicant. Generally this will mean the property has the number of bedrooms required by the household, regardless of whether the property is a house, flat or maisonette. A property may also be considered suitable in accordance with a medical assessment, for example, one level or level access accommodation; or is of a particular size or type as specified by the Senior Officer Housing Needs Panel.

The bids of time limited bidding applicants will be monitored throughout the three month period and the following decisions made:

Applicant bidding regularly and realistically

If the applicant has been bidding for all suitable properties but been unsuccessful in their bids, or if no suitable properties have been advertised, then their bidding period will be extended for a maximum of a further three months. Their bids will continue to be monitored during this period to ensure that they bid for all suitable properties: If still unsuccessful at the end of the extended bidding period, or if no suitable properties have been advertised, the applicants will no longer be able to bid but a direct allocation of a suitable property will be made to them.

Only one direct allocation will be made. If this offer is refused we will consider that the urgency is no longer justified and the priority no longer applies: The application will then be reassessed and placed in the appropriate band.

Applicant not bidding regularly or realistically

If the applicant has not been bidding for all suitable properties or has been the successful bidder on a property but subsequently refused the offer of a tenancy, we will make proxy bids for suitable properties on their behalf. If a proxy bid is successful but the applicant refuses the offer of a tenancy, then we will consider that the urgency is no longer justified and the priority no longer applies: The application will be reassessed and then placed in the appropriate band.

The Banding System table below shows which applicants will be subject to time-limited bidding.

24) *The banding system*

Applications from applicants who have an active application, can bid under choice based lettings and be considered for an allocation of accommodation, will be assessed and placed into one of five **bands A – E**.

Applications from applicants who have an inactive application and cannot bid under choice based lettings will be placed in **band F**.

Any person in one of the six bands A-F may be moved to a higher band if a Senior Manager at Head of Service level or above so decides on the basis of (a) exceptional circumstances or (b) in order to ensure that the council is complying with its statutory duties such as under the Housing Act 1996, s166A(3), or the Equality Act 2010, s149.

<i>Band A Urgent Priority</i>	<i>Criteria</i>
Urgent medical factors (time-limited bidding)	The council's medical adviser has confirmed in writing that the applicant (or a member of their household) is suffering from a medical condition that will not improve and is so severe that it makes it impossible or near impossible for them to continue to occupy the current property. Continuing to occupy the current property will result in an intolerably low quality of life for the patient and the medical adviser has recommended urgent re-housing.
<i>Band B Very High Priority</i>	<i>Criteria</i>
Existing band C or D applicant <i>and</i> significant medical factors	The applicant has been placed in band C or D and has also been assessed by the council's medical adviser as having significant medical factors.
Very severe overcrowding (three bedrooms or more)	The applicant has dependant child/ren as permanent members of their household and is overcrowded by three or more bedrooms.
Severe overcrowding (two bedrooms) <i>and</i> sharing accommodation	The applicant has dependant child/ren as permanent members of their household, is overcrowded by two bedrooms; and is sharing accommodation with another household.
Severe under-occupying (2 bedrooms or more)	The applicant is under-occupying by two bedrooms or more in line with Stevenage Borough Councils bedroom standard.
Succession to a tenancy (time-limited bidding)	The applicant is a statutory <u>or</u> discretionary successor to a tenancy and is required to move to a smaller property.
Senior officer housing needs panel award (time-limited bidding)	The applicant has been awarded greater priority by the senior officer housing needs panel. More information about the senior officer housing needs panel can be found at paragraph 35.
Un-adaptable property	The applicant is a council or registered provider tenant living in a home where an occupational therapist has recommended major adaptations but the landlord considers the property to be un-adaptable. This applies only to council and registered provider tenants living in Stevenage. Decisions will be made in line with the council's adaptations policy.
Category 1 HHSRS hazards – prohibition order	The applicant is a tenant of a private rented sector property where the council's environmental health section has confirmed the presence of a Category 1 hazard relating to disrepair (as defined by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System) that is so serious that the council is

	considering the service of a closing or prohibition order.,
Special needs/ Care leavers/ 16/17 year olds (time-limited bidding) See paragraph 25	The applicant has a valid local connection and is: A care leaver who meets the criteria; A priority need 16/17 year old who meets the criteria; A person ready to move on from supported accommodation who meets the criteria
Statutory homelessness	The council has accepted a homelessness duty under section 193 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and has placed the applicant in temporary accommodation.
Homeless prevention	The applicant has made active efforts to prevent their homelessness. A full housing needs appraisal has been carried out and established that the council would otherwise owe the full homelessness duty to the applicant and the council has negotiated for the applicant to remain in the existing accommodation in the short term to prevent homelessness. Homelessness prevention decisions are discretionary and can only be made by the Head of Housing Management.
Armed forces personnel with urgent housing needs (time-limited bidding) See paragraph 10	The applicant is a member or former member of the armed forces, with urgent housing needs as a result of serious injury, illness or disability and owed additional preference.
Re-housing guarantee (time-limited bidding) See paragraph 34	The applicant has re-applied for housing under a re-housing guarantee.
<i>Band C High Priority</i>	<i>Criteria</i>
Significant medical factors	The council's medical adviser has confirmed in writing that the applicant (or a member of their household) is suffering from a medical condition that means that it is difficult but not impossible for them to continue to occupy the current property. The medical adviser has recommended that early re-housing is required.
Existing band D applicant <i>and</i> moderate medical factors	The applicant has been placed in band D and has also been assessed by the council's medical adviser as having moderate medical factors.
High hardship, welfare or social grounds	The applicant needs to move in order to give or receive care or support or to access specialist medical treatment or specialist schooling; or to alleviate physical or social isolation by moving to sheltered housing.
Severe overcrowding (two bedrooms)	The applicant has dependant child/ren as permanent members of their household and is overcrowded by two bedrooms.
Under-occupying by 1 bedroom	The applicant is under-occupying by 1 bedroom in line with Stevenage Borough Councils bedroom standard.
Overcrowding (one bedroom) <i>and</i> sharing	Applicant has dependant child/ren as permanent members of their household, is overcrowded by one bedroom; and is

accommodation	sharing accommodation with another household.
Opposite sex children sharing a bedroom	The applicant has two children of opposite sexes, at least one of whom is aged 11 or over, as permanent members of their household and having to share a bedroom.
Armed forces or former armed forces personnel with a local connection See paragraph 13.2	The applicant is a member or former member of the armed forces who has applied to join the housing register within seven years of leaving the service AND had been resident in Stevenage at least five years out of the last 7 years prior to joining the services.
<i>Band D Medium Priority</i>	<i>Criteria</i>
Moderate medical factors	The council's medical adviser has confirmed in writing that the applicant (or a member of their household) is suffering from a medical condition that means that it is difficult but not impossible for them to continue to occupy the current property. The medical adviser has recommended that eventual re-housing is desirable.
Single people and couples with no dependant children as part of their household	The applicant is a single person or an eligible couple (with no dependant children living with them permanently) living with family or in any other shared accommodation including hostels and sofa-surfing, or are of no fixed address.
Overcrowding (one bedroom) or sharing accommodation	The applicant has dependant child/ren as permanent members of their household and is overcrowded by one bedroom; or is sharing accommodation with another household
Same sex children sharing a bedroom (11 year+ age gap)	The applicant has two dependant children of the same sex, with an age gap of 11 years or more, as permanent members of their household and having to share a bedroom
Single person living in a social housing studio flat for over four years or partner joined household	The applicant is the tenant of the council or a registered provider living in Stevenage and has: a) been the tenant of the studio flat for four years; or b) their eligible partner has joined the household as a permanent resident and a joint tenancy has been granted.
Single applicant or couple aged 60 or over housed in the private or social rented sector and with no other priority.	The applicant/s is aged 60 or over, housed in the social or private rented sector with no other priority, wishes to move to sheltered housing and has been assessed as suitable for sheltered housing.
Category 1 HHSRS hazards	The applicant is a tenant of a private rented sector property where the council's environmental health section have confirmed the existence of a category 1 hazard relating to disrepair as defined by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, that is not so serious that the council is considering serving a closure or prohibition notice.
<i>Band E Low Priority</i>	<i>Criteria</i>
Moderate hardship, welfare or social needs	The applicant needs to move because the medical condition of a member of their household (not included in their application) is having a detrimental effect on the

	applicant or their household.
Armed forces or former armed forces personnel without a local connection. See paragraph 13.2	The applicant is a member or former member of the armed forces who has applied to join the housing register within five years of leaving the service BUT who was not resident in Stevenage continuously for five years out of seven prior to joining the services.
Family in flat – no overcrowding	The applicant has at least one dependant child aged 10 or under as a permanent member of their household, is living in a flat, but is not overcrowded.
Adequately housed in the private rented sector	The applicant is an assured shorthold tenant in the private rented sector, is adequately housed and has no other housing need.
Worsening housing circumstances	The applicant would otherwise be placed in a higher band because they have acted, or failed to act, in such a way as to worsen their housing circumstances.
Single person living in a social housing studio flat for under four years	The applicant is the tenant of the council or a registered provider studio flat in Stevenage for less than four years and is the sole occupant.
<i>Band F No Priority</i> Band F applicants are not entitled to be made an offer of accommodation under the terms of this allocations scheme and will be unable to bid under choice based lettings.	<i>Criteria</i>
Special needs/care leavers/16/17 year olds not ready for independent living	The applicant may meet the criteria for band B but has not yet been assessed as ready for independent living.
Existing tenant exercising their Right to Buy or Right to Acquire	The applicant is a council or registered provider tenant who has commenced the Right to Buy or Right to Acquire process to purchase their existing home.
Unresolved interest in a property	The applicant has an unresolved interest in a joint council or registered provider tenancy; or is the spouse or civil partner of a homeowner awaiting divorce or judicial separation and a property settlement; or has rights to a property under the Matrimonial Homes Act; Family Law Act; or the Children Act, including an unresolved joint tenancy (until they no longer have a legal entitlement to reside at that property).
Capital/Equity above the limit See paragraph 14	The applicant has capital/equity from previous home ownership that is over the current DWP limit.

In education or training outside Stevenage	The applicant is in further education or training and living outside Stevenage, but they have a valid local connection and for the duration of the course the address they return to out of term time is in Stevenage.
On remand or in custody	The applicant is held on remand or is completing a custodial sentence, but otherwise has a valid local connection.
Joint applicants cohabiting for less than six months	The applicants are a cohabiting couple who have made a joint application but have not lived together for at least six months, or who have no child of the relationship.
Existing tenant in breach of tenancy conditions	The applicant is in breach of the terms and condition of their council or registered provider tenancy because of the condition of their existing property.
Housing related debt (see paragraph 26)	The applicant has an outstanding housing related debt.
Two successful CBL bids but failed to attend viewing or offer of allocation refused (see paragraph 39.8)	The applicant has successfully bid through choice based lettings on two properties but has failed to attend a viewing or refused an allocation on both occasions. The applicant will remain in band F for a period of six months before being re-assessed and placed in the appropriate band with a new effective date.
Failure to bid (see paragraph 39.7)	The applicant has failed to bid under CBL for a period of two years or more. The application will remain in band F for a period of six months.
Pending contact following withdrawal of an offer under CBL	The applicant has had an offer made under CBL withdrawn for one on the reasons shown in paragraph 39.9.
Other applicants	The applicant does not otherwise meet the criteria for bands A – E
Reasonable Preference	All persons owed reasonable preference within section 166A(3) of the Housing Act 1996, who do not otherwise meet the criteria for Band A-E

25) Local Lettings Policy

Pursuant to Section 166A(6) of the housing Act 1996, the Council operates within this scheme a local lettings policy to enable transferring social tenants who do not have a reasonable preference to be included in the banding system as this is beneficial to such tenants and also assists the Council in sourcing suitable housing stock.

26) *Applications from care leavers, priority need 16/17 year olds and those moving-on from supported accommodation*

26.1 Care leavers

Applications from care leavers who meet the criteria will initially be placed in band F. A care leaver who meets the criteria is:

1. a care leaver who originates from Stevenage and meets the requirements for housing under the Leaving Care Act 2000 as being an eligible, relevant or former relevant person aged 18-21 (24 if in full time education) or
2. a care leaver who does not originate from Stevenage but has been placed into foster care or residential care in Stevenage and has been resident in Stevenage for five continuous years and meets the requirements for housing under the Leaving Care Act 2000 as being an eligible, relevant or former relevant person aged 18-21 (24 if in full time education)

Hertfordshire Children's Services will refer the young person for independent living under the terms of the Joint Housing Protocol when it has been evidenced that the young person is ready for independent living. **The referral must be made no less than 6 months before the applicant wishes to access housing.** If the young person is 20 years old the move on application must be submitted at least six months before they turn 21 years.

The applicant must have an agreed support package and an up to date comprehensive pathway plan and risk assessment in place. The tenancy support team will consider the referral from Children's Services, and if satisfied that the care leaver is ready to move-on and that all support services are in place for the transition to independent living, will recommend that the application is moved to band B.

The applicant will be restricted to bidding on studio flats only and time limited bidding will apply - see paragraph 23.

26.2 Priority need 16/17 year olds

Applications from 16/17 year old young people who meet the criteria will initially be placed in band F. A young person who meets the criteria is a young person who is:

- a resident in specialist supported accommodation; and
- at the time of entering the specialist supported accommodation, was aged 16/17 years and was assessed by SBC's homeless team as unintentionally homeless and eligible for assistance under the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.

Re-housing will not be considered until the young person is aged 18 or over. The young person must be referred by the relevant agency to the tenancy support team when they have been assessed as ready for independent living. The young person must have a clear and up to date rent account in their current accommodation; have completed an approved training programme for independent living; and have an on-going support package in place for the transition to independent living.

The tenancy support team will consider the referral from the relevant agency, and if satisfied that the young person is ready to move on and that all support services are in

place for the transition to independent living, will recommend that the application is moved to band B.

The applicant will be restricted to bidding on studio flats only and time-limited bidding will apply. See paragraph 23.

26.3 Move on from supported housing

Applications from persons who meet the criteria will initially be placed in band F. A person who meets the criteria is a person who is living in specialist supported accommodation (other than sheltered housing) in Stevenage and originates from Stevenage (so had a valid local connection to Stevenage prior to moving into the supported accommodation). The applicant will have been assessed by their care co-ordinator or social worker as having on-going support needs but ready to live independently with continuing support. The applicant must have a care plan and support package in place for the transition to independent living.

When the tenancy support team receive a referral from the applicant's care co-ordinator or social worker the case will be referred to the Special Needs Panel for a decision. If the Special Needs Panel agrees that the applicant is ready to move-on and that all support services are in place for the transition to independent living, the panel will recommend that the application is moved to band B.

Time limited bidding will apply - see paragraph 23.

27) *Housing related debt*

Generally, applicants who have housing related debt will not be entitled to be made an allocation of housing and their application will be placed in band F. Housing related debt includes but is not limited to:

- Any current or former tenant rent arrears or charges for use and occupation owed to any local authority, registered provider or private sector landlord
- Unpaid sundry debts owing to any local authority, registered provider or private sector landlord, including rechargeable debts or court costs
- Any unpaid Right to Buy discounts from previously owned property
- Any tenancy deposit or rent in advance loans provided by the council that remain unpaid; or tenancy deposit guarantees that have been honoured by the council and remain unpaid
- Unpaid rent that was lawfully due to be paid to any local authority or registered provider landlord or any private sector landlord, but such unpaid rent is now unrecoverable in law because of bankruptcy proceedings
- Outstanding council tax debts.

27.1 Rent arrears - current tenant of the council or a registered provider

In cases of current tenant rent arrears, the applicant will remain in band F until such time as they have made a repayment commitment to clear the debt and are making regular payments of an agreed sum which they have maintained for a period of at least six months without missing a single payment; and the arrears have reduced to a figure that is equal to

or less than six weeks payable rent. At this stage the application will be re-assessed and placed in the appropriate band.

However, the applicant will be expected to continue making regular payments of the agreed sum until the debt is cleared – if payments are missed then the application will again be placed in band F until the arrears are cleared or payments have been made satisfactorily for at least a further six months.

If arrears are still outstanding when the applicant is successful in a bid under choice based lettings, they will be expected to sign an agreement to continue the agreed payments after they have moved.

27.2 Rent arrears – exceptional circumstances

If following a financial assessment carried out by the council's housing advice team, we are satisfied that rent arrears have accrued solely because of unexpected or unforeseeable welfare benefit changes; or under other exceptional circumstances, we will consider assessing the application in the normal way and placing it in the appropriate band. This decision will be made subject to the applicant having made a repayment commitment to clear the debt and commenced regular payments as outlined in paragraph 27.1. These payments will be monitored and if the promised payments are not maintained the situation will be reviewed and the application placed in band F until the arrears are cleared or payments have been made satisfactorily for at least a further six months.

If arrears are still outstanding when the applicant is successful in a bid under choice based lettings, they will be expected to sign an agreement to continue the agreed payments after they have moved.

27.3 Rent arrears – reduction of housing benefit due to “spare” bedrooms

As a result of welfare reform, tenants who are under-occupying their home where their housing benefit has been reduced due to “spare” bedrooms may accrue rent arrears because the rent has become genuinely unaffordable. Where the council is satisfied, following a financial assessment, that the rent due is genuinely unaffordable for the tenant, and the tenant is maintaining regular payments of the residual rent due, then we will consider assessing the application in the normal way and placing it in the appropriate band. This decision will be made subject to the tenant making a commitment to clearing the arrears with agreed regular payments following their transfer to more suitable accommodation.

27.4 All other housing related debt

For all other housing related debt the applicant will remain in band F until the debt is cleared in full. It will be the responsibility of the applicant to advise the lettings team when the debt is cleared in full and provide written evidence of this. The application will then be re-assessed and placed in the appropriate band.

28) *The bedroom standard*

The council will use the following bedroom standard to assess the level of overcrowding or under-occupation that exists in an applicant's current home.

Recent changes brought about by the Welfare Reform Act 2012 mean that **working age households** who receive housing benefit and are considered to be under-occupying their council or registered provider home will not receive housing benefit for the bedrooms that are considered to be "spare bedrooms" according to the legislation.

In response to these changes we will now allow applicants to decide if they wish to bid for a smaller home to avoid this loss of housing benefit. The table below shows the smallest and largest properties for which applicants with different family sizes and compositions will be able to bid. Where there is likely to be a housing benefit implication this is stated.

Number of Bedrooms	<i>Family Size and Composition</i>
Studio flat	Single person only
One bedroom	Single person or couple with no dependant child/ren as permanent members of the household Single person or couple with access to child/ren
Two bedroom	Family, one child Family, two children, same sex, both aged under 16 Family, two children, different sexes, both aged 10 or under Couple with medical recommendation for separate bedrooms (HB implications) Single person or couple with verified need for a permanent, full-time, live-in carer
Three bedroom	Family two children (HB implications) Family three children Family four children
Large three bedroom (three doubles)	Family with four children
Four bedroom (two doubles and two singles)	Family three children, where none can share a bedroom (HB implications) Family four children (HB implications)
Four bedroom (three doubles and one single)	Family five or more children
Five bedroom – any combination	Family five or more children (HB implications)

Where an applicant claiming housing benefit chooses to bid for a property where there are HB implications, they may be asked to demonstrate how they will afford to pay the additional rent due.

In exceptional circumstances and on the recommendation of the medical adviser or the senior officer housing needs panel, allocations may be made outside the bedroom criteria. Applicants should be aware that they may be affected by the reduction in housing benefit for bedrooms that are considered to be “spare bedrooms” according to welfare benefit reform legislation.

29) *Exceptions to the bedroom standard*

The bedroom standard does not normally apply in the following cases. However, applicants should be aware that they may be affected by the reduction in housing benefit for bedrooms that are considered to be “spare bedrooms” according to welfare benefit reform legislation:

- mutual exchanges
- sole tenancies transferred to joint and vice versa
- allocation of furnished non-secure accommodation
- tenancy assignments
- Property Transfer Orders as required by court orders
- successions to tenancies
- where the council or a registered provider landlord is using a property to temporarily or permanently re-house a tenant due to their home being converted, redeveloped, refurbished or undergoing extensive repairs
- special project nominations
- in accordance with statutory duties such as compulsory purchase
- social services co-operation - under the provisions of the Children Act 1989
- properties leased to specialist support providers
- properties let under Local Lettings Plans

30) *The property standard*

The council will allocate properties of different sizes and types in accordance with the following criteria. However, applicants should be aware that they may be affected by the reduction in housing benefit for bedrooms that are considered to be “spare bedrooms” according to welfare benefit reform legislation.

30.1 **Single people and couples**

	Studio flat	Sheltered studio flat	One bed flat	Sheltered one bed flat	One bed bungalow	Two bed flat or maisonette	Two bed sheltered flat	Two bed bungalow
Single under 60								
Single or couple with access to children								
Couple under								

60 no children								
Single 60 or over								
Couple 60 or over								
Single or couple with disability								
Couple under 60. Medical recommendation for separate bedrooms						HB implications		
Couple 60+ with medical recommendation for separate bedrooms						HB implications	HB implications	HB implications
Single or couple under 60 with live-in carer						HB implications		
Single or couple 60+ with live-in carer						HB implications	HB implications	HB implications

30.2 Medical recommendation for separate bedrooms

Priority for an additional bedroom for a couple will only be given when a recommendation has been made by the council's medical adviser. However, applicants should be aware that they may be affected by the reduction in housing benefit for bedrooms that are considered to be "spare bedrooms" according to welfare benefit reform legislation.

30.3 Priority for additional bedroom for live-in carer

Priority for an additional bedroom for a live-in carer will only be given when social services have confirmed in writing the applicant's need for a permanent, full-time live-in carer. However, applicants should be aware that they may be affected by the reduction in housing benefit for bedrooms that are considered to be "spare bedrooms" according to welfare benefit reform legislation.

30.4 Sheltered housing

Sheltered housing will normally only be allocated to applicants who are aged 60 or over (for couples, where at least one partner is aged 60 or over). All applicants will be subject to a needs and risk assessment.

In exceptional circumstances we may consider allocating sheltered housing to applicants under 60 if the applicant can demonstrate that they have a diagnosed illness or disability that means they would benefit from sheltered housing (receipt of disability living allowance or personal independence payment is not in itself evidence of this). We will also consider allocating 1st floor unlifted one-bedroom properties in dispersed sheltered housing schemes to applicants who are aged 55 and over.

In all cases a needs and risk assessment will be carried out to assess that the applicant:

- a) is suited to live in sheltered housing; and
- b) would benefit from sheltered housing

The needs and risk assessment will be carried out by the supported housing service and the final decision on the suitability of an applicant aged under 60 for an allocation will be made by the Service Manager, Supported Housing.

Applicants without a local connection to Stevenage (see paragraph 13.2) but who have an identified need for sheltered housing following an assessment, will be considered for hard-to-let sheltered properties ONLY. Such applicants will not be able to bid under choice based lettings but will be made a direct offer of a property.

30.5 Flexicare housing

Flexicare housing for those with high support needs will be allocated under a separate local lettings plan by a joint agency panel that is chaired by supported housing. Applicants must be eligible to join the housing register and qualify for an offer of accommodation, and have an assessed care need.

30.6 Families

	Two bed house, flat or maisonette	Two bed bungalow	Three bed house, flat or maisonette	Large three bed house	Three bed bungalow	Four bed 6 person house	Four bed 7 person house	Five bed house – very rarely available
Family one child								
Family one child with a disabled family member								
Family two			HB implications					

children								
Family two/three children with a disabled family member			HB implications		HB implications			
Family three children								
Family four children						HB implications		
Family five or more children							HB implications	HB implications

30.7 Three child families in four-bedroom houses

Families with three children may be considered for a four bedroom, six person house where none of the children can share a bedroom under the overcrowding/gender sharing/age gap over 11 years criteria (for example a family with sons aged 16 and 3 and a daughter aged 14), or on the recommendation of the medical adviser. However, applicants should be aware that they may be affected by the reduction in housing benefit for bedrooms that are considered to be “spare bedrooms” according to welfare benefit reform legislation.

30.8 Property sizes

Property sizes as described above will normally be:

- two bedroom = one double and one single bedroom or two double bedrooms
- three bedroom = one double and two single bedrooms or two double and one single bedroom
- Large three bedroom = three double bedrooms
- four bedroom, six person = two double and two single bedrooms
- four bedroom, seven person = three double and one single bedroom

A double bedroom will be deemed to be a room sized 110 square feet or more.

31) *Exceptions to the property standard*

Allocations outside the property prioritisation criteria will normally only be made in the following circumstances. However, applicants should be aware that they may be affected by the reduction in housing benefit for bedrooms that are considered to be “spare bedrooms” according to welfare benefit reform legislation.

- where the medical adviser has recommended that an additional bedroom is needed on medical grounds

- where specialist disabled person's mobility or sheltered accommodation has to be allocated outside the above criteria
- where, in order to enable a more balanced and sustainable community to be created by allocating properties to people of a particular description, a local lettings plan is in place in a particular group of properties, for example a flat block or sheltered housing scheme. If a local lettings plan is in place, properties will be advertised through choice based lettings under the terms of the local lettings plan rather than those of this allocation scheme
- where no other accommodation is available to meet the applicant's needs
- on the recommendation of the senior officer housing needs panel

32) *Sole and joint tenancies*

In order to prevent future under-occupation, joint tenancies will not be offered between parents and children or unrelated non-couples.

Individuals are granted sole tenancies. Joint tenancies will be granted to couples who have applied jointly, or who have been housed because there are children of the relationship living with them permanently, so long as both parties individually are eligible and qualify to join the housing register and meet the criteria for an allocation of housing.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, joint tenancies will also be granted in cases where a sole applicant's qualification for an allocation (whether through bidding under choice based lettings or through mutual exchange) is created solely because of the addition to their household of their partner. The partner must be eligible to become a tenant in their own right. This is in order to ensure the best use of council property and to protect the interests of both parties to the tenancy.

33) *Successions to tenancies*

33.1 Statutory successions

Tenancies created prior to 1 April 2012

Under the terms of the Housing Act 1985, where no succession to a tenancy has already taken place, specified family members may succeed to a secure tenancy on the death of the tenant, if certain conditions are met. This is known as a statutory succession. Where the successor tenant is the spouse, partner or civil partner of the tenant they will not be required to move even if under-occupying. If the statutory successor tenant will be under-occupying the property, they will be required to move to a property that is suited to their needs under the terms of this allocations scheme. The right of succession is to the tenancy, not the property.

Tenancies created from 1 April 2012

The Localism Act 2011 introduced changes to the law on succession rights. For tenancies created from 1st April 2012, the statutory right to succeed to a tenancy rests only with a spouse, partner or civil partner of the tenant, who was residing with the tenant as their only or principal home at the time of the tenant's death. Other family members will not have a statutory right to succeed to a tenancy.

33.2 Discretionary successions

Where a statutory succession to a tenancy has already taken place, or for a post April 2012 tenancy where there is no spouse, partner or civil partner eligible to succeed to the tenancy, the council will consider a request to succeed to the tenancy from certain family members or live-in carers who were resident with the tenant at the time of the death of the tenant. They must be eligible to join the housing register and qualify for an offer of accommodation in their own right - see paragraphs 12 and 13 - and satisfy certain other conditions as set out in the council's succession policy. This is known as a discretionary succession. The council's policy on discretionary succession may change from time to time and more information is available on the council's website www.stevenage.gov.uk .

In **every case** where the council has agreed a discretionary succession and there is under-occupation of the existing property, the discretionary successor will be required to move to a property that is suited to their needs under the terms of this allocations scheme. They will be subject to time limited bidding under choice based lettings but if they fail to bid or are unsuccessful in their bids, then a direct allocation of a suitable property will be made. Only one direct allocation will be made and if this is refused, the council will consider that the discretion is no longer justified and the discretionary successor will be required to leave the property and make their own arrangements for their future housing. The council will take legal action to recover possession of the property in occupation by the discretionary successor if they refuse to leave the property.

34) *Mutual exchanges*

A mutual exchange is a way for tenants to resolve their own housing need or desire to move to different property or area by swapping their home with another council or registered provider tenant.

34.1 Who can apply for a mutual exchange?

Secure council tenants have the right under the terms of the Housing Act 1985, as amended by the Housing Act 2004, to exchange homes with other council tenants and certain registered provider tenants.

Introductory tenants do not have the right to exchange, but applications from introductory tenants will be considered on an individual basis. Where an exchange is agreed for an introductory tenant, the introductory tenancy will continue at the new property.

Council tenants seeking a mutual exchange have free access to a national mutual exchange matching service. This service publishes details of council and registered provider tenants seeking an exchange both locally and nationally. More information on the service can be found at the council's website www.stevenage.org.uk.

There are other mutual exchange matching services available to tenants but tenants should be aware that there may be a cost involved in participating.

The senior officer housing needs panel will consider appeals from tenants against decisions to refuse consent to a mutual exchange.

The council will not consider applications to mutual exchange from tenants with licence or non-secure tenancy agreements, including demoted tenants.

34.2 Criteria for consent to a mutual exchange

The council will consider requests for mutual exchanges in line with the terms of the Housing Act 1985 as amended by the Housing Act 2004.

There are a limited number of grounds under which the council can refuse a request for a mutual exchange. These grounds are shown in Schedule 3 of the Housing Act 1985 as amended by the Housing Act 2004 and include:

- where a tenant has been served a notice of seeking possession for any reason and that notice is still valid
- where the council holds a county court possession order against a tenant
- where the exchange would result in significant overcrowding or under-occupation
- where the exchange would result in a sheltered bungalow or flat, or a flat connected by a hard wired community alarm, being occupied by a household where no person was above the age of 60
- where the exchange would result in a property built or substantially adapted for use by a disabled person being occupied by a household where no person has such a disability
- where either party to the proposed exchange has had action taken against them in respect of anti-social behaviour or such action is pending. Action can include injunctions, anti-social behaviour orders or acceptable behaviour contracts

The table below shows the criteria that the council will use to decide if a property will be overcrowded or under-occupied following a mutual exchange. **Applicants should be aware that if they are receiving housing benefit, they may be affected by the reduction in housing benefit for bedrooms that are considered to be “spare bedrooms” according to welfare benefit reform legislation.**

Family composition	Size and type of accommodation permitted on mutual exchange
Single Person	Studio flat/one or two bedroom flat (and two bedroom house if downsizing from larger house)
Eligible couple, no children	One or two bedroom property
Related non-couple (e.g. brother and sister)	Two or three bedroom property
Family with a pregnancy (MATB1 Evidence Required)	Two or three bedroom property
Family and one child	Two or three bedroom property
Family and two children	Two, three or four bedroom property
Family and three children	Three or four bedroom property
Family and four or more children	Large three or four or five bedroom property

The council will consider exchanges outside the above standard only where the exchange leads to no increase in under-occupation of our property.

The council may approve an exchange subject to certain conditions. For example, an exchange may be allowed to go ahead only if rent arrears are cleared in full before moving.

When the council has approved a mutual exchange under the terms of the Housing Act 1985 as amended by the Housing Act 2004, the exchange will be carried out by way of assignment of the tenancies involved.

However, the Localism Act 2011 has introduced flexible (or fixed term) tenancies. The council has made a decision not to use these new tenancies at this time; however some other local authority and registered provider landlords are using flexible tenancies. When an existing secure tenant of the council wishes to mutually exchange with someone holding a flexible tenancy with another landlord then they will have to take the new tenancy as a flexible tenancy. In such cases, the exchange will be carried out by the surrender of both existing tenancies and then the granting of new tenancies by both landlords.

34.3 Mutual exchanges by Low Start Shared Ownership (LSSO) lessees

Low start shared ownership (LSSO) lessees of the council do not have a statutory right to exchange as they are not secure tenants. However, the council will consider on a discretionary basis applications to mutually exchange from LSSO lessees who own no more than 5% of the freehold of the property.

Applications will only be considered where **all** parties to the proposed exchange have an identified housing need that would be met if the exchange took place. We consider an identified housing need to mean the applicant would otherwise be placed in band A to E of the housing register.

Decisions on applications to mutually exchange made by LSSO lessees will be made by the senior officer housing needs panel.

35) Re-Housing Guarantee Scheme

The Council has decided following consultation, not to continue it's 're-housing guarantee scheme' but will honour all existing commitments under that scheme.'

36) *Senior Officer Housing Needs Panel*

The senior officer housing needs panel is made up of a group of senior housing managers from the council who meet regularly to discuss specific housing allocations cases.

The make-up of the panel is prescribed in the Senior Officer Housing Needs Panel Protocol. The Housing Portfolio Holder or their representative has the opportunity to attend meetings and observe the panel's discussions.

Under its terms of reference the Lead Officer on the panel has the power to approve an application being placed in band B of the housing allocations scheme in cases where there is an urgency to be re-housed that falls outside the rules of this allocations scheme. Such cases will include but are not limited to:

36.1 Priority transfer in exceptional circumstances

If a council or registered provider tenant has an urgent need for re-housing due to exceptional factors, the panel may agree a priority transfer. This will only be agreed if other options are not available or not feasible.

The panel will consider all cases on their own merits. Where it has been decided that a priority transfer is justified the application will be placed in band B. The tenant will only be able to bid for a property that is of the **same size (or smaller) and type that they currently occupy** (a like-for-like transfer), and bids for properties in the area in which the tenant currently lives, or in any area that poses a risk to personal safety relevant to the reason for the priority transfer, will not be considered. The panel may make a decision to make a direct offer of a like-for-like property rather than allow the tenant to bid under CBL.

Under exceptional circumstances there may be a need to agree a move to larger accommodation. The panel will consider such requests on their own merits but only when the tenant is otherwise likely to be successful in bidding for a larger property within the next 12 months.

Because the circumstances must be exceptional and the need for re-housing considered urgent, applicants granted priority transfer status will be subject to time-limited bidding - see paragraph 23. Following a priority transfer to a like-for-like property, applicants who are already on the housing register will retain their existing priority and date in band.

Should the tenant fail to bid appropriately, we will consider that the urgency is no longer justified, the senior officer housing needs panel points will be removed and the application re-assessed and placed in the appropriate band.

36.2 Very severe hardship or welfare cases

The panel will consider cases on severe hardship or welfare grounds. These will normally be cases where an applicant is the victim or witness to a crime and needs to move urgently, usually on police advice, as a result of harassment amounting to violence or threats of violence. The panel will consider a case only when written confirmation from the police or other agency of both the threat and the urgency of the need to move has been received and that a move within Stevenage is recommended.

Where the panel decides that urgency is justified, the application will be placed in band B. Because the level of priority awarded recognises the seriousness of the situation, applicants granted very severe hardship and welfare status will be subject to time-limited bidding - see paragraph 23. Should the applicant fail to bid appropriately we will consider that the urgency is no longer justified, the senior officer housing needs panel points will be removed and the application re-assessed and placed in the appropriate band.

36.3 Succession to tenancy cases

When a person has the right to succeed to a tenancy under the terms of the Housing Act 1985 or the Localism Act 2011, and the property in question is too large or otherwise unsuitable for their needs, the successor tenant will be required to move to smaller, more

suitable accommodation - see paragraph 32.1. However, the panel will consider representations from a successor tenant to remain under occupying an existing property where there is supporting evidence to demonstrate that there are no other options available and/or when legal advice suggests that the County Court would not grant the council a possession order under Ground 16 of Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985. There may be housing benefit implications in these cases - see paragraph 29.

The panel will also consider:

36.4 Fraudulent housing applications

Where investigations have shown that a fraudulent housing register application has been submitted, or that a tenancy has been obtained by virtue of a fraudulent housing register application, the panel will, on receipt of advice from the council's legal section, consider whether to commence legal proceedings. Any legal proceedings are to be agreed by the Head of Housing Management or by a Strategic Director.

36.5 Mutual exchanges outside the criteria

Applications to mutual exchange from low start shared ownership lessees of the council, who do not have the right to exchange, must be considered by the panel - see paragraph 34.3.

The panel will also consider appeals against decisions to refuse consent to a mutual exchange under Schedule 3 of the Housing Act 1985 as amended by the Housing Act 2004.

36.6 Other exceptions

The panel will also consider cases of any other exceptions to this allocations scheme.

Any council officer can refer a case to the senior officer housing needs panel for consideration.

37) *Cancelling an application*

An application will be cancelled in any of the following circumstances:

- the applicant has requested cancellation of their application in writing
- a sole application is being replaced by a joint one, or vice versa
- the applicant does not respond to a review or to a request to contact the council or to provide information
- the applicant has moved and has not informed the lettings team of the council of a change of address
- correspondence addressed to the applicant at their last notified address is returned to the council marked "no longer at this address" or "not known at this address" or similar wording
- there is no response to an email sent to the applicant at their last notified email address

- the applicant is re-housed via the housing register or a mutual exchange
- the applicant has succeeded to or been assigned a secure tenancy or an assured tenancy of a registered provider
- the applicant is found to have given false or misleading information, or has not disclosed relevant information, in connection with their application
- under current immigration legislation, the applicant no longer has recourse to public funds and/or no longer has indefinite leave to remain in the UK and so is no longer entitled to be housed or be allowed to remain on the housing register
- the applicant has commenced the Right to Buy process
- the applicant has become the owner of residential property, whether solely or jointly - see paragraph 13.3 for the definition of ownership of residential property.
- the behaviour of the applicant(s) or a member of their household means the applicant is no longer considered to be suitable to be a tenant
- the applicant 's circumstances change and they are no longer eligible or no longer qualify to have a housing register application – see paragraphs 12 and 13

If an application is cancelled, the lettings team will notify the applicant of the reason for the cancellation at the last notified address and email address on their records. Letters will be sent by recorded delivery.

38) *Re-application to the housing register*

An applicant who has their application cancelled can re-apply to join the housing register at any time. A new application will be considered under the eligibility and qualification criteria and if the application is accepted it will be re-assessed according to the applicant's circumstances at the time. The effective date of application will be the date we receive the new application form and all the required proofs.

39) *Reviewing applications*

The council will review all applications from time to time. Applicants will be asked to confirm whether they wish to remain on the housing register and whether there has been any change to their circumstances.

A review will also be carried out when an applicant does not respond to an offer of a property under choice based lettings or has not responded to a request to contact the council about their application, or following demotion to band F for failure to bid.

All review correspondence will be sent to the applicant at the last notified address on our records and the last notified email address on our records. If the applicant fails to respond to a review within 28 days their application will be cancelled – see paragraph 36.

40) *Choice Based Lettings (CBL)*

40.1 Statement of choice on CBL

The council operates a choice based lettings (CBL) scheme called Home4U for available council-owned properties and nominations to available properties owned by registered provider landlords. Available homes are advertised weekly on our CBL website

www.home4u.org.uk and applicants are invited to bid to become the new tenant of the home. A hard copy of details of the available homes can be provided on request to applicants without internet access. Information on bidding and how to bid is also available at www.home4U.org.uk

The council is committed to offering applicants accepted onto the housing register as much choice as possible and applicants may express preference by bidding under CBL. However, this must be balanced against the council's need to abide by its legal obligations and its responsibility to make best use of the council's stock.

Applicants in bands A to E can bid under CBL. Bids will be disregarded when they are for a size or type of property for which the applicant does not meet the criteria.

Applicants in band F are not permitted to bid under CBL.

Applicants who are successful in a bid for a nomination to a registered provider landlord will also have to satisfy any rules or allocations criteria imposed by the registered provider before the nomination can be accepted by the registered provider. The registered provider landlord has the final say on whether to accept a nomination - see also paragraph 39.10.

40Direct allocations

A property can be withdrawn from CBL where a direct allocation is required under the circumstances described elsewhere in this allocations scheme; or where it is necessary to make an allocation of accommodation outside the terms of this allocations scheme. Such instances include, but are not limited to:

- A property is required to accommodate a tenant by way of a decant in an emergency, for example, fire or flood
- A senior manager has decided that a tenant must be decanted temporarily while major works are undertaken in their home
- a property is needed to provide temporary accommodation under the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002
- where the case is particularly sensitive, such as a witness protection case, or the case has been brought forward under the terms of the Adult Offenders Accommodation Protocol. Decisions on these cases will be made by the Head of Housing Management and the Head of Business Strategy. Community and Customer Services
- A rarely available property for example becomes available (5/6 bedroom home or specially adapted home) and the council has identified an applicant with an urgent housing need for a property of that type
- Where a direct allocation is identified as making best use of the council's housing stock
- A property is required to enable a council tenant with no reasonable preference to transfer - see paragraph 39.3
- A property is required as a direct allocation under the Council's Policy on the Purchase of Open Market Properties to Assist Vulnerable Homeowners to Move into More Suitable Accommodation and to Support the Prevention of Homelessness.

In these cases a property will be removed from CBL and a direct allocation made.

Every effort will be made not to withdraw a property from CBL after the property has been advertised. However there may be extenuating circumstances where doing so is unavoidable.

Other allocations made outside the terms of this allocations scheme occur when the property involved is not available for re-letting. These include

- tenancy transfers made by court order
 - statutory succession to a tenancy
 - assignment of a tenancy
 - mutual exchange of tenancies
 - introductory tenancies converted to secure tenancies
- allocations made when a property is acquired through the Council's Policy on the Purchase of Open Market Properties to Assist Vulnerable Homeowners to Move into More Suitable Accommodation and to Support the Prevention of Homelessness (where the vendor is offered an introductory tenancy of the same property, where this would prevent them from losing their home through repossession).

40.3 Allocations to tenants who do not have reasonable preference

Under the terms of the Localism Act 2011, applications from existing tenants who wish to transfer no longer have to be assessed on the same basis as households applying on the housing register, unless the council considers these households to have reasonable preference for an offer of accommodation - see paragraph 8. The Council will agree an Annual Lettings Plan that sets a quota of properties of different sizes to be offered to transferring tenants - see paragraph 40.

40.4 Proxy and assisted bidding

The council is committed to ensuring that all applicants have access to CBL and are not disadvantaged in any way because they are vulnerable or have special needs. Such applicants could include the elderly, or those with mental health problems or learning disabilities or those who require a property that is purpose built or adapted for a disabled person. The council will make every effort to identify applicants who may need assistance with CBL and offer to help in the following ways:

- by ensuring that wherever possible an applicant's own support network is capable of assisting with the CBL process
- by assisted bidding – the council will advise the applicant when suitable properties are advertised and assist them in making bids
- by proxy bidding – with the agreement of the applicant, the council will identify when suitable properties are advertised and make a proxy bid on their behalf

40.5 Allocations of accommodation under CBL

Following the close of the bidding round, the bids that meet the criteria for each property will be shortlisted. The top bidding applicant will normally be the applicant with the earliest effective date of application within the highest band. Where a property has been advertised under a local lettings policy or quota, or targeted at a particular group of

applicants, the top bidder will be shortlisted accordingly.

40.6 Pre-tenancy interview and verification check

All applicants who will be new tenants of the council (including those housed outside choice based lettings, such as via an external mutual exchange) must attend a pre-tenancy interview before being offered the tenancy of a council home. Council tenants transferring will not normally be required to attend.

We will also carry out verification checks on applicants who will be new tenants of the council. These checks are to ensure that all the information we hold relating to an application is up to date. Verification checks may be carried out as part of the pre-tenancy interview process or we may carry out a home visit prior to an appointment to view. Following the pre-tenancy interview, tenancy training will be offered to applicants where it is considered appropriate.

We will contact the successful applicant at their last notified address, email address or telephone number and arrange a pre-tenancy interview and verification check. If the successful applicant does not respond to this contact within two working days, or fails to attend an appointment for a pre-tenancy interview and verification check, their application will be disregarded and the next shortlisted applicant will be contacted.

Following a successful pre-tenancy interview and verification check the successful applicant will be invited to view the property. At the viewing, they will be offered the tenancy of the property and invited to sign an acceptance form. If an applicant requests more time to make a decision, they will be asked to contact the lettings team with their decision by 9.30am on the next working day.

If the applicant refuses the offer of a tenancy, or fails to contact the lettings team with their decision by 9.30am on the next working day, the next shortlisted applicant will be invited to view and accept an offer of the tenancy of the property, and so on until an offer is accepted.

From time to time it may be necessary to arrange multiple viewings of a property. In these circumstances, the decision on whether to accept a tenancy must be made at the viewing. The offer of a tenancy will be made to the top bidder present, if refused to the next ranked bidder and so on until the offer of a tenancy is accepted.

Where two or more bidders have the same effective date of application within a band, the council will give priority to the applicant with the earliest original date of application.

The council will disregard the highest shortlisted bidder and invite the next shortlisted bidder to view in the following circumstances:

- where priority is given to a particular group and the applicant is not in that group
- under the terms of this allocations scheme, the applicant does not meet the criteria for the property bid for
- the applicant failed to respond within two working days to a request to arrange pre-tenancy interview and verification check
- the applicant fails to attend an arranged viewing

- the applicant has pets and the property bid for is not suitable for certain pets
- the applicant is a tenant of the council or a registered provider and following their successful bid they are found to have committed anti-social behaviour or to have rent arrears, or their current property is found not to meet the leaving standard, or they have committed any other breach of tenancy conditions
- following their successful bid, an applicant is found to not qualify for the housing register - see paragraph 13

40.7 Failure to bid under CBL

Where an applicant fails to make any bids for suitable properties over a two year period or more, we will consider that the applicant is not in housing need and their application will be placed in band F for a period of six months.

After six months the application will be reviewed and if there is no response the application will be cancelled – see paragraph 36. If the applicant responds to the review, the application will be re-assessed and placed in the appropriate band with a new effective date.

40.8 Refusal of an offer under CBL

While the council is committed to offering applicants accepted onto the housing register as much choice as possible, the vast gap between the supply and demand of social housing means that we expect the refusal of offers of accommodation following a successful bid to be few and far between.

Applicants who bid successfully under CBL but subsequently fail to attend viewing appointments, or refuse an offer of a tenancy without good cause, become a burden on the administration of the scheme and could be denying other applicants the opportunity to shortlist for properties.

An applicant may withdraw their bid for a property without penalty at any stage of the bidding process **up to the close of the bidding round**. However, if an applicant is the successful bidder on a property but fails to attend a viewing appointment, or refuses the offer of a tenancy without good reason, this will count as a reasonable offer refused.

Representations from an applicant that they had good reason to refuse the offer of a tenancy will be considered on a case by case basis. However, since full details of the property such as property type, size, floor level (if applicable), street name and rent due are given on the property advertisement on the Home4U website, we expect that the number of occasions we would consider a refusal to be reasonable to be very few.

If an applicant refuses two reasonable offers in this way, their application will be demoted to band F for a period of six months. At the end of this period their application will be reassessed and placed in the appropriate band with a new effective date.

40.9 Withdrawal of an offer of a tenancy made under CBL

The council may withdraw the offer of a tenancy made under choice based lettings in certain circumstances, including:

- the property is found to be not suitable for the applicant's needs
- the council has decided that the applicant does not meet the criteria for the offer
- the applicant is a tenant of the council and they have not responded to a request or allowed a pre-void inspection of their home, or their current property is found not to meet the leaving standard.
- the applicant is found to have an outstanding housing related debt - see paragraph 26
- the applicant has not responded to an offer by 9.30am of the next working day following a viewing, unless the allocating officer has agreed a longer period
- the applicant is found to be not eligible to join the housing register or qualify for an offer of accommodation - see paragraphs 12 and 13 - or further investigations into their application are needed
- only one party to a joint tenancy attends the letting appointment

This list is not exhaustive and there may be other circumstances where an offer of a tenancy may be withdrawn. If an offer is withdrawn the council will tell the applicant the reason why in writing and will ask the applicant to contact the lettings team immediately. The application will be placed in band F pending contact from the applicant. If no contact is made the application will be cancelled - see paragraph 36.

40.10 Withdrawal of a nomination to a registered provider under CBL

In addition to the above circumstances, the council will withdraw an offer of a nomination made to a registered provider if the nomination would not meet the rules of the registered provider concerning rent arrears, household income, household size, pet ownership and others. All registered providers reserve the right to refuse to accept a nomination if the applicant does not qualify to be housed under their own rules.

40.11 Acceptance of an offer made under CBL

If an applicant accepts an offer of a council tenancy and the property is ready for letting they will be invited to sign for the tenancy and complete all necessary paperwork, including a financial assessment.

Where the offer is of a joint tenancy, then both parties to the tenancy must attend the letting appointment to sign the paperwork. If only one party attends, the letting will not proceed and the offer of a tenancy will be withdrawn.

If an applicant is a tenant of the council or a local registered provider, they must give up vacant possession of their existing property and the keys must be returned to the council's customer service centre or to the registered provider, by an agreed date. If keys are returned late, the tenant will be charged rent on both properties.

When the tenancy agreement has been signed, the tenant's housing register application will be cancelled. A new housing register application must be completed if the tenant wishes to be considered for re-housing in the future.

Acceptance of a nomination to a registered provider and arrangements for viewing and letting will be subject to the rules of that registered provider.

40.12 Feedback on CBL

The council will regularly produce feedback on CBL lettings and will publish this information on the Home4U website www.home4u.org.uk. The feedback will include:

- how many properties of each type were available
- how many applicants bid for each property
- the band and effective date of application of the successful bidders

More detailed feedback will be provided in News4U, the council's bi-annual report on choice based lettings that is published on the member's page of www.home4U.org.uk.

This information is provided to enable applicants to see what properties were available in what areas and how popular those properties were. This will help applicants to assess how long it may be before they are likely to make a successful bid for a property of a type and in an area of their choice. Applicants who use the Home4U website can also access information on their individual bidding history and see the outcomes of the bidding on the properties they bid for.

The council will also regularly publish accurate and anonymised information on the household characteristics of housing register applicants and new tenants.

41) *Target lettings*

41.1 Annual Lettings Plan

In order to ensure that the right balance is found between the different reasonable preference groups, the council will agree an Annual Lettings Plan that outlines how the anticipated supply of lettings over the year ahead will be shared between different bands. The Annual Lettings Plan will also set targets for allocations to the differing groups of applicants (housing register, transfer register, homeless). We must ensure we provide a reasonable proportion of allocations to the different reasonable preference groups on the housing register, and ensure that one group does not dominate the scheme.

The Annual Lettings Plan will be monitored and reviewed regularly. If monitoring shows that we are not achieving the allocation targets set out in the plan we reserve the right to implement a quota system until the desired balance is reached.

41.2 Target direct allocations

The council will target a proportion of properties (a quota) for direct allocation - see paragraph 39.2. This will include properties to be allocated to council tenants with no reasonable preference who wish to transfer. The council will hold a separate register of tenants with no reasonable preference wanting to transfer and properties will be offered to tenants from this register as direct allocations - see paragraph 39.3.

41.3 Local lettings plans

From time to time the council may produce a local lettings plan in order to address a specific local issue such as child density or anti-social behaviour or in order to make

best use of the council's stock. Local lettings plans will also be used when allocating new build properties. Where a local lettings plan is agreed for a group of properties or for a locality or a particular property type, the plan will be published on the council's website www.stevenage.gov.uk. Properties will be clearly marked as included in a local lettings plan when advertised under choice based lettings.

42) *Homeless applicants*

The council has a statutory duty under part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, to secure housing for those who fall within the criteria as described in the legislation **and** are homeless or threatened with homelessness within 28 days.

The council has adopted a homelessness prevention approach to all enquiries relating to homelessness and in every case will seek to prevent the applicant from becoming homeless by using a variety of interventions.

Such interventions may include negotiating with landlords to extend a private rented sector tenancy, assisting with securing a private rented sector tenancy with the help of a tenancy deposit guarantee, or mediation with family or friends to allow an applicant to remain in their present home

42.1 Homelessness prevention.

In exceptional cases, where a full housing needs appraisal establishes that the council would otherwise owe the full homelessness duty to assist under section 193 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, we are able to negotiate to enable an applicant to remain in their present home on a short term basis only. In these cases the applicant will be placed in band B of the register until alternative accommodation is secured for them. The date in band will be the effective date that the council would otherwise owe the full housing duty as agreed by a senior manager.

This may be an offer of accommodation secured by one of the following:

- the council securing suitable accommodation with a private sector landlord
- the applicant bidding under choice based lettings
- the council bidding on behalf of the applicant
- the council making a direct allocation of suitable accommodation

42.2 Discharge of duty under section 193 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended

In cases where homelessness prevention interventions are unsuccessful, we may refer the case to the homelessness team for an assessment under homelessness legislation. Where a full duty under section 193 of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 is triggered, the applicant will be given temporary accommodation, which may be accommodation in the private rented sector or in the council's own housing stock. While we will try to offer accommodation in our own area, this may not always be possible and in some circumstances an offer of temporary

accommodation will need to be made out of area. Offers of temporary accommodation will be made according to the availability of such accommodation. No choice of temporary accommodation will be given.

The application will be placed in band B of the housing register until alternative accommodation is secured for them in discharge of our duty under section 193.

This may be an offer of accommodation secured by one of the following:

- the council securing suitable accommodation with a private sector landlord in accordance with the Council's Private Sector Discharge Policy
- the applicant bidding under choice based lettings
- the council bidding on behalf of the applicant
- the council making a direct allocation of suitable accommodation

42.3 Refusal of an offer to homeless or homelessness prevention applicants

Whatever option results in an offer of suitable alternative accommodation, this will be considered a final offer of accommodation and only one such offer will be made.

Where this offer is made in discharge of a section 193 duty and is refused, if the applicant is occupying temporary accommodation they will be required to vacate this accommodation and make their own arrangements for their future housing. Applicants may request a review of a decision - see paragraph 41.4.

Applicants being considered under homelessness prevention measures will also be required to make their own arrangements for their future housing.

The council considers that this approach is consistent with our homelessness prevention agenda and also supports our commitment to ensure that homeless applicants do not dominate allocations to the detriment of other applicants who also have reasonable preference for an allocation of housing.

42.4 Review of decisions on final offers of accommodation under section 193

Under the terms of the Housing Act 1996 section 193(2) Part VII as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, an applicant has the right to a review of the suitability of a final offer of housing in discharge of the final duty owed under this legislation. Reviews must be requested in writing within 21 days of the date the applicant was notified of the decision. An applicant may accept a final offer of accommodation and at the same time request a review on its suitability and applicants will be encouraged to take up this option to ensure that if they lose their appeal they will still have accommodation available to them.

43) *Right to request a review*

Under the terms of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Localism Act 2011, applicants have a right to information about certain decisions that are taken in respect of their applications and the right to request a review of those decisions.

The council must notify applicants in writing of a decision that they are not eligible to join the housing register or do not qualify to join the housing register. This notification must

give clear grounds for the decision, which will be firmly based on the relevant facts of the case, and must also advise the applicant of their right to request a review of the decision.

Applicants may also request a review of any decision made in connection with their application. This could include:

- assessment of their banding
- reasonableness of a direct allocation
- cancellation of an application

We would encourage applicants unhappy with a decision to contact their caseworker in the lettings team in the first instance and explain why they think the decision is not reasonable. If the caseworker upholds the original decision then the applicant should make a formal request in writing for the decision to be reviewed. The letter should explain why the applicant feels the decision is wrong and provide supporting information where possible. The review must be requested with 21 days of the date of the original decision letter.

The review will be conducted by a manager senior to the officer that made the decision and who was not involved in the original decision making process. The applicant may provide the reviewing officer with any new information relevant to their case, for example the settlement of rent arrears or removal from the household of a person causing anti-social behaviour. We aim to give a full response to a request for a review with 56 days, however where this deadline cannot be met we will notify the applicant of the delay and the reasons for it. Applicants will be sent a written notification of the outcome of the review that will set out the reasons for the decision.

There is no further right to a review of a decision. If an applicant remains dissatisfied they may seek independent legal advice regarding their situation. Applicants may also pursue a complaint through the council's formal three stage complaints procedure. If they remain dissatisfied having done so they may then take their case to the Housing Ombudsman. More information of the complaints procedure is available on the council's website www.stevenage.gov.uk

Applicants seeking a review of a decision, made by a registered provider, not to accept a nomination from the council - see paragraph 39.10 - must do so through the appeal and review procedure of that registered provider.

44) *Monitoring and reviewing the allocations scheme*

The allocations scheme will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it meets its stated objectives, complies with existing and proposed legislation and guidance, and does not operate in a manner that disadvantages, or discriminates against, any particular group.

The allocations scheme will be monitored for any unintended consequences over the first twelve months of operation.

45) *Contacting the council*

You can contact Stevenage Borough Council:

By writing to:

Lettings or or Housing Advice
Stevenage Borough Council
Daneshill House
Danestrete,
Stevenage
Herts
SG1 1HN

By telephoning: 01438 242242

By emailing:

lettings@stevenage.gov.uk if you have a query regarding your housing register application
or this allocations scheme

housing.advice@stevenage.gov.uk if you would like advice on your housing options

Our website address is:

www.stevenage.gov.uk

Brief Equality Impact Assessment

For a minor operational change / review / simple analysis

Page 369

What is being assessed?	The review of the Allocations Policy	What are the key aims of it?	1. That those at risk of Homelessness, who present themselves to SBC, who subsequently self-source alternative accommodation outside of the Borough retain their local connection for 2 years. 2. That the 5 year local connection rule is extended to 5 years out of the last 7 years. 3. That those who are under-occupying their current property are given a priority banding allowing them to bid for properties via the Choice Based Letting system process. For households under-occupying by 2 bedrooms a band b to be applied and for those under-occupying by 1 bed for a Band C to be applied.		
Who may be affected by it?	All households seeking social housing in Stevenage				
Date of full EqIA on service area (planned or completed)	November 2015				
Form completed by:	Walter Oglina	Start date	24 March 2017	End date	1 February 2017
		Review date	1 February 2019		

What data / information are you using to inform your assessment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislation and Statutory Guidance Consultation feedback Jan 2018 	Have any information gaps been identified along the way? If so, please specify	N/A
------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modelling how the scheme would affect successful applications allocated social housing • Analyses of Housing register applicants and needs • Benchmarking • Case studies 		
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Explain the potential positive, negative or unequal impact on the following characteristics and how likely this is:			
Age	Positive - likely	Race	n/a
Disability	n/a	Religion or belief	n/a
Gender reassignment	n/a	Sex	n/a
Marriage or civil partnership	n/a	Sexual orientation	n/a
Pregnancy & maternity	n/a	Socio-economic ¹	n/a
Other	n/a		

Where there is a likely positive impact , please explain how it will help to fulfil our legislative duties to:					
Remove discrimination & harassment		Promote equal opportunities	To provide equal access to service for under-occupiers as is provided to over-crowded households	Encourage good relations	For those under-occupying to provide greater opportunity to move house.

What further work / activity is needed as a result of this assessment?

¹Although non-statutory, the council has chosen to implement the Socio-Economic Duty and so decision-makers should use their discretion to consider the impact on people with a socio-economic disadvantage.

Action	Responsible officer	How will this be delivered and monitored?	Deadline
If a negative or unequal (high or low) impact has been identified, you should assess this further in a Full EqIA			

Approved by Head of Service / Strategic Director:

Date:

Please send this EqIA to equalities@stevenage.gov.uk

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Glossary of terms

- 1 Homeless prevention/risk of homelessness – this is where a household, whilst adequately housed at time of approaching Stevenage Borough Council (so a duty is not owed), will be at risk of homelessness due to notice being served, affordability (rent arrears) etc.

The Housing Advice Team work with the household to prevent homelessness and seek alternative housing options to prevent a homelessness application.

- 2 Direct Lets – Section 39.2 of the Allocations Policy allows the allocation of properties outside of Choice Based Lettings. This is where a property will not be advertised but offered directly to an applicant. Examples where this may happen are as follows:

- A property is required to accommodate a tenant by way of a decant in an emergency, for example, fire or flood
- A senior manager has decided that a tenant must be decanted temporarily while major works are undertaken in their home
- a property is needed to provide temporary accommodation under the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002
- Where the case is particularly sensitive, such as a witness protection case or the case has been brought forward under the terms of the Adult Offenders Accommodation Protocol. Decisions on these cases will be made by the Head of Housing Management and the Head of Business Strategy. Community and Customer Services
- A rarely available property for example becomes available (5/6 bedroom home or specially adapted home) and the council has identified an applicant with an urgent housing need for a property of that type
- Where a direct allocation is identified as making best use of the council's housing stock
- A property is required to enable a council tenant with no reasonable preference to transfer - see paragraph 39.3

A property is required as a direct allocation under the Council's Policy on the Purchase of Open Market Properties to Assist Vulnerable Homeowners to Move into More Suitable Accommodation and to Support the Prevention of Homelessness

Currently the percentage of lettings allocated to directs under the quota is 10%

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Meeting: EXECUTIVE

Portfolio Area: Housing, Health and Older People



Date: 13 MARCH 2018

RETROFITTING FIRE SUPPRESSANT SPRINKLER SYSTEMS TO RESIDENTIAL TOWER BLOCKS – PROGRAMME PROPOSAL (SEE ALSO PART II REPORT)

KEY DECISION

Author	Steve McAlinden	Ext. 2740
Lead Officer	Jaine Cresser	Ext. 2028
Contact Officer	Steve McAlinden	Ext. 2740

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek approval to commence a programme of retrofitting Fire Suppressant Sprinkler Systems to all of the Council's 7 high rise flat blocks, including 2 sheltered schemes. These works will provide additional fire safety measures to our residential high rise flat blocks. The budget for these works is not covered in the HRA business plan.
- 1.2 As the financial implications detailed in the Part II report are above the Executive's contingency budget agreed by Council these proposals must be considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee before the Executive finalises its recommendations to Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That subject to the approval of the Executive, the proposals set out in this report and the related financial provisions set out in the accompanying part 2 report, be referred to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee before the final recommendations Council are approved.
- 2.2 That a Fire Suppressant Sprinkler System (FSSS) as specified by the Feasibility Study carried out by John Rowan and Partners (JRP) be retrofitted to all properties as stated in para 1.1. These works are fully endorsed by Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue.
- 2.3 That the retrofit programme led by the Investment Team will be delivered by a single appointed contractor.
- 2.4 That the contract be offered to market via advertised tender using the "Restricted Procedure" for a term of one year.

Part I Release to Press

- 2.5 That it be noted that these works are deemed improvements and as such will not be rechargeable to leaseholders.
- 2.6 That approval is given for officers to procure a Retrofitting Fire Suppressant Sprinkler Systems Contract in order to provide additional fire safety within all of our residential high rise flat blocks.
- 2.7 That all means of information and communication with residents, pertaining to the installation, ongoing maintenance and operation of the FSSS be utilised.
- 2.8 That it be noted SBC is undertaking this programme prior to the anticipated changes in regulations regarding Fire Safety and Building Control following the publication of the Building a Safer Future, Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety (Dec 2017) (Hackitt Report). It is very likely that further Fire Safety related works might come to force in the near future and that note be given to the outcomes.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Following the tragic events at Grenfell Tower West London, SBC commissioned a consultant (John Rowan and Partners) to undertake inspections of our high rise flat blocks and provide a feasibility study in relation to the retrofit installation of a proprietary type sprinkler system.
 - 3.1.1 New build tower blocks over 30m in height require a sprinkler system installed under the Building Regulations Part B and this was enforced in 2007 but no legal requirement exists to have a sprinkler system fitted retrospectively.
 - 3.1.2 Following the Lakanal fatalities in 2009, HM Coroner issued a recommendation, known as rule 432, stating that social housing providers should be encouraged to consider the retrofitting of sprinklers in all existing high-rise buildings in excess of 30 meters in height, particularly those identified as having complex designs that make fire-fighting more hazardous and/or difficult. SBC does not have any high rise blocks identified as having a complex design.
 - 3.1.3 The Government has commissioned an independent review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety following the Grenfell Tower fire. The review is likely to result in changes to the current regulations; the nature of these changes will not be known until the review is complete but may include recommendations around the installation of sprinkler systems.
 - 3.1.4 Consultation with tenants and leaseholders should make it clear that proposed works are taking place before the review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety report is published, works may require alternative and or additional works.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION & OTHER OPTION

- 4.1 The Grenfell tragedy resulted in much scrutiny into fire safety measures across the country.
- 4.2 SBC carried out Home Safety visits to reassure residents and complete surveys of individual dwellings. There was generally a view that residents would welcome the addition of FSSS.
- 4.3 SBC officers consulted with the Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue who were also suggesting that retrofitting FSSS would enhance our current fire safety measures, help save lives and protect both residents and firefighters.
- 4.4 SBC subsequently undertook a feasibility study into the practicalities of retrofitting FSSS in 7 high rise blocks.

4.5 This section highlights how the project will be carried out and why: PROGRAMME PROPOSAL

4.5.1 Stakeholder Consultation / Information to Residents

The information for residents must achieve three objectives:

1. To provide knowledge of how the FSSS works.
2. To answer any questions and reassure residents of safety and reliability.
3. To highlight the process of installation and ongoing maintenance.

4.5.2 Pre-installation communication and information provision will take four forms:

- **Face-to-face:** open days; utilising existing residents' groups and forums; collaboration with other front line staff (e.g. SHO, Tenancy Officers, Caretakers); the appointed contractor's Resident Liaison Officer and Herts Fire and Rescue representatives; in extreme cases home visits (as per Home Safety Visits).
- **Leaflets and posters:** two individual leaflets to be designed: Installation process and Sprinklers 'how they work & what they do' including FAQ; general information posters to be displayed lobbies, lifts and other communal areas.
- **Online:** dedicated information page containing both 'installation' and 'sprinklers' information; emails to the dedicated Fire Safety inbox.
- **Telephone:** relevant staff will be provided with brief script as well as the information leaflets; Herts Fire and Rescue will endorse the programme should anyone call their numbers.

4.5.3 Throughout installation the following personnel will continue to provide information and support:

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- Contractor's Resident's Liaison Officer.
- Contractor's Site Managers.
- SBC's Project Officer.
- SBC's Project Manager.

4.5.4 Post installation communication will focus on the ongoing generation and reinforcement of behaviours and will include:

- Website.
- Leaflets to be included with any new tenancy agreement.
- Periodic reminders.
- Presence at forums.

4.5.5 Proposed timings of the information campaign:

- 60 days before the works commence residents will be mailed relevant information.
- 40 days before the works start posters will be displayed.
- 30 days before the works begin introduce contractor at open days and face-to-face meetings.

4.5.6 Strategies to deal with **NO ACCESS** and works refusal:

- Although tenants, under the terms of their tenancy agreement, cannot refuse or decline the works, access to each property will be key to the successful delivery of the installation.
- Although leaseholders, under the terms of their lease agreement, cannot refuse or decline the works, access to each property will be key to the successful delivery of the installation.
- The pre-installation communication and information provision stage will need to stress SBC's importance of and legal obligation to carry out Fire Safety related works. The relevant SBC departments will need to contribute towards minimising issues and gaining access where required.
- Residents must be fully informed about the benefits of the works, but also about the consequences refusal of the works might lead to.

4.6 Contractor

4.6.1 The contractor will be appointed in accordance with SBC's procurement policies and procedures. At around the same time SBC is entering into the Major Flat Block refurbishment programme and the FSSS works will have similar requirements which may result in competitive pricing.

4.6.2 The overall timeframe for all aspects of the proposed works including procurement, consultation, installation and commissioning, will be approximately 9 to 12 months.

4.6.3 The appointed contractor will:

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- Assist with information provision via meetings, forums, post etc.
- Comply with CDM 2014 (e.g. site set up, welfare facilities)
- Provide Residents' Liaison Officer.
- Provide required documentation and certificates.
- Propose programme/schedule of works.
- Supply skilled, trained and reliable workforce.
- Ensure flexible approach to appointments (e.g. offer weekend appointments if necessary).
- Design, install and commission FSSS in accordance with BS9251:2014.
- Carry out regular quality and compliance checks throughout the works.
- Provide a completion certificate, operational manual and schematics.
- Provide costs for the option of ongoing maintenance.

4.6.4 The proposed schedule of works is contained below:

- The works will take approximately 20 weeks at 6 days per week.
- The works are based on block-by-block, sequential programme.
 - Suggested start: Brent Court – 28 days.
 - Harrow Court – 28 days.
 - High Plash – 14 days.
 - The Towers – 14 days.
 - Shaftesbury Court – 12 days.
 - High Croft – 14 days.
 - Gladstone Court – 12 days.

4.7 The main objections or concerns anticipated to the retrofit of FSSS are detailed in the table below along with responses to each matter:

Objections/Concerns	Response
Access to 100% of flats.	The information campaign will raise the issue of importance from the very first conversation/interaction. The Project Lead will work closely with the Contractor and the Tenancy Team to enforce 100% using the terms of tenancy/leaseholder agreement.
Installation and maintenance costs recharges to residents.	There will be no installation charge to residents and no maintenance cost to residents in year 1. In subsequent years, the maintenance costs will be recuperated via service charges.
Disruption, duration and aesthetic issues.	Main inlet pipes run through corridors at ceiling level. T-in off into each property. The pipe will be installed where the ceiling meets the walls and will be boxed in.

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	<p>The sprinkler head will be side-mounted to the wall (not in the middle of the ceiling).</p> <p>Where possible the sprinkler heads will be mounted back-to-back (one room into another) eliminating the need to install pipes in every room.</p> <p>Each installation in individual flats will take approximately 1 day.</p> <p>Make good will be done immediately.</p>
Testing of installation.	The completed pipework will be air tested for leaks.
If one sprinkler head is activated, they are all activated.	That is not the case. Only the sprinklers closest to the fire will go off.
Water damage will be too severe.	A Typical sprinkler discharges 55 litres per minute. A firefighting hose discharges over 600 litres per minute. You can expect a sprinkler to discharge less than 5% of the water used by the fire service.
Sprinklers go off accidentally.	Records show that the chance of an accidental discharge from a sprinkler is in the region of 16 million to one.
Even at a low temperature (e.g. burned toast) sprinklers can go off.	The temperature required depends on the type of sprinkler head installed but is usually between 68 -74 degrees Celsius.
Ongoing maintenance.	Very low ongoing maintenance. 1 yearly service.
Longevity.	There are variations of lifespan, with the minimum of 20 years. Officers will be able to confirm once final decision on which type of components will be used.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial implications are covered separately in the Part 2 report.

5.2 Legal and Risk Implications

5.2.1 As with the procurement of all public contracts, there is a risk that procurement may be delayed due to 'challenges' made during the procurement process.

5.2.2 A watching brief is being kept on the implications of the Referendum result regarding the United Kingdom exiting from the European Union.

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- 5.2.3 Officers have also sought independent advice on the likely reaction of the UK construction industry to any possible future market conditions and how best to respond to any changes. It should be noted that this risk is beyond the ability of the Council to influence and will affect all of the Council's procurement affairs.
- 5.2.4 As demand increases for these type of installations there may be potential capacity issues for suitable contractors, along with inflated costs.
- 5.2.5 The retrofit of FSSS might have a positive impact on the Council's building insurance. The insurance premiums will have to be renegotiated.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

APPENDICES

None

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Meeting: Executive

Agenda Item:

Portfolio Area: All

Date: 13 March 2018

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE FOR QUARTER THREE 2017/18

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. To highlight the Council's performance across key priorities and themes for quarter three 2017/18.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That the delivery of priorities which form the Future Town, Future Council Programme and performance of the Council across the key themes during quarter three 2017/18 together with latest achievements be noted.
- 2.2. That the improvement plans for the Customer Service Centre and associated timeframe for delivery are endorsed (outlined in paragraphs 3.122 to 3.126).
- 2.3. That steps outlined to improve management of sickness absence across the Council are endorsed (outlined in paragraphs 3.135 to 3.138).

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. Members approved the new Cooperative Corporate Plan in December 2016. It reflects the Council's continuing focus on cooperative working and outlines the key outcomes and priorities for the town over the next five years through the Future Town, Future Council (FTFC) Programme as seen in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Future Town, Future Council Programme

- 3.2. The FTFC Programme consists of nine programmes with five external programmes focused on improving the quality of life for Stevenage residents through building houses, regenerating the town centre, improving housing services and how local people feel about their neighbourhoods. Four internal programmes aim to build strong foundations within the Council through improving processes and skills, and making sure the Council is fit for the future. This will aid delivery of the externally focused programmes.
- 3.3. During 2016/17, a senior management review was completed that will, at a strategic level, drive the development of a more sustainable, customer orientated and commercial operating model. The model is focused upon delivering the right services, to the right standards, at the right time for the town's residents and businesses, using the most cost/resource effective delivery models.
- 3.4. The senior management review resulted in the reorganisation of Business Units across three key delivery themes; Customer, Place, and Transformation and Support.
- 3.5. In addition to monitoring progress on the delivery of the FTFC Programme, performance across these themes is monitored to highlight achievements and identify any areas for improvement. This recognises the critical role all Assistant Directors play in the delivery of the Future Town, Future Council Programme, either as a lead on one or more of the nine FTFC programmes or as an enabler, delivering services across the three themes in support.
- 3.6. A complete set of performance measures across all themes (FTFC programme, and the customer, place, and transformation and support themes) is attached as Appendix One and an overview of results is provided at paragraph 3.76.

Future Town, Future Council programme progress update

- 3.7. The FTFC Programme was reviewed during the first half of 2017/18 to ensure governance arrangements remain effective as programmes move from planning to delivery during 2017/18. The focus and scope of programmes is monitored to ensure that the Programme continues to deliver the Council's priorities. The focus and scope of the FTFC programmes is outlined in Appendix Two.
- 3.8. The FTFC programme continues to perform well and is on track against delivery of the agreed outcomes. This is reflected in performance measure results aligned to FTFC delivery. Eleven measures were reported on for April to December 2017 (quarter 3) with just two measures not achieving target:
- FS3: Percentage of General Fund savings identified to meet three year target – paragraphs 3.63 to 3.66 refer.
 - FS4: Percentage of HRA savings identified to meet three year target – paragraphs 3.63 to 3.66 refer.

Stevenage Centre Town Centre Regeneration Programme

3.9. Programme Outcomes

- A new vibrant town centre delivered through a phased regeneration programme.
- Two major regeneration schemes to advance – one completed by 2020/21 and one to begin 2019/20.

3.10. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:

- Securing a development partner for the first phase of the town centre regeneration.
- Beginning development and progressing more detailed plans for a public sector hub in the town.
- Completing public realm improvements within the town centre.

3.11. Programme Delivery Update

- 3.12. The Council have appointed a development partner to take forward the Town Centre Regeneration. Mace, the international development and construction company behind some of the world's landmark developments – will be undertaking the first phase of regeneration (SG1). This ambitious scheme will bring £350million of private investment into the town centre and will see the area covering the Council (Daneshill House) offices, the Plaza, bus station and some of the adjacent car parks redeveloped with new shops, bars and restaurants, homes, new public spaces, and a central public sector hub accommodating the Council offices, a library, exhibition space, and health services.
- 3.13. Plans to improve the appearance of the North Façade buildings of Town Square and enhance the standard of the canopies were prepared during quarter. Tenders will be pursued during February with a view to a contractor being selected during March to carry out the improvements.
- 3.14. Initial designs for planned public realm improvements to Market Place have been developed and approved by Sponsors and Members. Engagement with local businesses is continuing to cover the timeframe, benefits and finished look of the planned enhancements. Options relating to the final designs will be completed during quarter four (January to March 2018).
- 3.15. Plans for the relocation of Council teams currently based in Swingate House are progressing. Engagement with teams affected has taken place setting out the plans for the area and identifying accommodation requirements. Relocation plans will be finalised during quarter four for approval by the relevant Assistant Director or Service Manager.
- 3.16. Plans are in place to open a visitor centre in the former subway unit in the town centre Plaza. Through a partnership involving the regeneration team, Mace, and Stevenage Museum, the centre will illustrate some of Stevenage's heritage as the first post-war New Town, celebrate some of the cutting-edge technology produced by the town's businesses (e.g. the Mars Rover), and inform residents about the exciting regeneration plans. The centre will be highly interactive, with visual displays, videos, models and artwork used to bring Stevenage to life as the Town enters a new chapter in its history.

- 3.17. Residents are being kept informed of regeneration plans through drop-in sessions, articles in the Stevenage Central magazine and information campaigns using the Stevenage Central branding.

Housing Development Programme

3.18. Programme Outcomes

- Increased number of affordable houses in Stevenage.
- Improve access to the housing market in Stevenage for greater number of residents.

- 3.19. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:

- Delivering 43 homes across a range of planned schemes.
- Setting up a Council owned Housing Development Company to provide a variety of housing types across the town and consideration of a joint venture to bring further housing development forward.

3.20. Programme Delivery Update

- 3.21. The Du-Pont Scheme is progressing with housing developers on site. Completion of this scheme will provide the Council with access to 34 properties for social rent in exchange for funding (approved by Executive July 2017).
- 3.22. Design proposals for the March Hare Scheme have been improved and will now deliver fifteen homes. The scheme was granted planning permission on 5 December 2017. The Council expects to assign developers during quarter four.
- 3.23. The Twin Foxes Scheme is progressing well with the installation of internal fixtures and fittings now being completed. As a result of a requirement for additional works and adverse weather the contractor has indicated that completion will take an additional six weeks.
- 3.24. Officers are working on development proposals for the Kenilworth Close Scheme for approval by Members during February prior to public consultation. Council officers continue to attend the Bragbury Centre Executive and carry out meetings with the Ward Councillors and residents of Asquith Court and Walpole Court to answer queries and offer reassurance.
- 3.25. Three sites for future development have been purchased by the Council during 2018. Hoarding has been put up around the sites and Stevenage Housing Development branding will be installed to identify that the Council owns the sites and plans to develop them to provide additional housing opportunities.
- 3.26. Thirty-three homes have been completed this year and by the end March 2018 the Council is expecting that figure to rise to 49 homes taking the total delivered by the Council's Housing development programme to 145 since it was established in 2014. Further good news has been received that the newly formed Ministry of Housing has awarded the Council's proposed scheme at Kenilworth Close over £900,000 of infrastructure funding. The scheme at Kenilworth will incorporate a flagship older persons housing scheme.

Excellent Council Homes Programme.

3.27. Programme Outcomes

- Transforming Housing Services

3.28. The focus of this programme is to transform Council housing services to provide high quality, efficient and effective housing services that better meet the needs of customers.

3.29. Programme Delivery Update

3.30. The Assistant Director for Housing and Investment has completed the 4th Tier Management Team restructure and the new management team is now in place:

- Housing Operations Manager – Managing Homes.
- Housing Operations Manager – Providing Homes.
- Housing Operations Manager – Investing in Homes and Properties.

3.31. Staff engagement in relation to the housing transformation programme is being sustained. In December, the Assistant Director (Housing and Investment) carried out information sessions for all staff outlining the vision for the programme. In February, a housing and investment staff meeting focused on managing change and team cohesion.

3.32. Residents were provided with an opportunity to give feedback on the housing services currently provided by the Council and potential areas for improvement through the 'Big Knock'. The aim is to incorporate residents' feedback into future phases of the programme including a digital housing offer. The findings of the survey are to be shared with tenants and leaseholders within the Spring edition of Chronicle.

Co-operative and Neighbourhood Management Programme

3.33. Programme Outcomes

- Residents feel that they can work with the Council and other organisations to help meet the needs of the local area.
- Staff better understand the town's communities and through doing so are more able to facilitate the change that is required.
- Public spaces are more attractive, better cared for by the Council and residents, and help to give people pride in the place they live.
- The Council's Community centres are efficiently run, well-managed and most importantly, meet local needs.

3.34. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:

- Delivery of £800k of investment (including Green Space signage, public realm work, nine play areas, litterbins and hardstanding) into Pin Green, Shephall, St Nicholas and Martins Wood.
- Encouraging partner agencies to work in partnership with the Council to help improve public spaces and other local assets and engage with communities.
- Undertaking a Resident Survey to determine future neighbourhood priorities.

- Reviewing the effectiveness and usage of Community Centres.
- Engaging with partners and communities on the next phase of the planned physical improvement works in the wards of St Nicholas and Martins Wood.

3.35. Programme Delivery Update

3.36. Focused investment in neighbourhood improvements has continued to progress:

- Seven of the nine play area improvements have been completed across Pin Green, Shephall, St Nicholas and Martins Wood and the remaining two play areas are expected to be completed during quarter four (January to March 2018). During the summer, the Council will carry out consultation with the children that use the play areas to determine how well-used the play areas are and whether the children are happy with the improvements made.
- All litterbins have been replaced in Shephall and Pin Green and teams are now working to replace those on arterial (connecting) roads.
- Public realm enhancements across Pin Green and Shephall continue with the majority now completed. There has been a particular focus on community projects in Shephall with the Council taking a cooperative approach with Shephall Residents' Group to determining and completing improvements.

3.37. Demonstrating co-operative working, Council officers worked with teachers and pupils of Peartree Spring Primary School to clean-up an alleyway that is a popular route to the school for the children and their families. The Council will now make further improvements to include:

- Widening the footpath and replacing steps with a ramp to improve access.
- Installing new bins for the disposal of waste.
- Replacing damaged fencing.

In addition, the Council is putting arrangements in place that will allow the school community to progress their plans to make further visual enhancements to the area. As a result of the positive publicity this cooperative approach has achieved, another school has advised the Council that they would like to work in partnership with Council officers to make similar improvements in their community.

3.38. Council officers have discussed initial plans for the neighbourhood environment improvements to St Nicholas and Martins Wood with the Ward Members. Improvement work is scheduled to start in April 2018. Council officers are now considering feedback provided in the town-wide survey of residents and carrying out discussions with partners, local groups and the neighbourhood residents to identify potential areas of focus and opportunities to work in partnership. The information provided will be used to inform the focus of cooperative activity to improve the neighbourhoods.

3.39. A review of the Community Centres within Stevenage will be carried out during quarter four to determine options for their future management that will enable them to continue to provide community services long-term.

3.40. Council officers are identifying potential opportunities to celebrate and strengthen volunteering in Stevenage both within the community and among Council staff.

Connected to our Customers Programme

3.41. Programme Outcomes

- Use of self-service is encouraged, so more time can be spent with customers that need extra help.
- Increased customer satisfaction for residents interacting with key services.
- Online customer data will be protected, better used to provide useful insight, and the technology reliable.
- The Council uses technology to meet its ambitions and make its workforce more modern, efficient and responsive to customer needs.
- A simple and clearer website with more self-service choices.

3.42. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:

- Delivering a Technology Improvement Plan to support a range of new digital applications and services.
- Recruiting digital specialists to drive the programme.
- Achieving quick wins to expand the customer self-serve offer through use of digital technologies, including new online Council Tax and Business rate services.
- A number of supporting projects relating to Public Sector Network and General Data Protection Regulation requirements to provide the Council with a resilient platform to establish a new range of digital applications and services.
- Completing the telephony upgrade across the Technology Shared Service to improve resilience and reduce costs.
- Working towards the development of a new website and intranet.

3.43. Programme Delivery Update

- 3.44. The “Customer Conscience” initiative was launched with staff in January. Several life-size cardboard customer images have been used across Council offices in Daneshill House and Cavendish Road to remind staff that customers are at the heart of everything the Council does. Further activity will take place in April to explore what customer service means to Stevenage, and how managers can make practical improvements.
- 3.45. Sixteen Council Tax, Benefits and Business Rates eForms are being built and will be available on the Council’s website in April. These are services that customers use frequently and establishing the eforms will allow customers to electronically submit applications directly to the Council, instead of needing to print out and post a form – which is inefficient for both customers and the Council.
- 3.46. To improve services provided to customers through the Council’s Customer Service Centre, Council officers are identifying opportunities to deliver digital access to services alongside current methods of customer service.
- 3.47. To inform the delivery of new digital services and ensure that IT services meet customer needs Council officers are consulting with customers, staff and elected Members.

- 3.48. In partnership with East Hertfordshire Council, work has started on a replacement staff Intranet, which is considered a high priority improvement action.

Partner of Choice Programme

3.49. Programme Outcomes

- Develop new and existing shared services with the Council's preferred partners to improve resilience, create efficiencies and establish income opportunities.
- Develop reputation as a professional partner to work with.

- 3.50. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:

- Finalising the legal shared services arrangements.
- Setting out further potential shared service options.

3.51. Programme Delivery Update

- 3.52. An approach to developing shared services opportunities was agreed by the Strategic Leadership Team in July. Informal discussions have been carried out at a senior management level with the Council's partner authorities, to understand whether there is a common view on further development opportunities. Agreement on the future focus of the programme is anticipated by the end of March.

Performing at our Peak Programme

3.53. Programme Outcomes

- The provision of high quality performance management software tools.
- Streamlined governance structures that ensure effective and timely decision making.
- A strong performance culture is embedded across the organisation.

- 3.54. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:

- Continuing to build dashboards at a business unit level and ensuring service managers have the right skills to use the tool robustly to analyse information and make informed decisions that result in improved services for the Council's customers.
- The introduction of a new devolved governance and performance framework, including a new scheme of delegation, to help improve decision making and accountability at a business unit level.

3.55. Programme Delivery Update

- 3.56. The Council's performance and governance system (InPhase) provides the Strategic Leadership Team with access to data and information that form strategic insight. InPhase is providing a clearer picture of performance to senior management to help inform faster action planning and decision making. In addition, access is provided across all of the Assistant Director briefing books to provide corporate wide transparency of performance and governance information.

- 3.57. To expand the use of the strategic insight information captured and enhance improvement action planning, access to the system is now being provided to managers across the business units.
- 3.58. Steps are being taken to enable council officers to automate the capture of service data that will provide more up-to-date information to inform decisions.
- 3.59. The Council has carried out a review of internal Council meetings and groups and begun a process to streamline and simplify arrangements that will ensure continued robust decision-making by all council officers.

Financial Security Programme

3.60. Programme Outcomes

- As set out in Figure 2: Financial Security Workstreams.

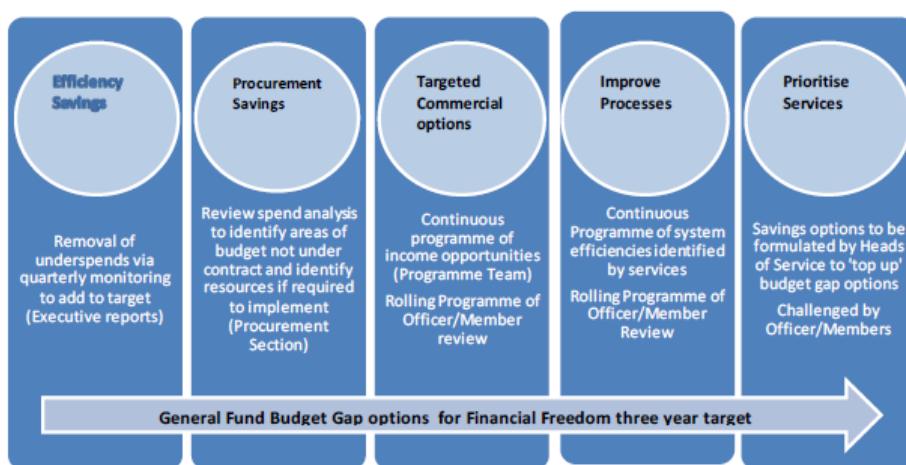


Figure 2: Financial Security Workstreams

- 3.61. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:
- Generating significant savings from the leisure contract.
 - Finalise savings of approximately £40k per annum through a move to digital post.
 - Prioritise services to generate further savings and ensure a balanced budget.

3.62. Programme Delivery Update

- 3.63. The November Financial Security report reset the savings target for both the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the General Fund (GF) for future years. Business Unit Reviews will refocus on delivering Financial Security savings through targeted commercialisation and improved processes to enhance efficiency and deliver savings. Some of these projects apply to working in partnership with East Herts Council and are to the benefit of both Councils. A number of options have been identified for delivery in 2018/19 to contribute towards the three year target.
- 3.64. The commercial property investment initiative has resulted in the purchase of one property and further sites are being actively sought. The acquisition of sites is focused on ensuring economic growth within the town.

- 3.65. The HRA savings target for 2018/19 was achieved and options just exceeding the target of £225,959 were included in the Financial Security report to the November Executive. A package of financial security savings for both the GF and the HRA totalling £568,360 were approved by Members at the November Executive (with final approval at Council in January and February 2018).
- 3.66. Saving options totalling an estimated £170,000 are either identified or being progressed to contribute to the 2019/20-2021/22 Financial Security Target
- FS3: Percentage of GF savings identified to meet three year target (April to December 2017 target 63%, achieved 59.1%)
 - FS4: Percentage of HRA savings identified to meet the three year target (April to December 2017 target 64%, achieved 27.6%).

Employer of Choice Programme

3.67. Programme Outcomes

- Improved employee engagement.
- Right person, right place, right time – recruiting/retaining staff to hard to fill posts.
- Improved managerial competency.
- Improved reputation as a place to work.
- Evidence of staff progressing to higher grades and new roles.

3.68. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:

- Further rollout of online services for staff, including a new e-learning system and intranet.
- Creation of new leadership and management development programmes.
- Development and implementation of a competency framework for staff up to Grade 9 of the Council's pay structure.
- Introduction of new performance management policies, tools and processes.

3.69. Programme Delivery Update

- 3.70. A new E-learning package was launched in December that will develop staff knowledge and capability. The training available will now be expanded, informed by consultation with Council staff, to ensure that the learning provides access to skills that align with planned service enhancements focused on improving services to customers.
- 3.71. Agency worker usage as a percentage of the workforce has shown a downward trend since April and is now better than the March 2018 target of 10%, at 9.55%.
- 3.72. The initial research and planning for a new corporate appraisal scheme has been completed. The plans will be developed further during quarter 4 (January to March) to ensure that the final scheme provides appropriate feedback and direction to staff.
- 3.73. The approach to Strategic Leadership Team learning is being developed. HR are working with Business Units to identify the skills focus that is required to ensure the

delivery of the Council's change programme (Future Town, Future Council) together with planned service enhancements.

- 3.74. The development of a Corporate Social Responsibility approach for the Council has begun, to include a focus on volunteering, charity activities and health and wellbeing activity. This will be joined up across the Employer of Choice and Cooperative Neighbourhood Management Programme to identify a consistent approach that will encourage staff to engage in activities in the local community.

3.75. Corporate Performance highlights and areas for improvement

- 3.76. Results for the full set of current corporate performance measures across all themes (FTFC programme, and the Customer, Place, and Transformation and Support themes) are attached as Appendix One. The overview of results for April to December 2017 (quarter 3 2017/18) is outlined below:

Number of Measures Reported	Meeting or exceeding target	Amber Status (within a manageable tolerance)	Red Status (urgent improvement action required)
47	30	6	11

- 3.77. The Strategic Leadership Team has requested that Assistant Directors identify improvement activity for performance measures that did not meet the target set. The improvement activity identified is being aligned to the Business Unit Reviews that aim to deliver sustainable services that better meet the needs of customers. This transformation of service delivery requires longer-term improvement planning and the impact on performance results may be minimal for the current year. The impact of the broad transformation being applied across the Council will be considered when determining appropriate measures and targets to monitor performance throughout 2018/19.
- 3.78. A summary of highlights and areas for improvement is set out in the following paragraphs across the three key delivery themes; Customer, Place, and Transformation and Support (FTFC theme measures are referred to in paragraphs 3.63 to 3.66).

3.79. Key Business Unit Themes Update

- 3.80. Thirty-six measures were reported on for April to December 2017 (quarter 3) aligned to the three business unit themes of Customer, Place, and Transformation and Support.

Customer Theme

- 3.81. The Customer Theme incorporates the following Business Units:

- Housing and Investment
- Communities and Neighbourhood

Housing and Investment

- 3.82. To support vulnerable residents, Housing and Investment officers are working in partnership with paramedics in relation to emergency call-outs and working with Hertfordshire Careline to ensure partnership arrangements meet the needs of customers.
- 3.83. To support future housing development at Kenilworth Close the Housing and Investment team have worked with affected residents at both Asquith and Walpole Court. The team have agreed individual solutions for each household to support their requirements which in some cases has meant a move to other suitable independent living schemes. Officers aim to have supported all affected residents at Asquith Court with a move to an appropriate new home by the end of March 2018.
- 3.84. The Tenancy Support team has helped three residents of Wellfield Court secure work.
- 3.85. The Housing and Investment team have redesigned the layouts of several void properties in the Council's independent living schemes to improve future demand and as a result of improved advertisement and promotion successfully allocated 20 independent living properties during quarter three.

Health and Safety compliant Council buildings (Assets 5)

- 3.86. Compliance tasks are being completed on Council buildings. There are no current concerns in relation to meeting statutory Health and Safety requirements, but compliance certification is required to demonstrate that the Health and Safety standards that the Council defines are achieved and these were not received due to the contractor experiencing ICT issues during December.
- 3.87. Performance is being monitored on a weekly basis and the contractor has confirmed that resources will be focused on provision of the necessary certification.
- Assets 5: Health and Safety compliance of Council Buildings, April to December 2017 target 100%, achieved 95%.

Homelessness preventions (BV213)

- 3.88. There has been a significant improvement in the number of homelessness preventions during quarter 3 (October to December) and the target for this quarter has been achieved (Target 90, Achieved 92). In addition 237 cases were being actively managed by the Housing Service at the end of December which will contribute to the prevention outcomes achieved for January 2018 to March 2018.
- 3.89. Performance during quarter 4 (January to March) is expected to meet the target for the quarter (90) as a result of the plans put in place during quarter 3 to improve performance:
- A service has been introduced in the Customer Service Centre (6 November 2017) to enable initial prompt assessments to take place when a customer requests assistance in relation to homelessness. This allows the team to

intervene in cases at an earlier stage and increase the potential for a homeless prevention outcome.

- Interim arrangements have been agreed to use agency workers to improve capacity in the team.
- The Housing Advice and Homeless Manager introduced weekly meetings to monitor and manage target delivery with the team and carries out a random audit of cases to ensure all prevention outcomes have been recorded.

3.90. However, as a result of Housing Service staff resourcing issues that impacted on performance for April to September 2017, as advised to the Executive (September), the cumulative target for the year will not be achieved.

- BV213: Homelessness preventions, April to December 2017 target 270, achieved 177.

Communities and Neighbourhood

3.91. The Play Service have been shortlisted for the Team of the Year at the LGC Awards 2018 demonstrating the positive contribution the service makes in supporting local communities. The outcome will be known at the Awards ceremony in March.

3.92. In recognition of the Council's strong arrangements relating to the Safeguarding of Adults, a positive assurance response was received from the Quality Assurance Visit conducted by Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board in December.

3.93. An outline of plans to improve health and well-being for Stevenage residents has been developed informed by a Health Summit held in December attended by more than 80 local organisations.

3.94. The Leisure Team were successful in a stage one bid to the Sport England Tackling Inactivity and Economic Disadvantage Fund. This has been a collaborative process between six other local authorities in Hertfordshire with Stevenage leading the project. The project has been selected from 475 expressions of interest that requested over £55m of investment from an available pot of £3m. The value of the bid is £450k and the stage 2 deadline is in early March.

3.95. Planters at Roebuck shops have been adopted by local residents. United Living helped the residents group to clear the planters and donated some money for them to be re-planted as part of their community investment commitment.

3.96. The Resident Involvement Team supported a problem-solving meeting with council staff and other organisations at Roundmead. This has led to a number of positive outcomes and demonstrates strong joint working across council departments.

Community Safety

3.97. Partner organisations have worked together through the SoSafe partnership on joint activity to improve community safety across the town and on the delivery of enforcement action and events. In response to resident feedback through a town-wide survey a campaign is being planned to reassure residents that Stevenage remains a safe town.

- 3.98. Hertfordshire Police have a high level of crime resolution - To help provide evidence that will inform prosecutions of crime, mobile community safety cameras are now being used.
- 3.99. Increases in crime rates are evident nationally:
- CS8: Anti-social behaviour per 1,000 population, April to December 2016: 30.4 incidents per 1,000 population, April to December 2017: 31.49 incidents per 1,000 population against threshold of 29.75.
 - CS9: Criminal damage per 1,000 population, April to December 2016: 7.64 incidents per 1,000 population, April to December 2017: 9.93 incidents per 1,000 population against a threshold of 7.75.
 - Incidents of violent crime have reduced in comparison to 2016/17 levels, NI15b: the rate of violence against the person (victim based crime) per 1,000 population, April to December 2016: 25.75 incidents per 1,000 population, April to December 2017: 25.65 incidents per 1,000 population against a threshold of 30.13. The scope of crimes now classified as 'violent' was expanded for 2017/18.

Place Theme

3.100. The Place Theme incorporates the following Business Units:

- Planning and Regulation
- Stevenage Direct Services
- Regeneration
- Housing Development

(The Regeneration and Housing Development Business Units are primarily focused on delivery of the Stevenage Town Centre Regeneration and Housing Development Programmes of FTFC. Delivery updates for these programmes are summarised in paragraphs 3.12 to 3.17 and 3.19 to 3.26 respectively.)

Planning and Regulation

- 3.101. Planning continues to deal with planning applications within corporate and statutory targets.
- 3.102. As of December 2017, 100% of known Houses of Multiple Occupation are free from category 1 hazards (as set in the Housing Act 2004, Housing Health and Safety Rating System).
- 3.103. In addition, 96% of food establishments in the area are assessed as broadly compliant with food hygiene law. This means that, as a minimum, they are considered 'generally satisfactory' in the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme that assesses the hygiene, structure and confidence in management of the premises.

Stevenage Direct Services

- 3.104. To support improved play areas for toddlers through to teenagers, Executive approved £1.5 million of capital over the next five years, together with £37k annually to support improved maintenance. Officers consulted with over 200 children and

young people over the spring/summer to help inform significant play area improvements to six sites. Work on two play areas was completed in July and a further three completed by December.

3.105. To improve the safety of visitors to Fairlands Valley Park, water safety and rescue equipment provision has been improved.

3.106. Council officers and volunteers (Friends of Hampson Park) organised a Christmas event that brought local communities together in celebration.

3.107. Repairs and Voids

3.108. Repairs satisfaction surveys are currently recorded using e-forms and feedback cards. During quarter 2 (July to September 2017), the Service put additional arrangements in place for telephone surveys to encourage customer feedback and capture customers' views on their experience of the repairs service delivered. The level of satisfaction has been improving. Customers advised a 92.5% satisfaction level with the service provided for April to December 2017 (90.6% April to September 2017).

3.109. The completion of repairs by the Council's team continues to meet targets achieving an average completion time of 8.5 days during quarter 3 (target 9.5 days). The performance of external contractors has also improved. The overall time taken to complete a repair from time of reporting was 10.2 days for April to December 2017 compared to 11.43 days April to September 2017. As part of the arrangements to implement and embed the Repairs and Voids improvement programme a Contract Manager will be assigned to manage contractor performance.

3.110. The rate of repairs fixed first time has also improved. The Council continue to monitor revised service delivery arrangements introduced during quarter 2 (July to September 2017) to ensure that the materials required are available at the time of repair. (ECH-Rep4: Percentage repairs fixed first time, April to December 2017 target 90%, achieved 84.88%).

3.111. VoidsSheltered: The time taken to re-let standard sheltered voids.

3.112. On a positive note, an increased focus on the advertisement of particular void properties resulted in the letting of 20 sheltered properties together with the resulting increase in income. Ten of these properties were void for a significant period and once properties are let that have been void for a significant period, the performance figures are negatively affected.

- Voids sheltered: the time taken to re-let standard sheltered voids, April to December 2017 target 70 days, achieved 109.47 days.
- Additional information measure - Time taken from tenancy termination to ready to let for standard sheltered voids, April to September 2017 achieved 23.56 days, April to December 2017 achieved 19.49 days.

3.113. To enhance awareness of properties available, the service is liaising with other registered service providers and tenants that meet the criteria set out in the Council's Housing Allocations Policy that may have a preference for a move to sheltered housing.

- 3.114. Void properties continue to be assessed to: Determine where there is potential to redesign property layout to improve future demand; determine whether a property needs to be removed from management; identify those properties that will continue to be advertised.
- 3.115. VoidsGN: The time taken to re-let standard general needs voids, April to December 2017 target 28 days, achieved 33.18 days.
- 3.116. Average re-let time performance for April to December 2017 (33.18 days) has improved on performance to September (33.84 days).

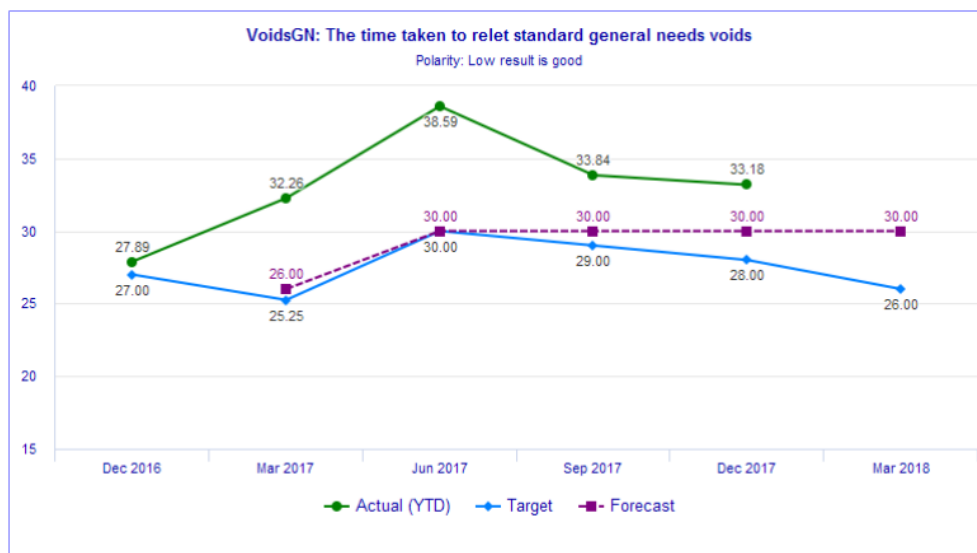


Figure 3: VoidsGn
– The time taken to re-let standard general needs voids

- 3.117. The service has focused on making improvements to repairs service delivery during quarter three to make properties available for letting. Service performance has been affected by additional workload temporarily directed to the team as a result of a change in contractor relating to the delivery of decent homes and major works. Mobilisation of a new contractor has commenced this month. Rental income loss associated with void properties at the end of quarter three is in line with the budgeted position for the quarter.
- 3.118. The Assistant Director for Stevenage Direct Services and the Service Delivery Manager for Repairs and Voids (R&V) carried out a review of the first phase of the R&V improvement programme that was approved by the Council's Executive in January 2016 to inform the next phase of the project and to ensure that the new business unit management team have complete and informed ownership and accountability for its delivery.
- 3.119. The second phase of the R&V improvement programme will address any outstanding elements from the first phase, include a review of unit costs for repairs and voids and incorporate any new projects that are deemed necessary. A purge of active void cases will be implemented during quarter four 2017/18 to minimise the number of void cases carried forward into the new financial year.
- 3.120. The ultimate aim of the improvement programme is to ensure that the R&V function is operating successfully and serving its customers well which will help enable it to take on further work when deemed appropriate in due course.

Transformation and Support Theme

3.121. The Transformation and Support Theme incorporates the following Business Units:

- Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology
- Corporate Services and Transformation
- Finance and Estates

Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology

Spotlight: Customer Services

3.122. A significant number of calls to the Customer Service Centre (CSC) are resolved by the CSC advisor that initially answers the call (57.7%). An additional 14% are passed to a more appropriately skilled advisor within the CSC in order to provide a response that will meet the customer need at this first point of contact with the Council.

- CSC13: Percentage of calls closed at first point of contact by the CSC, April to December target 62%, achieved 57.7%.

3.123. In response to CSC performance interim agency staff were recruited in October to provide short-term capacity and this helped to improve performance during the quarter.

- Calls answered within 20 seconds (CSC4) July to September achieved 50.1%, October to December achieved 51.6%
- Calls abandoned (CSC12) November 8.3% abandoned, December 6.9% abandoned.

3.124. During quarter three the service appointed to two permanent roles and a programme of training to increase the availability of skills on all telephone lines and walk-in services is being carried out across the Customer Service Team.

3.125. Satisfaction in CSC however remains high and the Council regularly appears in the top ten performing Councils nationally for customer satisfaction for the call centres' walk in services and telephony (captured through Govmetric). Customers like how they are treated by advisers and appreciate the time given to them during a call.

- CSC4: Percentage of telephone calls to the Customer Service Centre answered within 20 seconds, April to December 2017 target 55%, achieved 51.8%.
- CSC12: Percentage of calls abandoned in the Customer Service Centre, April to December 2017 target 4%, achieved 9.2%.
- CSC5: Percentage of walk-in customers to the Customer Service Centre served within 20 minutes, April to December 2017 target 85%, achieved 73.6%.

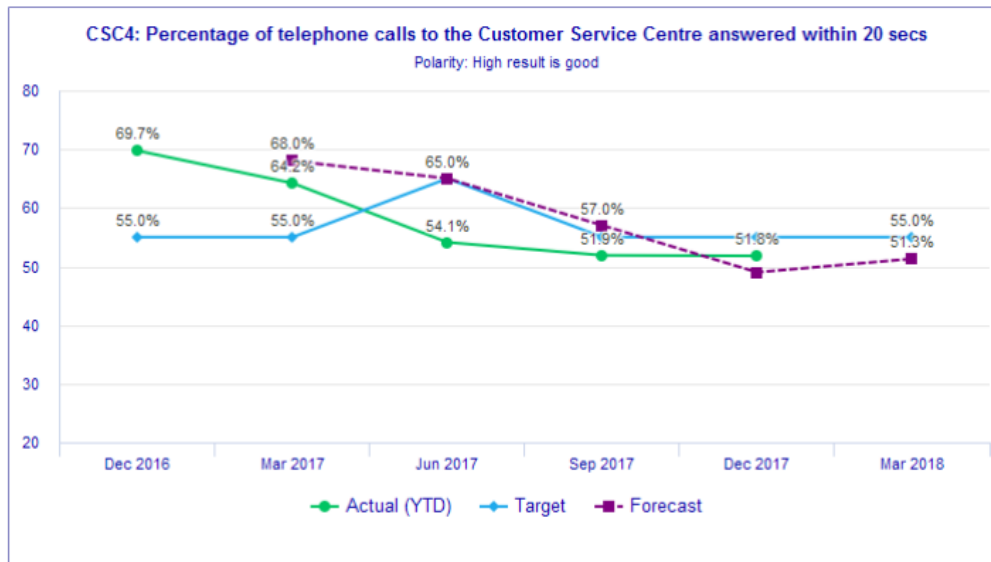


Figure 4: CSC4 –
Percentage of
telephone calls to
the CSC answered
within 20 seconds

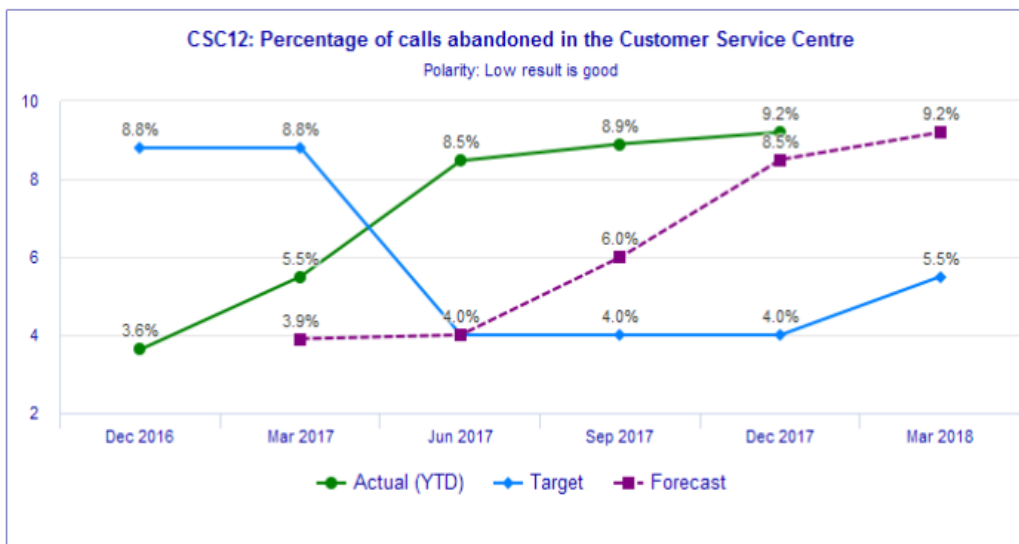


Figure 5: CSC12 –
Percentage of calls
abandoned in the
Customer Service
Centre.

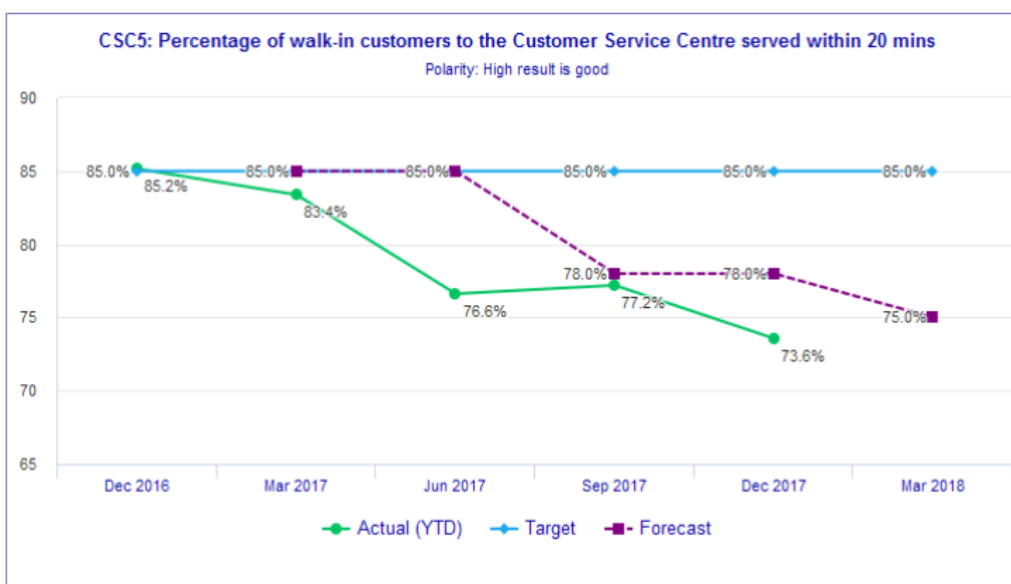


Figure 6: CSC5:
Percentage of
walk-in customers
to the CSC served
within 20 minutes

3.126. The Assistant Director (Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology) is currently carrying out a review of working practices within the CSC. Activity has started that aims to stabilise and sustain future CSC performance through:

- An initial focus on improving the availability of advisors by:
 - Recruiting more CSC advisors to maintain service levels when there is a high staff turnover and associated loss of skills.
 - Applying new innovative approaches to recruitment to enable posts to be filled more effectively and quickly.
 - Increasing the delivery of an enhanced programme of training for CSC advisors.
(Delivery by April 2018)
- Implementation of a revised service delivery model, resulting from:
 - A review of working practices within the CSC (considering options such as home working, appointments in the walk-in, and a review of opening hours).
 - The implementation of digital self-service options for customers as part of the Connected to Our Customers programme to drive down transactional and avoidable contact, leaving capacity to provide in-depth services for those in need.
(Delivery by March 2019)

Customer Feedback

3.127. As advised to Executive (December) senior management reminded service managers of the importance of considering all the evidence available when a complaint is received, to enhance the quality of response and to act upon information to enhance future service delivery. The percentage of complaints progressing to stage two and three that are upheld (Cust1) has improved significantly during quarter three:

- The percentage of complaints that progressed to stage 2 or 3 and were upheld (April to September 2017 target 40%, achieved 52.8%, April to December 2017 achieved 42.9%).

3.128. To enhance the handling of complaints and quality of complaint responses, the Customer Feedback team routinely offers training to officers with responsibilities for administering complaints. In addition, services must capture learning on upheld complaints and then record implemented or planned service improvements to improve the service offer and encourage a reduction in customer complaints.

Technology

3.129. IT resilience and availability was tested over the August Bank Holiday due to a fibre break. The availability of core IT systems for October to December during supported hours achieved 99.86%.

- (ICT1: Percentage availability of core systems during supported hours, April to December 2017 target 99.5% achieved 98.7%)

3.130. A Technology Shared Service Improvement Plan developed for the Council (and its shared service partner) was considered by Executive (November). Initial activity included within the Technology Shared Service Improvement Plan targets improved

IT resilience and security and will be followed by adoption of an improved operational framework based on recognised ITIL standards and development of future IT Strategy to support organisational change and digital service delivery. This will ensure that services are delivered that meet customer needs and are fit for the future.

- 3.131. Delivery of the improvement programme will ensure the Technology Shared Service has the skills, capacity and reliable foundation to support the delivery of the Council's Connected to Our Customers programme and enable the technology and system changes that will be required by the Council's Business Unit Reviews (and their equivalent programmes at East Herts Council).

Corporate Services and Transformation

Council staff

- 3.132. The Council's Human Resources team continue to work with service managers to ensure that all Council staff appraisals and objective setting meetings are completed (to include new officers appointed). The rate of completion for staff appraisals is now 99.8%.
- 3.133. Spotlight: Sickness Absence
- 3.134. Active management of sickness absence is continuing across all Business Units and the Absence Management Policy has been revised to enable managers to take supportive but robust action more quickly.
- 3.135. There has been an increase in the number of long-term complex health conditions being managed and long-term absence now accounts for 60% of sickness absence.
- 3.136. Council officers are developing plans to improve the management of sickness absence across the Council. Initial steps include the following:
- A programme of training is being delivered to provide Assistant Directors and service managers with the skills to effectively manage sickness absence.
 - Improving the sickness absence management information provided to service managers to facilitate timely management interventions.
 - Prioritising HR business partnering support for business units and service teams that have high levels of sickness absence to effectively review sickness absence information and ensure compliance with the application of the Absence Management Policy.
 - Aligning health and well-being activity to the primary reasons for sickness absence.
 - Developing a business case for the potential introduction of a third party reporter service that would ensure staff receive early advice and support to help improve their attendance.

3.137. The method of calculating sickness absence has been revised to ensure that it reflects levels for current staff. In addition, realistic, but stretching thresholds are to be set for each business unit to align to the corporate aim for absence levels that do not exceed 8 days. (Pe4a: Sickness Absence rate threshold for twelve months to December 2017 per fte 8 days, achieved 9.28 days)

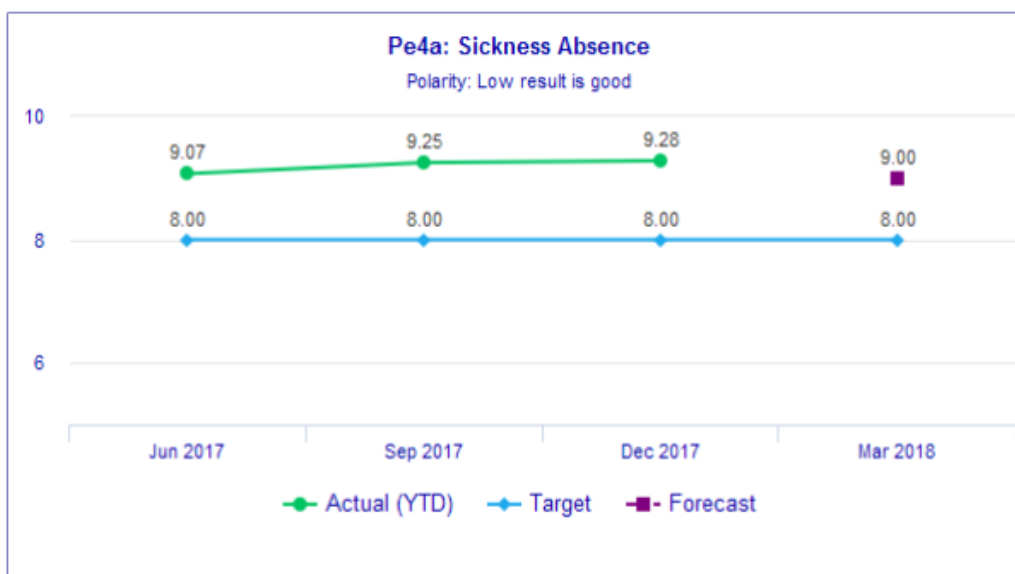


Figure 7: PE4a: Sickness Absence rate for the current workforce (days per fte)

Finance and Estates

3.138. Housing Benefit Claims and changes are now being processed in just 7.11 days and have consistently improved during 2017/18.

- Time taken to process Housing Benefit new claims and change events (NI181) April to June 2017 achieved 13.94 days, April to September achieved 8.03 days, April to December achieved 7.11 days.

Senior Leadership Team perspective

3.139. There has been some sustained high levels of performance across all three key delivery themes (Customer, Place, Transformation and Support) for April to December 2017, to include the following:

- The number of households in temporary accommodation has been maintained below the thresholds set across the year.
- The determination of planning applications has consistently exceeded national targets.
- Collection rates for Council Tax and non-domestic rates have met or exceeded target.

3.140. During the year, the Senior Leadership Team requested that the Assistant Directors responsible for areas of improvement focus assess the factors impacting on performance and outline robust improvement plans.

3.141. In response to quarter two performance Executive were advised (December 2017) of:

- The plans in place to progress and embed the Repairs and Voids Improvement Programme to ensure that the service is operating successfully and serving its

customers well. Initial performance improvement is now evident (paragraphs 3.108 to 3.120 refer). The Senior Leadership Team will continue to monitor performance to ensure improvement is sustained.

- The plans to increase the availability, skills and knowledge of Customer Service Advisers to improve performance in the Customer Service Centre. This remains an area of improvement focus – A summary of the improvement plans together with associated timeline for delivery have been outlined (paragraph 3.126 refers)

3.142. In response to quarter three performance (April to December 2017) the Senior Leadership Team have also requested a focus on improving sickness absence management (paragraphs 3.134 to 3.138 refer)

3.143. Assistant Directors have been requested to determine targets for 2018/19 having consideration for the 2017/18 trends, planned reviews of /revisions to service delivery models and alignment to 2018/19 budgets.

3.144. The Council's approach to performance management and monitoring allows the organisation to proactively identify issues and challenges and ensure prompt management intervention. The fluid nature of the new performance framework enables the Senior Leadership Team to amend targets in year to drive forward additional improvement in services and processes where appropriate. Although there is no guarantee services will meet these increased targets, it is important for the Council to aspire to improve performance levels and standards for the benefit of internal and external customers.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

4.1. The information presented in this report is collated from the information provided to monitor delivery of the Future Town Future Council and corporate performance for the quarter. It aims to give Executive an overview of the achievements the Council has made for the year to date, with a focus on the current quarter and identifies plans for continued improvements in some areas to ensure the Council is fit for the future.

4.2. The Senior Leadership Team and Service Managers have been consulted to determine the appropriate content and to identify the key achievements.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Financial Implications

5.1.1. There are no direct financial implications from the recommendations contained in this report. However, officers responsible for improvement activity identified will need to identify and consider any resulting financial implications.

5.2. Legal Implications

5.2.1. There are no direct legal implications from the recommendations contained in this report. However, officers responsible for improvement activity identified will need to identify and consider any resulting legal implications.

5.3. Risk Implications

- 5.3.1. There are no direct significant risks to the Council in agreeing the recommendation(s). Officers responsible for developing performance improvement plans will need to consider any risk implications from the improvement activity identified.
- 5.3.2. The Council has an embedded approach to risk management that mitigates any adverse effect on delivery of the Council's objectives and internal control processes and also provides good governance assurance.

5.4. Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.4.1. The report outlines performance against key priorities that form the Future Town, Future Council Programme and performance of the Council across key business unit themes. Where necessary, Equality Impact Assessments will be completed for improvement activity identified.

5.5. Other Corporate Implications

- 5.5.1. Improvement activity outlined may impact on the development of future policy or procedure.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

BD1 - Executive Report 12 December 2017

<http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/content/committees/182083/182087/182091/Executive-12-December-2017-Item8.pdf>

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Compendium of performance results

Appendix Two: Future Town, Future Council Programme Scope/Focus

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Appendix One to Executive Report																					
	▲ Business Unit Theme/Programme	Sub Theme	Target to 31/12/16	Actual to 31/12/16	Status at 31/12/16	Target to 31/03/17	Actual to 31/03/17	Status at 31/03/17	Target to 30/06/17	Actual to 30/06/17	Status at 30/06/17	Target to 30/09/17	Actual to 30/09/17	Status at 30/09/17	Target to 31/12/17	Actual to 31/12/17	Status at 31/12/17	Target to 31/03/18	Forecast to 31/03/18	Forecast Status 31/03/18	
CTOC1: Percentage of customer complaints responded to within deadline	• Connected To Our Customers	FTFC			»			»	95.00	96.68	★	95.00	92.18	★	95.00	97.10	★	95.00	94.00	★	
EAA1: Customer satisfaction with CSC customer service	• Connected To Our Customers	FTFC	88.0%	91.0%	★	88.0%	90.4%	★	90.0%	90.0%	★	90.0%	88.5%	★	90.0%	88.5%	★	90.0%	89.0%	★	
CNM2g: Garage Voids as a percentage of stock	• Cooperative Neighbourhood Management: Outcome 3: Public Space Improvements	FTFC	12.00%	11.37%	★	12.00%	11.44%	★	12.00%	11.78%	★	12.00%	12.32%	★	12.00%	12.05%	★	12.00%	12.00%	★	
VoidsGN: The time taken to relet standard general needs voids	• Customers	Housing Management	27.00	27.89	🟡	25.25	32.26	▲	30.00	38.59	▲	29.00	33.84	▲	28.00	33.18	▲	26.00	30.00	▲	
Voids sheltered:The time taken to relet standard sheltered voids	• Customers	Housing Management	60.00	76.52	▲	60.00	83.42	▲	70.00	89.84	▲	70.00	106.15	▲	70.00	109.47	▲	70.00	80.00	▲	
VGC1: Percentage of dwellings with a valid gas certificate	• Customers	Compliance	100.0%	100.0%	★	100.0%	100.0%	★	100.0%	100.0%	★	100.0%	100.0%	★	100.0%	100.0%	★	100.0%	100.0%	★	
CS8: Anti-social behaviour per 1,000 population	• Customers	Community Safety Partnership	24.75	30.04	▲	31.49	38.33	▲	10.00	11.72	▲	19.10	23.27	▲	29.75	31.49	🟡	33.10	40.00	▲	
CS9: Criminal damage per 1,000 population	• Customers	Community Safety Partnership	8.97	7.64	☆	11.97	10.72	☆	3.21	3.58	▲	6.13	6.80	▲	7.75	9.93	▲	9.13	10.00	🟡	
Assets 5: Percentage of assets known to be health and safety compliant	• Customers	Compliance	100.00%	97.00%	▲	100.00%	99.00%	★	100.00%	99.00%	★	100.00%	99.00%	★	100.00%	95.00%	▲	100.00%	100.00%	★	
BV213: Homelessness preventions	• Customers	Housing Management	300.00	250.00	▲	360.00	339.00	▲	90.00	47.00	▲	180.00	85.00	▲	270.00	177.00	▲	360.00	270.00	▲	
BV66a: Rent collection rate	• Customers	Income Collection / Benefit Process	97.8%	98.2%	★	98.8%	98.9%	★	93.6%	94.0%	★	96.5%	96.3%	★	97.8%	98.3%	★	98.8%	98.8%	★	
ECHFL-EW1: Percentage of tenants satisfied with external works completed (for the current quarter)	• Customers	Maintaining Housing			»			»	85.0%	100.0%	☆	85.0%	98.1%	☆	85.0%	96.7%	★	85.0%	85.0%	★	
ECHFL1: Percentage of Homes maintained as decent	• Customers	Maintaining Housing	88.6%	88.3%	★	76.4%	80.5%	☆	81.2%	81.0%	★	82.3%	82.3%	★	83.8%	83.7%	★	75.4%	75.4%	★	
NI156: Number of households in temporary accommodation at end qtr	• Customers	Housing Management	100.00	98.00	★	100.00	110.00	▲	110.00	97.00	☆	110.00	78.00	☆	110.00	85.00	☆	110.00	100.00	☆	
NI15b: The rate of violence against the person (victim based crime) per 1,000	• Customers	Community Safety Partnership	17.93	25.75	▲	23.07	33.12	▲	6.16	8.53	▲	15.93	17.02	🟡	30.13	25.65	☆	33.07	35.00	🟡	
EoC4a: Percentage of graduate placements as percentage of workforce	• Employer of Choice	FTFC			»			»	0.30	0.32	☆	0.30	0.30	★	0.60	0.58	★	0.60	0.58	★	
EoC4b: Percentage of apprentices in post as percentage of workforce.	• Employer of Choice	FTFC	1.5%	0.3%	▲	1.5%	2.2%	☆	2.3%	2.1%	★	2.3%	1.8%	★	2.3%	2.2%	★	2.3%	2.0%	★	
FS4 (Futsav2b): Percentage of HRA savings identified to meet three year target	• Financial Security	FTFC	40.0%	47.6%	☆	50.0%	55.6%	☆	39.0%	49.5%	☆	54.0%	34.2%	▲	64.0%	27.6%	▲	73.0%	32.0%	▲	
FS3 (Futsav1b): Percentage of GF savings identified to meet three year target	• Financial Security	FTFC	40.0%	53.7%	☆	50.0%	61.9%	☆	30.0%	46.9%	☆	48.0%	53.4%	☆	63.0%	59.1%	🟡	70.0%	64.0%	🟡	
FS2 (LACC2): HRA approved savings removed from HRA for current year	• Financial Security	FTFC	158,370.0	158,370.0	★	158,370.0	150,250.0	🟡	675,300.0	675,300.0	★	675,300.0	675,300.0	★	675,300.0	675,300.0	★	675,300.0	675,300.0	★	
FS1 (LACC1) GF approved savings removed from GF budget for current year	• Financial Security	FTFC	556,040.0	488,267.0	🟡	556,040.0	484,927.0	🟡	226,190.0	226,190.0	★	226,190.0	226,190.0	★	226,190.0	226,190.0	★	226,190.0	226,190.0	★	
HDD1c - Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) by the Council	• Housing Development Delivery	FTFC	0.00	21.00	☆	28.00	22.00	▲	1.00	2.00	☆	2.00	30.00	☆	31.00	31.00	★	42.00	48.00	★	
HDD1b (formerly NB1) - New Build Spend v Budget of development activity that is contracted	• Housing Development Delivery: Outcome 1: Increased number of affordable houses in Stevenage	FTFC	95.0%	95.0%	★	95.0%	95.0%	★	95.0%	95.0%	★	95.0%	82.7%	▲	95.0%	91.6%	★	95.0%	95.0%	★	
ECH-Rep5: Time taken to complete repair from time of reporting	• Place	Maintaining Housing			»			»	10.00	14.70	▲	9.75	11.43	▲	9.50	10.20	▲	9.00	9.00	★	
NI192: Percentage of household waste sent for reuse,recycling and composting	• Place	Environment	43.0%	41.4%	★	43.0%	39.8%	🟡	42.0%	42.0%	★	42.0%	41.8%	★	43.0%	41.4%	★	43.0%	43.0%	★	
ECHFL5: Percentage of Repairs service customers satisfied (telephone survey)	• Place	Maintaining Housing			»			»	95.00%	90.82%	🟡	95.00%	90.61%	🟡	95.00%	92.50%	🟡	95.00%	95.00%	★	
ECH-Rep4: Percentage repairs fixed first time	• Place	Maintaining Housing			»			»	87.50%	86.24%	🟡	87.50%	84.00%	🟡	90.00%	84.88%	▲	90.00%	86.00%	🟡	
ECH-Rep3: Percentage repairs appointment made and kept	• Place	Maintaining Housing			»			»	95.00%	95.65%	★	95.00%	96.87%	★	95.00%	97.08%	★	95.00%	95.00%	★	
NI184: Food establishments in the area broadly compliant with food hygiene law	• Place	Planning	95.0%	97.0%	★	95.0%	96.9%	★	95.0%	96.9%	★	95.0%	96.3%	★	95.0%	96.0%	★	95.0%	96.0%	★	
NI157c: Percentage of other planning applications determined within 8 weeks	• Place	Planning	80.0%	97.1%	☆	80.0%	98.1%	☆	80.0%	96.8%	☆	80.0%	96.3%	☆	80.0%	96.8%	☆	80.0%	85.0%	★	
NI157b: Percentage of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks	• Place	Planning	65.0%	98.6%	☆	65.0%	99.2%	☆	65.0%	96.4%	☆	65.0%	98.0%	☆	65.0%	98.6%	☆	65.0%	80.0%	☆	
NI157a: Percentage of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks	• Place	Planning	60.0%	100.0%	☆	60.0%	90.0%	☆	60.0%	100.0%	☆	60.0%	100.0%	☆	60.0%	87.5%	☆	60.0%	80.0%	☆	
ELL1: Percentage of known HMOs that are free from category 1 hazards	• Place	Planning	98.0%	97.7%	★	98.0%	99.6%	★	98.0%	100.0%	☆	98.0%	99.0%	★	98.0%	100.0%	☆	98.0%	99.0%	★	
NI191: Residual household waste per household (kgs)	• Place	Environment	392.00	390.00	★	510.00	518.00	★	135.00	132.00	★	265.00	257.60	★	392.00	390.00	★	510.00	490.00	★	
CSC13: Percentage of calls closed at first point of contact by the CSC	• Transformation & Support	Customer Service	61.0%	57.5%	★	62.0%	57.5%	★	62.0%	57.8%	★	62.0%	57.8%	★	62.0%	57.7%	★	62.0%	58.0%	★	
CSC4: Percentage of telephone calls to the CSC answered within 20 secs	• Transformation & Support	Customer Service	55.0%	69.7%	☆	55.0%	64.2%	★	65.0%	54.1%	▲	55.0%	51.9%	🟡	55.0%	51.8%	🟡	55.0%	51.3%	1	

	▲ Business Unit Theme/Programme	Sub Theme	Target to 31/12/16	Actual to 31/12/16	Status at 31/12/16	Target to 31/03/17	Actual to 31/03/17	Status at 31/03/17	Target to 30/06/17	Actual to 30/06/17	Status at 30/06/17	Target to 30/09/17	Actual to 30/09/17	Status at 30/09/17	Target to 31/12/17	Actual to 31/12/17	Status at 31/12/17	Target to 31/03/18	Forecast to 31/03/18	Forecast Status 31/03/18
CSC5: Percentage of walk-in customers to the CSC served within 20mins	• Transformation & Support	Customer Service	85.0%	85.2%	★	85.0%	83.4%	★	85.0%	76.6%	▲	85.0%	77.2%	▲	85.0%	73.6%	▲	85.0%	75.0%	▲
Cust1: Percentage complaints progressing to stage 2 and 3 that are upheld or partially upheld	• Transformation & Support	Customer Service	40.0%	42.6%	●	40.0%	41.9%	★	40.0%	51.6%	▲	40.0%	52.8%	▲	40.0%	42.9%	●	40.0%	50.0%	▲
ICT1: Percentage availability of core systems during supported hours	• Transformation & Support	Support Services	99.0%	99.5%	★	99.0%	99.8%	☆	99.5%	99.6%	★	99.5%	96.7%	▲	99.5%	98.7%	●	99.5%	98.8%	●
Pe4a: Sickness Absence Rate for the Current Workforce (FTE)	• Transformation & Support	People			»			»	8.00	9.07	▲	8.00	9.25	▲	8.00	9.28	▲	8.00	9.00	●
BV9: Percentage of council tax collected	• Transformation & Support	Income Collection / Benefit Process	88.0%	88.9%	☆	96.4%	96.6%	★	33.5%	33.8%	★	61.0%	61.3%	★	88.5%	88.8%	★	96.5%	96.5%	★
BV10: Percentage of non-domestic rates due for the financial year received by the authority	• Transformation & Support	Income Collection / Benefit Process	88.0%	89.8%	☆	98.4%	98.1%	★	35.5%	36.7%	☆	62.0%	62.0%	★	89.0%	89.1%	★	98.5%	98.5%	★
Pe2: Agency Usage as a percentage of total workforce	• Transformation & Support	People	6.0%	12.0%	▲	5.0%	14.7%	▲	15.0%	15.4%	★	14.0%	12.5%	★	12.0%	9.6%	☆	10.0%	9.0%	★
Pe6: Appraisal completion to meet corporate deadlines	• Transformation & Support	People	100.0%	99.0%	★	100.0%	99.1%	★	75.0%	65.2%	▲	100.0%	98.7%	★	100.0%	99.8%	★	100.0%	100.0%	★
NI181: Time taken (days) to process housing benefit new claims and change events	• Transformation & Support	Income Collection / Benefit Process	12.00	10.30	★	10.00	7.90	☆	12.00	13.94	●	12.00	8.03	☆	12.00	7.11	☆	10.00	9.50	★
Pe1: Total Human Capital - measures Workforce Stability	• Transformation & Support	People	85.0%	88.0%	★	85.0%	87.0%	★	85.0%	87.0%	★	85.0%	85.0%	★	85.0%	85.3%	★	85.0%	85.0%	★
CSC12: Percentage of calls abandoned in the Customer Service Centre	• Transformation & Support	Customer Service	8.8%	3.6%	☆	8.8%	5.5%	★	4.0%	8.5%	▲	4.0%	8.9%	▲	4.0%	9.2%	▲	5.5%	9.2%	▲

Appendix Two.

Future Town, Future Council Outcomes and Focus for 2017 /18

1. Stevenage Centre Town Centre Regeneration Programme

1.1. Programme Outcomes

- A new vibrant town centre delivered through a phased regeneration programme.
- Two major regeneration schemes to advance – one completed by 2020/21 and one to begin 2019/20.

1.2. Programme Overview

1.3. The Council wants to make Stevenage a destination of choice through delivering a new vibrant town centre, with quality shopping, office and leisure facilities. New homes will be built in the town centre and a new hub for public services will be created.

1.4. Regeneration of the town centre is the Council's number one priority and the associated programme progressed well during 2016/17. Stevenage is now the single largest regeneration zone in the East of England. In March 2017, the Council commenced the procurement process to appoint a preferred developer to take forward SG1, which is the first phase of the regeneration scheme. The key building blocks of SG1 include:

- **Stevenage Core** – signature public space, new retail, residential, restaurants and cafes; and other civic uses.
- **New Public Sector Hub** - new health facilities, a library, civic spaces and offices.
- **Southgate Park** – which will include new residential apartments, a linear park and potentially a new urban primary school.

1.5. The aim is to have a preferred developer appointed by February 2018.

1.6. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:

- Securing a development partner for the first phase of the town centre regeneration.
- Beginning development and progressing more detailed plans for a public sector hub in the town.
- Completing public realm improvements within the town centre.

2. Housing Development Programme

2.1. Programme Outcomes

- Increased number of affordable houses in Stevenage.

- Improve access to the housing market in Stevenage for greater number of residents.

2.2. Programme Overview

2.3. Providing decent, affordable homes appropriate to the needs of residents is one of the Council's key priorities. The Council is meeting this priority by establishing a programme of building new homes and buying others on the open market.

2.4. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:

- Delivering 43 homes across a range of planned schemes.
- Setting up a Council owned Housing Development Company to provide a variety of housing types across the town and consideration of a joint venture to bring further housing development forward.

3. Excellent Council Homes Programme

3.1. Programme Outcomes

- Transforming the housing service

3.2. Programme Overview

3.3. The Council's aim is to provide high quality, efficient and effective housing services. The Council has committed through the Excellent Council Homes programme to transform its housing services to better meet the needs of its customers.

4. Co-operative and Neighbourhood Management Programme

4.1. Programme Outcomes

- Residents feel that they can work with the council and other organisations to help meet the needs of the local area.
- Staff better understand the town's communities and through doing so are more able to deliver the change that is required.
- Public spaces are more attractive, better cared for by the council and residents, and help to give people pride in the place they live.
- The Community centres are efficiently run, well-managed and most importantly, meet local needs.

4.2. Programme Overview

4.3. The Co-operative Neighbourhood Management programme sets out how the Council will work with communities to improve the neighbourhoods. Through working together with residents and other partners the Council believes public spaces can be made more attractive and in turn help to give people pride in the place they live.

- 4.4. The programme has now begun to deliver against the expected outcomes after a year of planning and implementation. During 2016/17 £10M was allocated by the Council to improve the quality and look of its garage blocks over the next 10 years. The Council has also allocated £1.5M to be spent on rejuvenating play areas over the next 5 years.
- 4.5. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:
- Delivery of £800k of investment (relating to Green Space signage, public realm work, nine play areas, litterbins and hardstanding) into Pin Green, Shephall, St Nicholas and Martins Wood.
 - Encouraging partner agencies to work in partnership with the Council to help improve public spaces and other local assets and engage with communities.
 - Undertaking a Resident Survey to determine future neighbourhood priorities.
 - Reviewing the effectiveness and usage of Community Centres.
 - Engaging with partners and communities on the next phase of the planned physical improvement works in the wards of St Nicholas and Martins Wood.

5. Connected to our Customers Programme

5.1. Programme Outcomes

- Use of self-service is encouraged, so more time can be spent with customers that need extra help.
- Increased customer satisfaction for residents interacting with key services.
- Online customer data will be protected, better used to provide useful insight, and the technology reliable.
- The Council uses technology to meet its ambitions and make its workforce more modern, efficient and responsive to customer needs.
- A simple and clearer website with more self-service choices.

5.2. Programme Overview

- 5.3. The Connected to our Customers programme aims to improve the way residents can access Council services through increasing the use of digital options. The programme will specifically target high cost / low value transactional activities. It will ensure that the Council will use technology to meet its ambitions and make the workforce more modern, efficient and responsive to customer needs. The programme will encourage the use of self-service so more time can be spent with customers that need extra help and will see the development of a much improved website with more self-service choices.

5.4. During 2016/17 the programme started to deliver against its key aims following a year of scoping and planning. The Executive approved more than £2m capital funding for this digital change programme which will fund the required team and works to deliver digital services. The Assistant Director for Corporate Projects, Technology and Customer Services started as Programme Sponsor in March 2017. Initial focus for the current year is to ensure that the technology foundations are right to enable the Council (and its shared service partner) to deliver services that meet customer needs and are fit for the future.

5.5. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:

- Delivering a Technology Improvement Plan to support a range of new digital applications and services.
- Recruiting digital specialists to drive the programme.
- Achieving quick wins to expand the customer self-serve offer through use of digital technologies, including new online Council Tax and Business rate services.
- A number of supporting projects relating to Public Sector Network and General Data Protection Regulation requirements to provide the Council with a resilient platform to establish a new range of digital applications and services.
- Completing the telephony upgrade across the Technology Shared Service to improve resilience and reduce costs.
- Working towards the development of a new website and intranet.

6. Partner of Choice Programme

6.1. Programme Outcomes

- Develop new and existing shared services with our preferred partners to improve resilience, create efficiencies and establish income opportunities.
- Develop reputation as a professional partner to work with.

6.2. Programme Overview

6.3. The Council believes that through working with partners it can achieve better outcomes for the town and deliver services more efficiently. The Council has a proven track record of developing a range of partnerships such as those under the Stevenage Together umbrella. As a partner of choice the council continues to proactively work with partners from across all sectors to deliver projects that make a difference to the lives of Stevenage residents.

6.4. A key success during 2016/17 has been the creation of a joint Building Control Partnership. The Council as a founder member has worked

alongside other local authority partners to establish Hertfordshire Building Control Services.

6.5. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:

- Finalising the legal shared services arrangements.
- Setting out further potential shared service options.

7. Performing at our Peak Programme

7.1. Programme Outcomes

- The provision of high quality performance management software tools.
- Streamlined governance structures that ensure effective and timely decision making.
- A strong performance culture is embedded across the organisation.

7.2. Programme Overview

7.3. The Council aims to become an insightful Council with improved service performance and slimmed down decision-making processes. The programme will improve the organisation's insight, analysis and intelligence to help us to make better informed business decisions. This is being achieved through more timely coordination of data and the adoption of tools to support ongoing strategic and operational analysis.

7.4. During 2016/17 a new software tool has been developed to help managers access up-to-date service information and data, and work has been completed to create 'live' performance dashboards for the Council's Senior Leadership Team.

7.5. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:

- Continuing to build dashboards at a business unit level and ensuring service managers have the right skills to use the tool robustly to analyse information and make informed decisions that result in improved services for our customers.
- The introduction of a new devolved governance and performance framework, including a new scheme of delegation, to help improve decision making and accountability at a business unit level.

8. Financial Security Programme

8.1. Programme Outcomes

- As set out in Figure 2: Financial Security Workstreams.

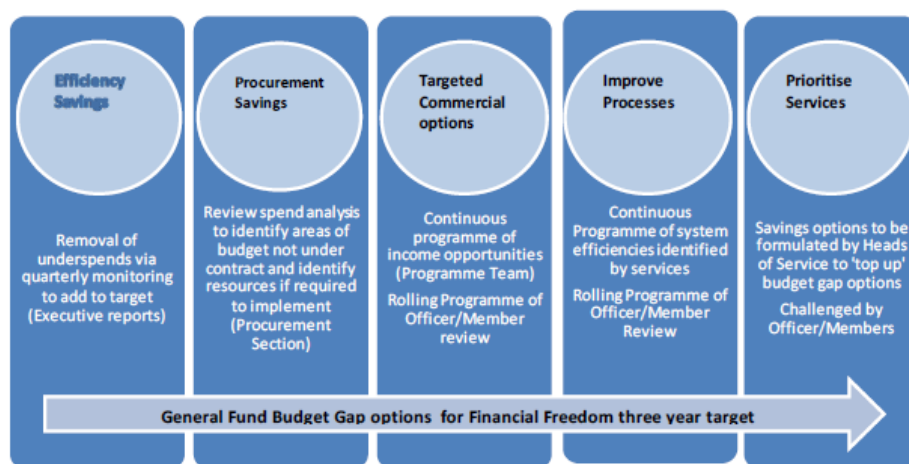


Figure 2: Financial Security Workstreams

8.2. Programme Overview

- 8.3. This programme aims to ensure that the Council has sufficient funds available to deliver quality services that residents want and need. The aim is to break away from the cycle of dependency on Government Grant through becoming more efficient in processes and developing new and innovative funding streams to ensure the Council has the resources to be a Council fit for the future and build a vibrant town that residents deserve.
- 8.4. Despite continued national government austerity the Council has managed to balance the books whilst protecting the much valued front line services and providing funding to support the FTFC programme.
- 8.5. The Executive approved the allocation of £15m towards a Commercial Property strategy in March 2017 to enable the purchase of commercial assets that yield a financial return.
- 8.6. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:
- Generating significant savings from the leisure contract.
 - Finalise savings of approximately £40k per annum through a move to digital post.
 - Prioritise services to generate further savings and ensure a balanced budget.

9. Employer of Choice Programme

9.1. Programme Outcomes

- Improved employee engagement.
- Right person, right place, right time – recruiting/retaining staff to hard to fill posts.
- Improved managerial competency.
- Improved reputation as a place to work.

- Evidence of staff progressing to higher grades and new roles.

9.2. Programme Overview

- 9.3. The Council aims to create a flexible, collaborative, creative and modern workforce to ensure the Council can deliver the priorities set out in the FTFC programme and give residents the standard of services they expect. This programme aims to transform the way the Council works; ensuring that staff have the skills, abilities and experience to deliver excellence. The Council must become an employer of choice so that it can compete in today's market place and attract and retain the best staff to build for the future.
- 9.4. During 2016/17 the Senior Management review was completed and a new leadership team is now in place. Through Future Council Business Reviews, work has begun on shaping the next stage of the transformation programme to ensure the Council has the right structures, teams and people in place.
- 9.5. The Leader of the Council secured the prestigious 'Leader of the Year' from the Local Government Information Unit highlighting the organisation's creative and continued delivery of excellent services despite continued government austerity.
- 9.6. During 2017/18 the programme focus is:
- Further rollout of online services for staff, including a new e-learning system and intranet.
 - Creation of new leadership and management development programmes.
 - Development and implementation of a competency framework for staff up to Grade 9 of the Council's pay structure.
 - Introduction of new performance management policies, tools and processes.

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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