

Public Document Pack



EXECUTIVE

Date: Wednesday, 12 December 2018
Time: 2.00pm,
Location: Shimkent Room, Daneshill House
Contact: Ian Gourlay (01438) 242703

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

AGENDA

PART 1

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. MINUTES - 21 NOVEMBER 2018

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 21 November 2018 for signature by the Chair.

Page Nos. 5 - 12

3. MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND SELECT COMMITTEES

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

Community Select Committee – 7 November 2018

Environment & Economy Select Committee – 12 November 2018

Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 14 November 2018

Page Nos. 13 - 28

4. DRAFT HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) RENT SETTING AND BUDGET REPORT 2019/20

To consider draft proposals on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budgets and rent setting for 2019/20, to be considered by Council on 30 January 2019.

Page Nos. 29 - 48

5. TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION UPDATE

To consider an update on the regeneration projects taking place in Stevenage Town Centre, including in principle agreement for the funding and design of a new bus interchange; approval to develop a business case and timetable for the development of enhance leisure facilities; and approval to undertake an options appraisal for the Stevenage Arts and Leisure Centre.

Page Nos. 49 - 64

6. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE FOR QUARTER TWO 2018/19

To consider the Council's performance across key priorities and themes for Quarter 2 2018/19.

Page Nos. 65 - 102

7. URGENT PART I BUSINESS

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

8. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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.

9. PART II MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 21 NOVEMBER 2018

To approve as a correct record the Part II section of the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 21 November 2018.

Page Nos. 103 - 106

10. WEST OF STEVENAGE DEVELOPMENT

To advise Members on the current state of negotiations relating to West of Stevenage and to seek approval to progress the next stage of this strategic residential development.

Pages 107 - 122

11. 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 Wednesday, 12 December 2018 – <http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/have-your-say/council-meetings/161153/>

Agenda Published 4 December 2018

This page is intentionally left blank

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, 21 November 2018

Time: 2.00pm

Place: Shimkent Room, Danesill House

Present: Councillors: Sharon Taylor OBE CC (Chair), Mrs Joan Lloyd (Vice-Chair), Rob Broom, John Gardner, Richard Henry, Jackie Hollywell, Ralph Raynor and Jeannette Thomas.

Start / End Time: Start Time: 2.00pm
End Time: 4.45pm

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No apologies for absence were received.

The Chair (Councillor Sharon Taylor) declared an interest in Item 4 – Housing Revenue Account Medium Term Financial Strategy (2018/19 – 2022/23) and Business Plan Update, as her daughter worked in the SBC Housing Department. She considered that that this was not a prejudicial interest and that she would therefore be remaining in the meeting for the duration of that item.

2 **MINUTES - 3 OCTOBER 2018**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 3 October 2018 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

3 **MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND SELECT COMMITTEES**

In relation to the Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 8 October 2018, and in particular the item on Diversity in the SBC Workforce, the Leader was pleased to learn that the gender pay gap at the Council was improving, and looked forward to receiving the updated statistics. She further advised of the probability that the Government would be extending the monitoring of pay gap statistics to ethnic minority groups, and requested that when any such monitoring report was received it be circulated to all Members of the Council.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the following meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees be noted:

Community Select Committee – 2 October 2018

Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 8 October 2018

Environment & Economy Select Committee – 18 October 2018

Community Select Committee – 23 October 2018

4 **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY
(2018/19 - 2022/23) AND BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE**

The Executive considered a report on the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Medium Term Financial Strategy (2018/19 – 2022/23) and Business Plan Update.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources stated that the modelling contained within the report had been completed before the announcement that the HRA debt cap of £217Million would be lifted with immediate effect following the Chancellor's budget speech. The report contained a number of scenarios to show the impact of the borrowing bid made to the Government, private sales, changes in Right to Buy (RTB) and the impact of funding the capital required.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources commented that the report updated Members on the 30 year HRA capital programme of £1.28Billion (which in the recommended Scenario 2b included the additional borrowing bid, 39 private sales and a small funding gap of £9.4Million over 30 years).

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Older People welcomed the action plan which contained an approach for reviewing new build/major works, management and maintenance, and then fitting a borrowing strategy around those proposals, subject to affordability. The report identified two growth items for approval, relating to viability options for high rise blocks (£190K) and the conversion of Asquith Court, in part for temporary accommodation (£100K).

The Assistant Director (Finance and Estates) gave a Powerpoint presentation on the key aspects of the report.

The Assistant Director (Finance and Estates) was requested to re-emphasise to the Government the importance to the Council of it being able to retain 50% of 1 for 1 Capital receipts. She was also requested to amend the MTFs principles to make it clear that the Council was committed to the delivery of an increased number of homes available for social rent.

Officers were further requested to monitor the impact on the HRA of Government welfare reforms, particularly Universal Credit.

The Leader thanked the Assistant Director (Finance and Estates), her Team and other officers who had contributed for a very thorough report. In turn, the Assistant Director (Finance and Estates) thanked the particular contribution of the Housing Policy, Performance and Improvement Manager.

RESOLVED:

1. That, for modelling purposes, fees and charges increases are in line with inflation.

2. That, for modelling purposes, the updated inflation assumptions used in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (Section 4.5 refers) be approved.
3. That the Capital Programme assumptions contained within the report be approved for the existing programme and new build properties and incorporated into the 2019/20 budget, (subject to subsequent approved changes from the action plan in Appendix A).
4. That the assumptions contained within Scenario 2b be approved, including the ability to build for private sale to provide additional income to the HRA (Paragraphs 4.11.8 - 4.11.12 refer), and subject to subsequent approved changes from the action plan in Appendix A.
5. That the Action Plan is approved, in order to consider options to increase the spending power within the HRA, as a result of the removal of the HRA debt cap (Appendix A).
6. That the two new additional funding requirements identified in Paragraph 14.13.8 of the report be approved.
7. That the current £4.9Million capital funding shortfall over the 30 year business plan (Paragraph 4.11.9 refers) be noted.
8. That the minimum level of balances for the HRA Business Plan, set as a minimum £2Million plus inflation (Paragraph 4.16.3 refers), be noted.
9. That if material changes to forecasts are required following further Government announcements or recommendations as a result of the Action Plan, the Assistant Director (Finance and Estates) be requested to revise the Medium Term Financial Strategy and re-present it to the Executive for approval.
10. That the HRA MTFS principles are reviewed and re-approved following the work contained within the Action Plan at Appendix A.
11. That public consultation is in line with the requirements of the Council's Consultation and Engagement Strategy.
12. That the Trade Unions and staff be consulted on the key messages contained within the Medium Term Financial Strategies and more specifically when drawing up any proposals where there is a risk of redundancy.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

5 **2018/19 MID YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW**

The Executive considered a report which provided an update on Treasury Management activities in 2018/19 and which reviewed the effectiveness of the 2018/19 Treasury Management and Investment Strategy, including the 2018/19 prudential and treasury indicators.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources advised that the report identified that cash balances were estimated to be £55Million by 31 March 2019. The average borrowing rate on loans as at 30 September 2018 was 3.37% and the average investment rate at the same date was 0.77% (compared to 0.58% earned in 2017/18). The report also identified that officers were seeking approval to invest balances on behalf of Council wholly owned companies and/or Council Limited Liability Partnership (LLP).

The Executive noted that the figure for “Total Borrowing” in the second column of the table at Paragraph 4.5.4 of the report should be £227,595.

The Leader advised that Hertfordshire Living were developing projects across the county aimed at working with Housing Associations. She hoped that this would include working with Local Authorities like SBC that still retained their own housing stock in order to support management issues. There may also be the possibility for some investment of the Council’s 1 for 1 Capital receipts.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That Council be recommended to approve the 2018/19 Treasury Management Mid-Year review.
2. That Council be recommended to approve the latest list of approved Countries for investments, as set out in Appendix D to the report.
3. That Council be recommended to empower officers to undertake treasury management functions on behalf of Council wholly owned companies and/or Council Limited Liability Partnership (LLP), subject to authorisation from the Board of Directors (see Paragraph 4.5.12 of the report).

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

6 **STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI)**

The Executive considered a report which provided consultation feedback and which sought approval for the adoption of the final Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration advised that there had been six responses to the consultation on the SCI, a similar amount to the consultation response on the 2012 SCI.

The Executive supported the proposal of the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration that the SCI be adopted, subject to some minor wording amendments to Paragraphs 52 and 53 of the document to emphasise the right of appeal to the Local Government Ombudsman for those objecting to planning applications and drawing attention to the “Planning Aid” website for those wishing to consider Judicial Review proceedings, and which explained the process as well as the costs of this

course of action.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the key outcomes of the public consultation on the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), as set out in Appendix A to the report, be noted.
2. That the revised SCI, as set out in Appendix B to the report, be adopted, subject to minor wording amendments being made to Paragraphs 52 and 53, as discussed.
3. That the SCI 2012 (BD1) be revoked.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

7 **COMMUNITY CENTRES REVIEW - DIRECTION OF TRAVEL REPORT**

The Executive considered a report on the Stage One review of community centres in Stevenage and which sought approval to undertake further community consultation and the establishment of co-operative agreements with existing community associations to develop a sustainable future model of community centre delivery.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities, Community Safety and Equalities advised that it was intended to carry out a broad consultation exercise on a wide range of options. Future operating models would be explored including the development of co-operative compacts. She thanked the Community Select Committee and officers for their support to the review through the Portfolio Holder Advisory Group.

The Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Co-operative Working was supportive of the report, and hoped it would include work on identifying best practice in other parts of the UK.

The following Members' comments were noted by officers:

- The emphasis going forward with the review should be on working co-operatively with community associations to arrive at agreed solutions, rather than about the closure of community centres;
- The sterling work of volunteer staff at community centres should be recognised, all of which added to the vibrancy of the town;
- Even though SBC revenue support to community centres was diminishing, it should be made clear to community associations that the Council still bore considerable capital costs in their upkeep;
- Leases – the issue of trustees being reticent to sign leases was an ongoing problem. A resolution of this issue was needed as soon as possible;
- As it was felt that councillors had an important role in putting the minds of community association representatives at rest, it was agreed that an All-Member Briefing session be held prior to the wider community consultation process on the review.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the outcome of the stage one review of community centres and the scope of options for potential future operational models be noted.
2. That wider community consultation be undertaken to vision the future community centre offer for Stevenage to meet residents' needs.
3. That the implementation of a co-operative agreement with existing community associations, in order to award delivery grants for 2019/20, be approved.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

8 **SMART CHOICES, BETTER PLACES: A TRANSPORT STRATEGY FOR STEVENAGE**

The Executive considered a report which provided an update on progress made in preparing a Transport Strategy for Stevenage and which sought approval to carry out public consultation on the draft Strategy over the next three months.

The Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Transport advised that the report explained the need for a sustainable Strategy. The Strategy was in line with the aspirations of the emerging SBC Local Plan and supported projects included in the SBC Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

The Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Transport commented that the consultation would include previous consultees, but would also benefit from the closer involvement of local communities and local businesses. The Strategy also included action plans, which would specify the partners, schedules and resources required for specific outcomes.

The Executive supported the Leader's request that she and the Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Transport be delegated authority to agree a change in the title of the strategy.

The Leader referred to a document containing some comments on the draft Strategy submitted by Councillor Jim Brown. This would be added to the consultation responses on the Strategy, subject to officers seeking clarification on a number of the issues raised.

Officers were requested to consider the preparation of a plan of the footpaths running across the Borough in line with the objectives of the Transport Strategy.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That, subject to the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Transport being delegated authority to agree a change in the title of the document, the content of the draft "Smart Choices, Better Places: A Transport Strategy for Stevenage" (as attached at Appendix A to the report) be agreed for

public consultation.

2. That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director (Planning and Regulation), following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Transport, to make minor amendments as are necessary in the final preparation of the draft Strategy prior to its consultation.
3. That public consultation on the draft Transport Strategy be approved for a period of 3 months, commencing on 5 December 2018.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

9 **URGENT PART I BUSINESS**

Stevenage Local Plan

The Chief Executive advised that through previous correspondence, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) had stated that a decision would be taken in respect of the holding direction on the Stevenage Local Plan by 13 November 2018. However, as at 21 November 2018, no written response had been provided by the MCHLG and the holding direction remained in effect. Stevenage Borough Council officers had maintained regular contact with the MCHLG over recent weeks, but no decision had been on this matter by the Secretary of State.

Accordingly, a letter had been despatched to the MHCLG demanding an urgent face to face meeting with the Secretary of State to seek to positively resolve this matter. The Council had requested a response by no later than 30 November 2018 to avoid the need for more formal legal routes to be considered.

The Leader commented that, in accordance with the Communications Strategy, the Council would be publicising the latest position on the Plan.

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 Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by SI 2006 No. 88.
2. That having considered the reasons for the following items 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 - 3 OCTOBER 2018**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 3 October 2018 be approved for signature by the Chair.

12 **BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY CENTRE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT 2019-24**

The Executive considered a Part II report which sought approval to commence the procurement process for the Business Technology Centre for the period 2019-24, with an optional extension contract of a further two years.

It was **RESOLVED** that the recommendations in the report, including some additions to Recommendation 2.1, be approved.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

13 **FINANCIAL SECURITY OPTIONS 2019/20 - 2021/22**

The Executive considered a Part II report that provided a range of Financial Security Options for 2019/20 – 2021/22.

It was **RESOLVED** that the recommendations in the report be approved.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

14 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, 7 November 2018

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Shimkent Room - Daneshill House, Danestrete

Present: Councillors: Sarah Mead (Chair), Adam Mitchell CC (Vice-Chair), Sandra Barr, Jim Brown, Liz Harrington, John Mead, Simon Speller and Tom Wren.

Start / End Time: Start Time: 6.00pm
End Time: 7.55pm

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Roni Hearn and Sarah-Jane Potter.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 **MINUTES - 2 OCTOBER 2018**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Community Select Committee meeting held on 2 October 2018 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 **RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT SCRUTINY REVIEW**

The Chair invited feedback from Members regarding research they had undertaken into resident engagement processes used by other local authorities.

Councillor John Mead had investigated on-line consultation and had been impressed by the consultation hub used by Bristol City Council. It had recently received nearly 3,000 responses to a consultation exercise regarding Houses in Multiple Occupation, and provided a demographic breakdown of those who had replied. They had also used the hub asking residents to vote on 5 possible options for the Council's 2019/20 Budget.

Councillor Adam Mitchell had supplied some examples of existing resident engagement activities and processes carried out by SBC.

Councillor Sandra Barr had carried out some on-line research on resident engagement techniques employed by other local authorities, and highlighted:

- the use of a large map in an area of Suffolk, allowing residents to label their concerns and needs. The outcome of this exercise was directly fed into the Council's business plan priorities;

- a website for community events and consultation exercises maintained by a local volunteer in an area of Peterborough, the logo for which was designed following a competition in a local primary school;
- the “Friends of Ashfield Fair Share Trust” group on Facebook. A Nottinghamshire group, providing regular access to community information; and
- “The Gedling Conversation” – an annual consultative campaign in June/July each year that provided opportunities for residents to meet face-to-face with Members and senior officers in order to raise issues of concern.

Councillor Jim Brown gave feedback on a meeting he had attended, accompanied by the Scrutiny Officer, with the Youth Council. It was acknowledged that work was required in order to successfully engage with young people. A joined up approach by SBC and its partners in engaging with young people could perhaps be developed. It was also recognised that attention was needed to provide a robust method of consultation with residents with learning difficulties.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Judi Billing (North Hertfordshire District Council) to the meeting. Councillor Billing had been invited to the meeting to provide a perspective from another authority on resident engagement.

Councillor Billing advised that she had a fondness for area governance, and had been the Chairman of the Hitchin Area Committee for some 12 years. In response to Members’ questions, she commented:

- The use of Twitter, Facebook and other social media was important; it was important that Members monitored the Facebook pages of known community groups, so that they were aware of public feeling on issues and (where appropriate) were able to contribute to the debate; this often might be a reputational defence of decisions taken by the Council;
- whilst engaging with hard to reach groups was challenging, much of her time was spent dealing with “hard to avoid” groups (often self-appointed community leaders); the use of Town Talk sessions prior to Hitchin Area Committee meetings and monthly Saturday morning surgeries in Hitchin Town Square were invariably attended by members of such groups, although it was often a good way of gleaning their views;
- in terms of engagement with minority communities, it can take a long time to secure their trust;
- although residents’ surveys often produced a result where 70-80% of respondents were interested in being more involved in local decision-making, the reality was that very few took the matter forward;
- Digital engagement – as well as using this platform to engage with working and full-time mothers, a possible idea could be to engage with them outside of schools at dropping off/collection times;
- Participatory budgeting was a good idea, especially on a small scale and involving specific projects; and
- The use of locality budgets, both at County Council and Borough/District Council level, was also important, and good outcomes should be publicised through social media platforms.

Councillor Billing referred to and commended the Local Government Association's "New Conversations: Guide to Engagement" document, which was an excellent publication for councillors and officers working to build stronger dialogues between councils and the community.

The Community Development Manager introduced a Resident Engagement desk top comparison exercise he had recently undertaken, which was set out in the agenda papers. This compared the existing SBC model of engagement with those of Brighton and Hove City Council, the London Borough of Southwark, Croydon Borough Council and Milton Keynes Council.

Following the presentations from Members and officers and evidence supplied by Councillor Judi Billing, the Select Committee formulated the following recommendations:

- Resident engagement should include a mechanism for dealing with issues at a street-by-street level;
- There should be a corporate branding of SBC consultation/engagement exercises, along the lines of SoSafe;
- From time to time, residents' meetings should be encouraged to consider town-wide topics, as well as focussing on local issues;
- Residents' groups should be encouraged to set up Facebook pages;
- Consideration should be given to moving residents' meetings around each area;
- Consideration should be given to re-visiting the concept of Area Committees, which could be a helpful mechanism for dealing with larger neighbourhood issues;
- The proposed Community Engagement Framework should include an information booklet providing a directory of local groups and a flowchart on best practice for community engagement;
- All committee reports should include a section on consultation / engagement;
- The correct methodology should be adopted for carrying out random structured surveys (eg) Resident's Surveys;
- The methods of digital/electronic engagement should be improved, including the idea of a consultation hub;
- Consideration should be given to the installation of a screen in the SBC Reception area to highlight current consultations;
- Data analysis, using digital platforms, should be undertaken regarding the hard to reach groups;
- The Neighbourhood Warden Service should be developed to ensure each County Division was supported, and that consideration should be given to re-naming their job title to Community Engagement Officer;
- Consideration should be given to holding some Policing Priorities meetings in community venues; and
- Consideration should be given to diversifying resident representation through existing mechanisms, such as the Housing Management Advisory Board.

The Scrutiny Officer reminded Members of some possible further draft recommendations he had gleaned from the Select Committee's consideration of resident engagement at previous meetings, including:

- That the Community and Neighbourhood Business Unit Review addressed the areas of deficiency regarding resident engagement, including improving the links between different elements of the service, some of which sat in isolation, such as the Youth Council. Making links to the minority ethnic groups in the town and the LGBT community. That officers demonstrate how Neighbourhood Wardens were engaging with residents to improve neighbourhoods. That the Business Unit review helped the Council to fulfil its obligations as a social landlord. That the Business Unit review recognised the work that voluntary groups, such as scouts/cadets and non-vocational training (eg. dance/drama/singing clubs/sports clubs) carried out in the community and had in many ways a greater capacity than the Council to engage with local people;
- Investigate and potentially enhance the engagement with young families via the play service, which could adopt some of the models that Housing Resident Engagement employed. Perhaps utilise informal networks, such as parents at school gates child pick up to engage on issues;
- Make Resident Engagement simple, convenient and provide real time responses. Timely responses/acknowledgements to come across to residents that someone was listening to them;
- Focus on themes and projects to build engagement - Area based regular meetings had their place, but the most successful resident engagement was project/issue based. The Bragbury End gardens project was provided as a good example of engaging local residents in a project to enhance their area and, as a consequence, residents had been more likely to engage on other issues. The nature of these projects could be ad hoc, task and finish. This was something that a wider cadre than Community Development/Housing officers could be engaged on;
- Digital Transformation – It was critical that a strong consultation platform be developed as part of the digital transformation plans and new website; Promote digital expansion – internet clubs at Community Centres – low income groups/older people, those with learning difficulties. Training residents and Housing Tenants – digital inclusion (identify those who don't use IT) – use diagnostic tools/schedule appointments etc.; Resilience of the Council's IT systems crucial – take away single point of failure, need robust back-up systems; Develop an SBC App which could access all electronic interactions with the Council (part of the Customer Account Programme); Encouraging departments to take a lead (e.g. a separate social media presence for each department, such as Environmental Health refuse collection teams) to give real time updates/responses; Provide a better website with a community/resident engagement page.

Members also noted that, in addition to the above, there had been further recommendations that were not raised at the meeting, but would need to be considered by the Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** that the above recommendations be incorporated into the final report on the Resident Engagement Review to be submitted to the Select Committee in due course.

4 **URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

None.

5 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Not required.

6 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR

This page is intentionally left blank

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Date: Monday, 12 November 2018

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Shimkent Room - Daneshill House, Danestrete

Present: Councillors: Michael Downing (Chair) (Chair), Matthew Hurst (Vice-Chair) (Vice Chair), Lloyd Briscoe, Jim Brown, David Cullen, James Fraser, Lizzy Kelly, Andy McGuinness, Adam Mitchell CC and Sarah-Jane Potter

Start / End Time: Start Time: 6.00pm
End Time: 7.50pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor Simon Speller.

Councillor Dave Cullen declared an interest in item 3 – Licence to Occupy as a holder of a Licence to Cultivate.

Councillors Matthew Hurst and Adam Mitchell also declared interests in item 3 as members of an organisation with a Grant to Occupy.

2 MINUTES - 18 OCTOBER 2018

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Environment and Economy Select Committee held on 18 October be approved subject to the following amendments:

- Page 6 – 1st bullet point be amended to read “Unlike previous arrangements, the new timetable had a repeating pattern that made it easier for passengers”
- Page 7 – in relation to the Hertford Loop the words “at the station” at the end of the first paragraph be deleted.

3 LICENCE TO OCCUPY

Craig Miller, Assistant Director Stevenage Direct Services gave a presentation to the Committee on the process of applying for a Licence to Occupy which allows the licensee to maintain council owned amenity land without any proprietary rights to the land.

Officers advised that the main issues regarding the process were the unresponsive and bureaucratic procedures which were not resident focussed with no dedicated Council contact point.

The Committee was pleased to note the proposals for the review and improvement of the process which would dramatically reduce the time for licence applications and had given officers the opportunity for the whole process to be delivered electronically. The Committee was supportive of the Assistant Director's plans to consult with interested parties on the proposals.

In response to a question, Officers confirmed that there was no charge for a Licence to Occupy but that an admin charge of approximately £60 was charged by Herts County Council in respect of a Licence to Cultivate.

Officers also advised that applicants would be invited into the Council for a meeting to work out the exact details of an application rather than delaying an application by the use of letters or emails. In response to a question, Officers advised that applications received were for a 5 year licence, the Council would also require the land to be kept maintained at an agreed standard and would also require the applicant to purchase appropriate public liability insurance.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- (i) That support be given to the Assistant Director Stevenage Direct Services to start the consultation process on the proposals to review the Licence to Occupy process.
- (ii) That a progress report be brought back to the Committee by the Assistant Director once the new process is in place.

4 **URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

None.

5 **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.

6 **STEVENAGE DIRECT SERVICES BUSINESS REVIEW**

The Assistant Director Stevenage Direct Services gave a presentation to the Committee setting out his proposals for the Stevenage Direct Services Business Unit Review.

The Committee were supportive of the proposals put forward by the Assistant

Director and it was **RESOLVED** that

1. the presentation be noted; and
2. the Assistant Director come back to a future meeting of the Committee with an update on the progress of the review.

7 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR

This page is intentionally left blank

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - SITTING AS A SELECT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, 14 November 2018

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Autun Room - Daneshill House, Danestrete

Present: Councillors: Lin Martin-Haugh (Chair), Sandra Barr, Jim Brown, Michael Downing, Michelle Gardner, Lizzy Kelly, Sarah Mead, Adam Mitchell CC, Robin Parker CC and Sarah-Jane Potter

Start / End Start Time: 6.00pm

Time: End Time: 8.05pm

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs P Bibby CC, J Fraser and J Mead.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 **MINUTES**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 08 October 2018 are approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 **REVIEW OF SBC SICKNESS MANAGEMENT**

The Chair welcomed Matthew Scrimshire, the FirstCare Business Development Manager to the meeting. The Business Development Manager had been invited to provide an update on the proposed Absence Management Contract.

FirstCare is an Absence Management Solutions provider that was established in 2004. The company has a staff compliment of about 180 and it operates from a base in Watford. FirstCare has another office in Waterloo and it also has remote working arrangements. FirstCare provides a specialised phone triage service for 120 clients including 15 local authorities. 60% of the company's clients are public sector organisations. FC works with 15 local authorities. The provider employs one doctor and nurses of Band 6 grade and above. The service provider also works with 12 NHS Trusts. The robust service had been signed off by Chelsea and Westminster NHS Foundation Trust.

The service was procured via the Watford Borough Council Procurement Framework Agreement. The Framework Agreement enables local authorities to procure the Absence Management Service without going to tender. The Agreement sets the cost of the service to £3.30 per employee per month.

The objectives of FirstCare Absence Management Solutions are to support employees, minimise absence and promote safe return to work. All initial calls to the service are handled by administration (non-clinical) staff who will direct callers/employees to relevant nurses for clinical advice.

FirstCare received about 1 million calls in 2017. One in 436 of calls received involve life-threatening conditions. The provider has handled 215 urgent calls so far this year including seven (7) unintentional overdoses, 28 suicidal ideation calls and 44 cardiac/chest pain calls. It is worth noting that 56% of red flag calls were received between 6.00pm and 9.00am. Statistics from FirstCare clients indicate that early intervention significantly contributes to reduction in sickness levels. A bus operator had reduced sickness absence following advice from FirstCare to adjust shift patterns for drivers. Data analysis had revealed a link between musculoskeletal disorders and the operator's working patterns.

The Business Development Manager informed the Committee that:

- FirstCare would be the first point of contact for officers. FirstCare non-clinical staff would record employee details and then transfer the call to a nurse. The provider's call centres operate the entire 24 hours of the day and seven days of the week (24/7).
- An email or text notification would be sent to the employee's line manager or other nominated Council officer within five minutes of the employee's first call to FirstCare.
- FirstCare would provide regular updates regarding estimated duration of absence
- Medical details will be shared only in cases of positive consent by the employee

The Committee also considered the Sickness Absence Report for the period 1 October 2017 to 30 September 2018. The report highlighted the overall trend, organisational changes, comparison with national and local absence trends, long and short term absence, cost of sickness absence, reasons for sickness absence and the support available to employees. It was reported that on average 50% of staff did not take time off for sickness.

Members were informed that:

- The Executive had been monitoring sickness levels for a long time. The introduction of the FirstCare service was part of the Council's sickness absence management strategy. SBC will still maintain control over sickness management
- The FirstCare service was aimed at delivering safe and speedy recovery
- FirstCare will facilitate holistic analysis of sickness absence and improve sickness management
- The benefits of the service will be assessed via contract monitoring procedures. Regular feedback from managers will be used for data analysis. Absence levels will be tracked at quarterly meetings of the Executive and at SLT
- SBC had opted for a one year contract with an option to extend if contract

- performance was satisfactory
- Management culture at SBC supports safe return to work. Even with the introduction of FirstCare service, managers and officers would still be expected to discuss health and safety issues during regular scheduled appraisal meetings.
- Return to Work interviews were the perfect forum for constructive discussions about health and safety issues
- The introduction of FirstCare service will not stop managers from contacting employees who are off sick
- Line Managers will still be able to use the medical suspension option
- The service was scheduled to be introduced during the final quarter of the current financial year

It was confirmed that elective procedures such as routine dental and eye checks were not included in the scope of the SBC Contract with FirstCare. However, if requested, FirstCare would provide advice on routine procedures.

With regard to mental health, Members were informed that statistics showed that 50% of employees were not comfortable discussing mental Health issues with their managers. Even though there was an increase in mental health issues, employees were not fully utilising available resources. FirstCare had specialist nurses who provided unbiased mental health support. Following the intervention of FirstCare, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council recorded a 64% mental health absence reduction. The Chief Executive confirmed that SBC had a genuine commitment to act on mental health issues. The Council had signed the “Time to Change” pledge. By signing the “Time to Change” pledge, the Council was demonstrating a commitment to changing how staff think and act about mental health in the workplace and supporting employees who are facing these problems. Mental health champions are part of the Council’s mental health support structure. A list of trained mental health counsellors was available on request.

The Waste Operations Manager provided an updated on sickness management for one of the Stevenage Direct Services teams. Stevenage Direct Services had performed below target between October 2017 and September 2018. Members were informed that the Waste Operations team holds regular absence workshops. It was reported that 39 absence cases had been reviewed in the past year with the aim of supporting staff and identify any underlying issues. The impact of staff absence on team cohesion was highlighted at team meetings. Managers followed up on long-term absence cases. Staff returning from long-term absence were offered alternative duties and flexible working. Peak absence was recorded in the summer. During this period, operatives were supplied with extra bottles of water and shift patterns were adjusted so as to minimise exposure to extreme heat conditions.

Corporate Services and Transformation was one of the Business Units that had performed above target during the period under review. The Business Improvement Manager informed the Committee that low sickness absence levels were partly due to the management practice of giving officers as much autonomy as is possible to deliver projects. In some cases, officers opted to work from home or have a shorter working day so as to aid recovery. The Business Improvement Manager confirmed that officers were not under pressure to substitute annual leave days for sickness

absence. It was also indicated that risk assessments and reasonable adjustments were made for employees with chronic conditions and those returning from long-term absence.

Members questioned whether the introduction of a third-party absence management service could potentially put pressure on employees to return to work before full recovery or discourage employees from reporting sickness. In response to a question about raising awareness about the service, the Senior HR Officer informed the Committee that there were plans to use promotional videos and other publicity materials. There were plans to enlist the assistance of current SBC employees who had used the service at Stevenage Homes. The Executive Portfolio Holder for Resources confirmed that unions had been consulted on the engagement of a third-party absence management provider. Members sought clarification on projections for reduction in sickness absence after the engagement of FirstCare. Members were reassured that the Council had put in place a number of measures to reduce sickness absence levels over the past ten years. It was highlighted that cuts to local government funding, the salary freeze and restructuring of Council Business Units had a bearing on sickness absence figures. Members agreed that staff should be told how much they are valued. The Committee requested more details about current FirstCare clients, employee assistance programme, current SBC sickness and volunteering policies. Members also sought to interview union representatives and management officers from Customer Services and Housing Investment at a further Sickness Management review meeting.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee formulated the following recommendations:

1. That a further meeting to consider other aspects of the review be arranged
2. That management officers from Customer Services and Housing Investment be invited to the next SBC Sickness Management review meeting
3. That union representatives be invited to the further Sickness Management review meeting
4. That data collected for FirstCare's East of England clients be shared with the Committee
5. That officers clarify the projections for reduction in sickness absence after the engagement of the third-party sickness absence provider (FirstCare)
6. That the "Time to Change" pledge be circulated to Members
7. That the SBC Volunteering Policy be submitted to the Committee
8. That the current and revised Sickness Policy (when available) be submitted to the Committee
9. That details of the employee assistance programme be submitted to the Committee

4 **URGENT PART I BUSINESS**

None.

5 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Not required.

6 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR

This page is intentionally left blank

Meeting EXECUTIVE
Portfolio Area Resources/Housing
Date 12 DECEMBER 2018



DRAFT HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) RENT SETTING AND BUDGET REPORT 2019/20

KEY DECISION

Authors Clare Fletcher | 2933
Lead Officers Clare Fletcher | 2933
Contact Officer Clare Fletcher | 2933

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update Members on the draft proposals on the HRA budgets and rent setting for 2019/20, to be considered by Council on 30 January 2019.
- 1.2 To propose the HRA rents for 2019/20.
- 1.3 To propose the HRA service charges for 2019/20.
- 1.4 To update Members on the 2018/19 and 2019/20 HRA budget, incorporating the Financial Security options and fees and charges included in the November Financial Security report, together with any revised income and expenditure assumptions identified since that report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That HRA dwelling rents not subject to the 1% rent reduction (currently Low Start Shared Ownership LSSOs) be increased, week commencing 1 April 2019 by 3.4% i.e. £3.86 per week which has been calculated using the existing rent formula, CPI +1% in line with the Rent and Service Charge Policy approved at the January 2018 Council.

- 2.2 That it be noted that HRA dwelling rents, (other than those outlined in 2.1) are subject to the 1% rent reduction from week commencing 1 April 2019 or £0.96 and £1.60 per week for social and affordable rents respectively, as outlined in the Government's Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016.
- 2.3 That the draft 2019/20 HRA budget be approved, as set out in Appendix A. This may be subject to change as a result of consultation and the finalisation of recharges from the General Fund.
- 2.4 That the final HRA rent setting budget for 2019/20 be presented to the Executive on the 23 January 2019 and then Council on 30 January 2019.
- 2.5 That key partners and other stakeholders be consulted and views fed back into the 2019/20 budget setting process.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In November 2018, the Executive approved a revised HRA Business Plan which is annually updated. Business Plan projections have needed to undergo a number of reiterations, mainly due to the impacts of Government policy which were set out in the 2018 Business Plan update (November 2018 Executive). The most significant of which has been the negative financial impact on the HRA of the four year 1% rent reduction in the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016. The impact on the HRA is an estimated £225Million loss of income over a 30 year period. 2019/20 represents year four of the four year rent reduction. The Government has announced from 2020 social housing providers can increase rents by CPI+1% for a five year period.
- 3.2 In terms of Government policy for Higher Value Voids levy (HVV) the Government has confirmed (as part of the social green paper) that this will not be introduced, the HRA business plan had assumed £29Million cost over a 30 year period.
- 3.3 The Government has announced its policy on rent increases from 2020 for the following five years (CPI+1%). However the difficulty for planning HRA finances is that it is a 30 year view of debt and borrowing costs particularly due to the payback period for building new social housing with the rent being the major source of income for the HRA and the ability to fund the life cycle of components of a council home. The Social Housing Green Paper has also now stated that the Government will not restrict lifetime tenancies, at the present time.
- 3.4 The Government's recent 'Use of RTB Receipts' paper is consulting on increased flexibilities on the use of 1.4.1 receipts and allowing currently held receipts to be held for five years. These flexibilities will allow councils to use more per new build and keep receipts for longer. However what isn't clear is Government future policy regarding RTB discounts which have more than doubled since 2011/12 from £34,000 to £80,900 in 2018/19. Any increase in the discount rate could influence the level of RTB sales, which again impacts on HRA available resources to fund any improvements or management costs.
- 3.5 In summary current rent regulations in force require the Council to set a 1% rent reduction for social and affordable rents, the exception being low start

shared ownership (LSSOs). There are 87 LSSO properties which equate to 82.15 full house equivalents. Any service charges can be charged at cost and sit outside the rent reduction regulations.

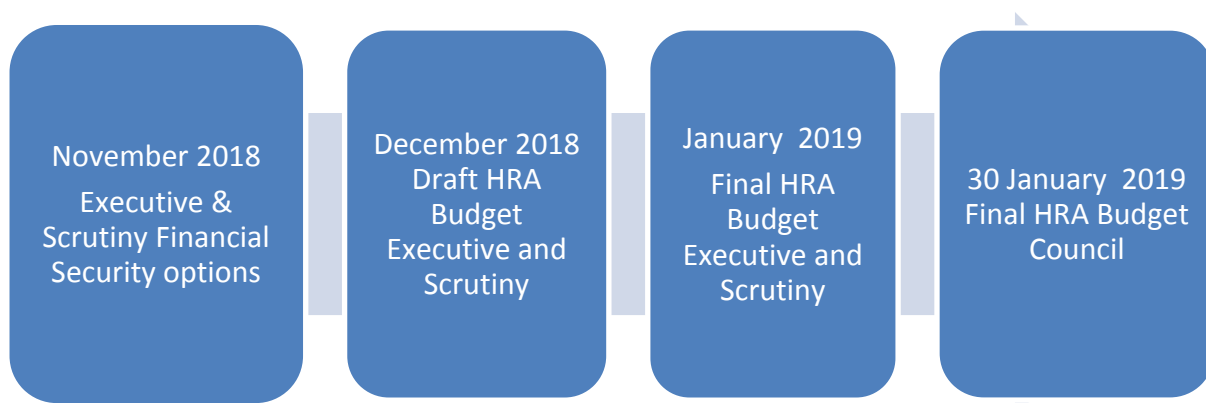
- 3.6 The total number of HRA homes in management at 30 September 2018 is summarised in the table below. The average rents for 2019/20 are based on this housing stock, however any right to buys or new schemes subsequent to the 30 September may change the average rent per property type.

Stock Numbers at 30/9/2018	Social	Affordable	Sheltered	LSSO	Homeless	Total
Number of Properties at 30/9/2018	6,835	18	845	87	129	7,914

- 3.7 The HRA Business Plan presented to the November Executive has been adjusted for changes including the Financial Security Options and Fees and Charges approved at the November Executive. A summary of the assumptions for the budget are shown in the table below.

Financial Assumptions included in the HRA BP and November FS report	2018/19	2019/20
Rent & Service Charge Increases	1% rent reduction for general stock and 1%+CPI (3.4%) for LSSOs and relets to formula rent	
New Build	50% Affordable 50% Social	
Right-to-Buys	50	35
Bad debt rates	0.60%	0.60%
2019/20 Financial Security options	£0	£354,630
2019/20 Growth bids	£0	£190,000
New Build - Number of Units (HRA BP)	37	66
Repayment of Debt	1,241,000	0
New loans	6,400,000	3,056,508
Capital Deficit in the Business Plan	0	0

- 3.8 The Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules in the Constitution prescribe the Budget setting process, which includes a minimum consultation period of three weeks. Under Article 4 of the Constitution, the Budget also includes: the allocation of financial resources to different services and projects; proposed contingency funds; setting the rents; decisions relating to the control of the Council's borrowing requirement; the control of its capital expenditure; and the setting of virement limits. The timescale required to implement this process is outlined below.



4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

4.1 Rents

4.1.1 The continuing impact of the 1% rent reduction on an average rent is illustrated in the table below. Over the four year period a CPI+1% increase is estimated to be a 10.68% increase in average rents, compared to a 3.94% loss of a 1% rent reduction for four years. This gives an overall difference between the two rents of 14.62% and an estimated rent loss per year by year four of £5.9Million and in total £12.6Million. The impact over a 30 year business plan has been estimated at £225Million.

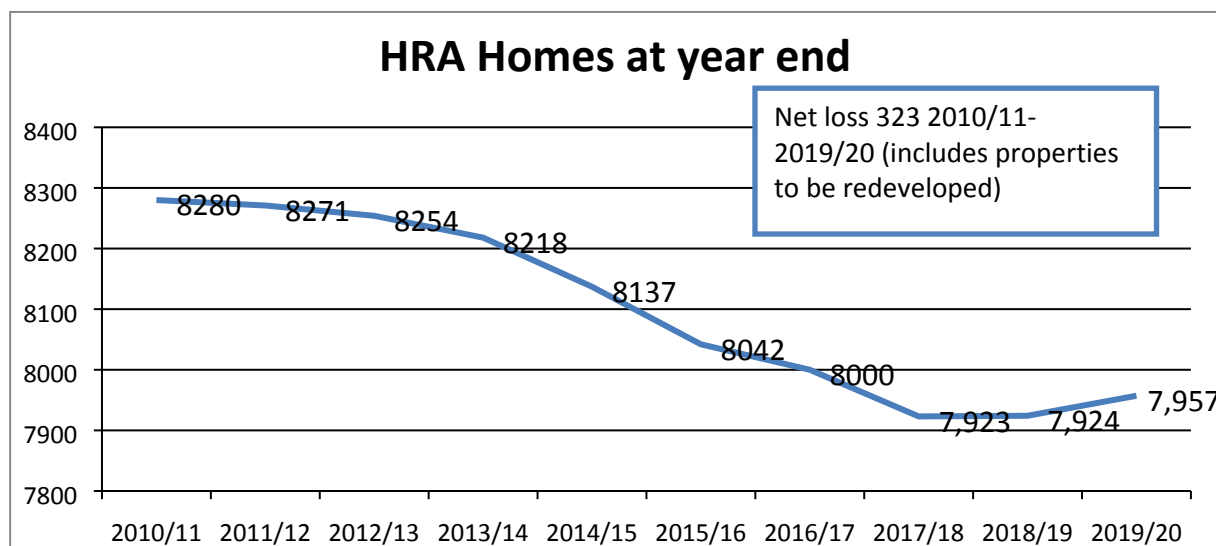
Impact of 1% rent reduction (starting rent £98.59)	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Incr.(decr.) after 4 years £	Incr./(decr.) after 4 years
Rent based on CPI+1%	£99.48	£101.47	£105.53	£109.11		
Increase per year	£0.89	£1.99	£4.06	£3.59	£10.53	10.68%
Rent with 1% rent reduction	£97.60	£96.62	£95.66	£94.70		
Decrease per year	-£0.99	-£0.98	-£0.97	-£0.96	-£3.88	-3.94%
Overall loss per average property	£1.88	£4.84	£9.87	£14.41	£31.00	14.62%
Rent loss in £'000	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Incr.(decr.) after 4 years £	Incr./(decr.) after 4 years
Estimated rent loss per year £'000	£771	£1,975	£4,005	£5,852	£12,604	

4.1.2 The exceptions to the 1% rent reduction for Stevenage Borough Council, is Low Start Shared Ownership properties (LSSOs). The Council has 85 LSSO properties and owns 82.15 full house equivalents. This report recommends that these rents are set in line with the rent policy CPI+1% or a 3.4% increase for 2019/20, (2018/19 increase 4%).

4.1.3 The proposed average rents for 2019/20 are set out in the table below, there are currently 10 affordable rented properties (ranging from 4 bedroom-2 bedroom houses and flats).

Average Rents 2019/20	LSSO	Incr./ (decr.) %	social	Increase/ (decrease) %	Affordable	Incr./ (decr.) %
Average Rent 2018/19	£113.55		£95.75		£160.21	
Add rent impact 2019/20	£3.86	3.40%	-£0.96	-1.00%	-£1.60	-1.00%
Total 52 week Rent 2019/20	£117.41		£94.79		£158.61	

4.1.4 The net rental income decrease for 2019/20 is estimated to be £291,280, which includes the impacts of the rent reduction and estimated right to buys, offset by estimated new properties and properties taken out of management (awaiting redevelopment). The total number of properties in management is estimated to have reduced by 323 homes between 2010/11 and 2019/20, the 2018/19 & 2019/20 numbers have been temporarily impacted by sheltered properties out of management ready for scheme redevelopment.

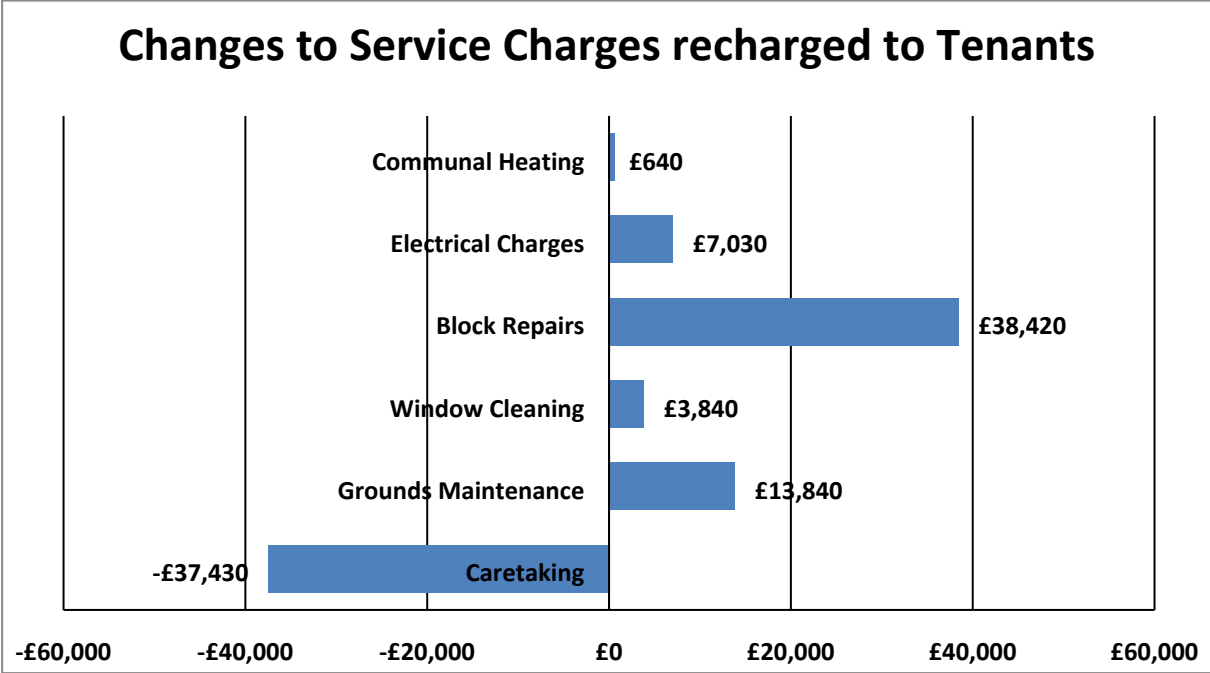


4.2 Service Charges

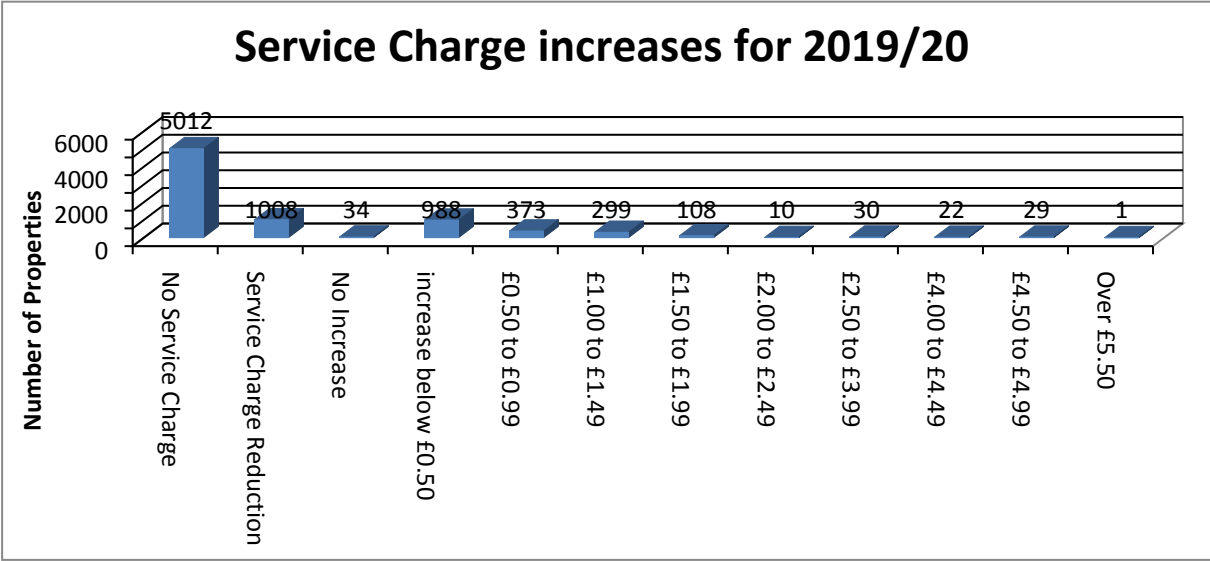
4.2.1 Service charges are calculated for each block individually for 2,902 properties, (2017/18 2,925) or 37% of current SBC tenanted properties. A review of service charges has been started but not concluded in time for the 2019/20 rent setting and still requires tenant and Member consultation. Service charges currently provided, (eligible for housing benefit) are shown below.

Service Charges:
Caretaking
Grounds maintenance
Window cleaning
Block repairs (including pest control)
Electrical charges
Communal heating

4.2.2 Service charges are not subject to the 1% rent reduction regulations, but are based on cost recovery. For 2019/20, service charge costs will increase with inflationary pressures and changes in usage. The chart below identifies the changes between 2018/19 and 2019/20 for service charges. The increase in grounds maintenance and block repairs has impacted on a number of tenants as identified in paragraph 4.2.3.

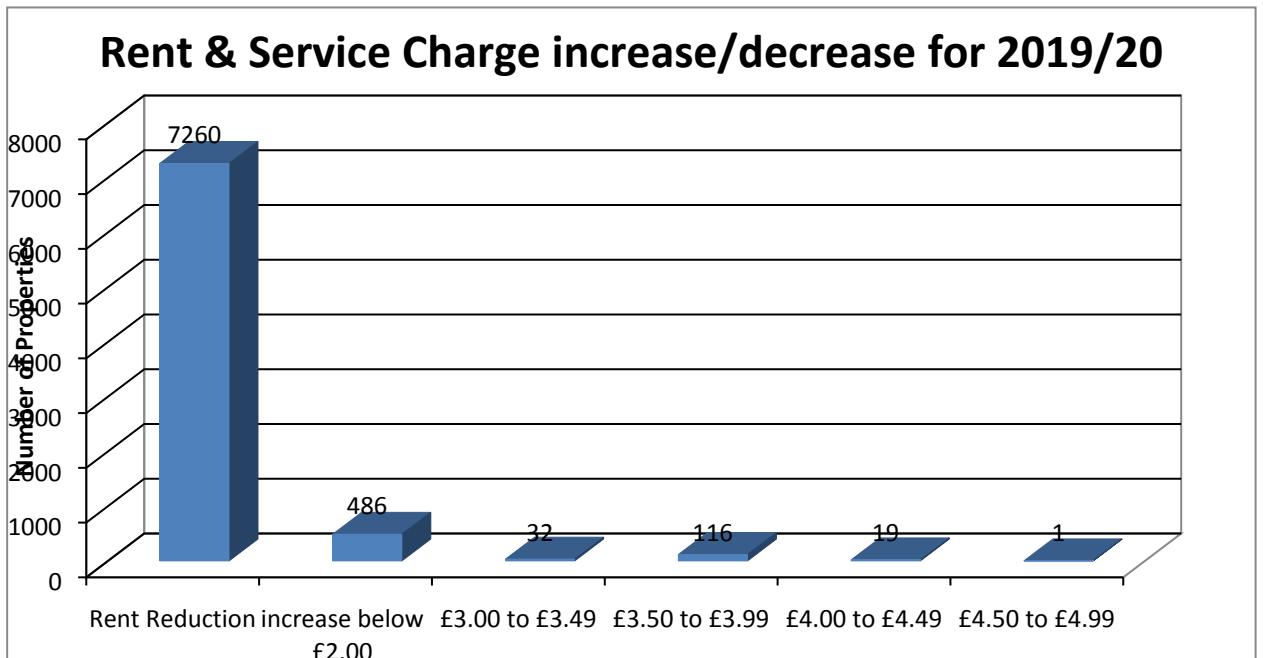


4.2.3 The spread of service charge increases for all tenants in 2019/20 is shown in the chart below. The impact of the changes in service charges (including caretaking), means 1,008 or 35% of homes (who get a service charge) will receive a service charge reduction, even though service charges have fluctuated between individual services as shown above. There are 30 properties with an increase above £4.50, of which one home has an increase over £5.50 due to in part increased costs for block repairs.

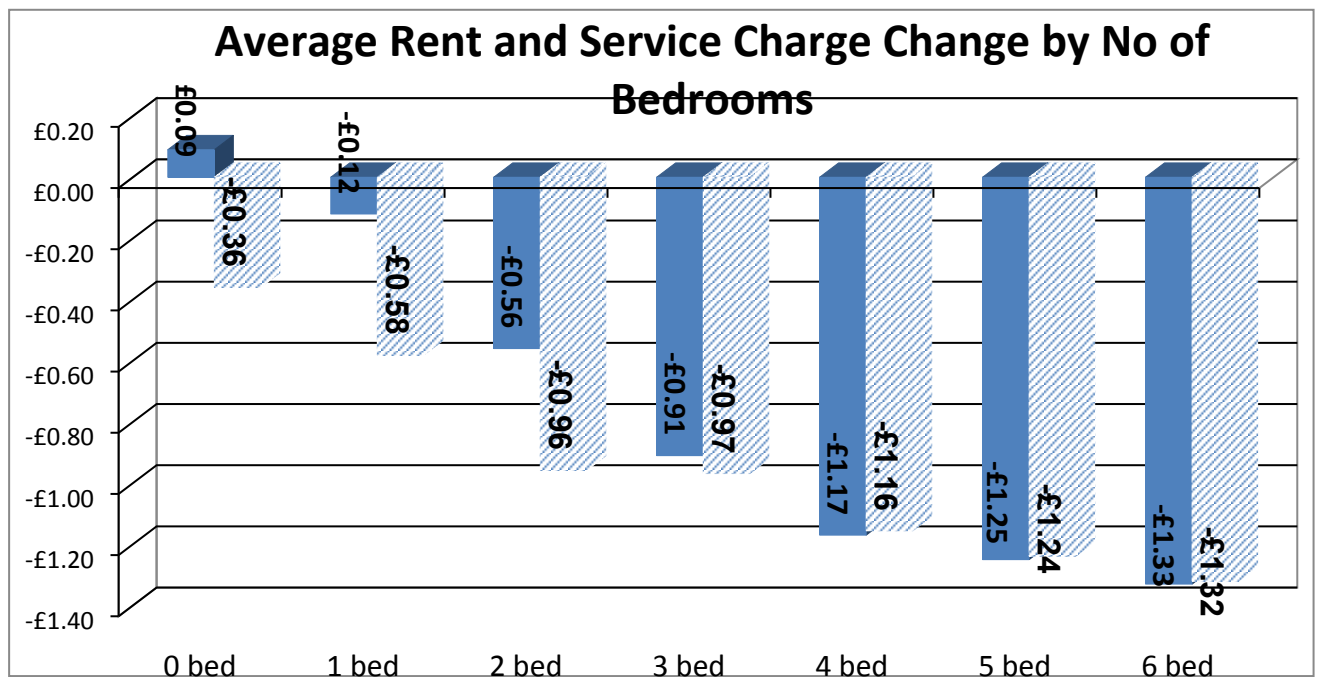


4.3 Rents and Service Charges

4.3.1 The 2019/20 rent reduction and service charges impact is that 7,260 (or 92% of council tenants) compared to 84.6% in 2018/19 receive a rent and service charge reduction. There are 136 properties with an increase of more than £3.50 with one home with an increase between £4.50-£4.99. The spread of the 2019/20 rent and service charge changes are summarised in the chart below.



4.3.2 The average rent and service charge increase/(decrease) by bedroom size has also been calculated and summarised in the chart below and compared to the 2018/19 data.



4.3.3 The comparison between HRA property rents per week and private sector rents per week for one to four bedroom properties is shown in the chart below. A three bedroom private sector rental property costs an additional 140%, (2017/18,138%) more per week than a SBC council home and 40% more than the affordable let properties,(2017/18 38%).

	SBC Social Rent	SBC Affordable Rent	Median Private Rent	Local Housing Allowance (LHA) 2018/19	Median % v SBC Social	Median % v SBC Affordable
1 Bed Property	£80.96	£126.06	£160.00	£129.81	98%	27%
2 Bed Property	£94.32	£154.59	£213.00	£160.03	126%	38%
3 Bed Property	£105.33	£180.92	£253.00	£197.81	140%	40%
4 Bed Property	£116.07	£223.56	£322.00	£253.34	177%	44%

Private rent Data from Home track housing intelligence system re Oct-17 to Nov-18 (Updated Nov 2018). SBC rents are 2019/20 and the private rents are 2018/19 rents

4.3.4 **The Local Housing Allowance (LHA)** shown in the table above is the maximum amount of housing benefit payable by property size for private rented properties.

4.4 Borrowing

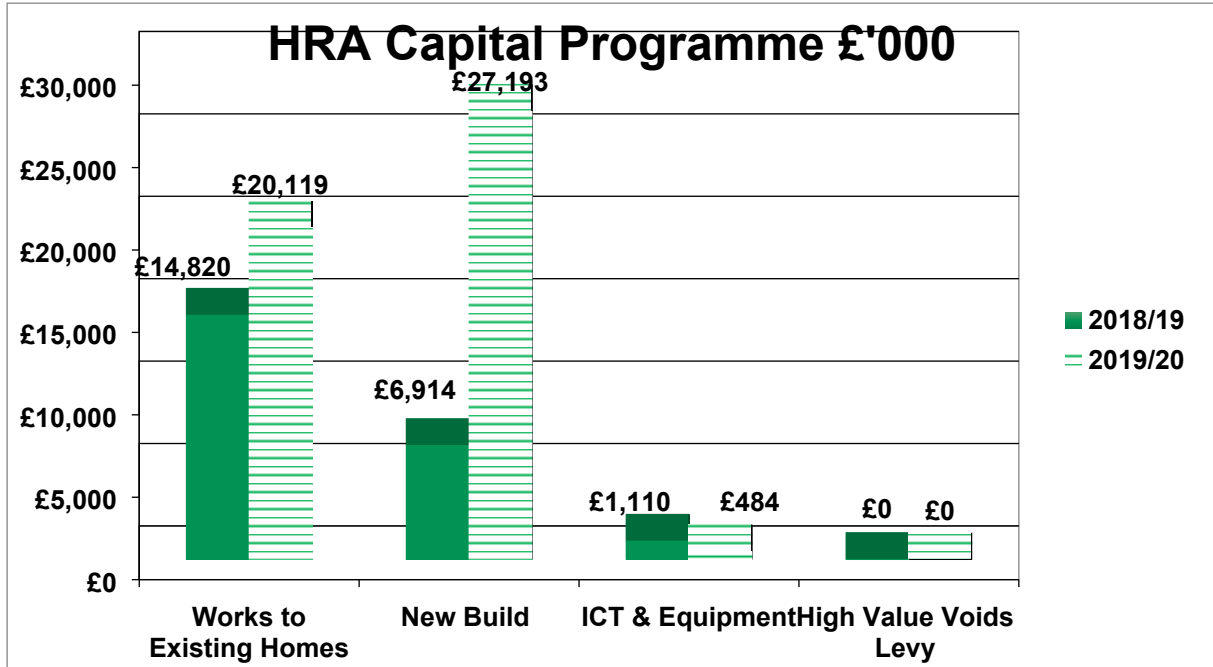
4.4.1 The HRA Business Plan's (HRA BP) existing loans have an average interest rate of 3.37% based on £205.614Million of borrowing. The current business plan makes allowance for new loans totalling £6,400,000 in 2018/19 and £3,056,508 in 2019/20. The decision when to take the new borrowing will be reviewed, weighing up the cost of carry and the prevailing PWLB rates. The interest payable in 2018/19 and 2019/20 is estimated to be £6,866,152 and £6,960,900 respectively.

4.4.2 The HRA Business Plan update to the November 2018 Executive identified that in light of the lifting of the HRA borrowing cap by the Chancellor, the HRA would not be constrained by the £217.685Million borrowing cap set as part of the self-financing settlement. The HRA Business Plan needed to look at a revised approach to borrowing, versus using revenue contributions to capital. This will be based on the HRA need to borrow and affordability as identified in the action plan, (Appendix A to the November Executive report).

4.5 Contributions to Capital Expenditure

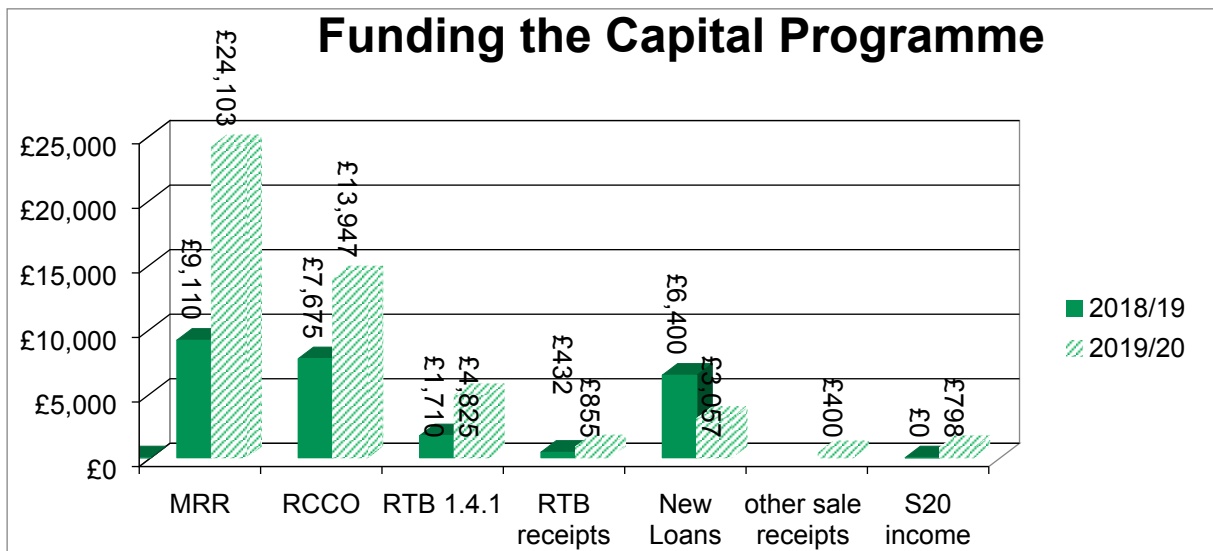
4.5.1 A large part of the capital programme has been funded from HRA revenue resources and the HRA BP has identified a further £105Million over the next 15 years. As stated in 4.4.2 above the HRA action plan will review revenue contributions to capital and this will be brought back to Members in 2019/20. The level of revenue contribution for 2018/19 and 2019/20 are £7,675,440 (unchanged from the working budget) and £13,948,110 respectively.

4.5.2 The 2019/20 budgeted depreciation allowance to be transferred to the Major Repairs Reserve (MRR) to fund the capital programme is £12,156,450, (a small increase of £15,550 to the November MTFS). A summary of the 2017/18-2018/19 capital programme is shown in the chart below



4.5.3 The increase in the size of the 2019/20 capital programme compared to the 2018/19 programme, is due to two significant schemes, the Major Repairs Contract (works to flat blocks) and costs related to the redevelopment of Kenilworth Close (new build scheme).

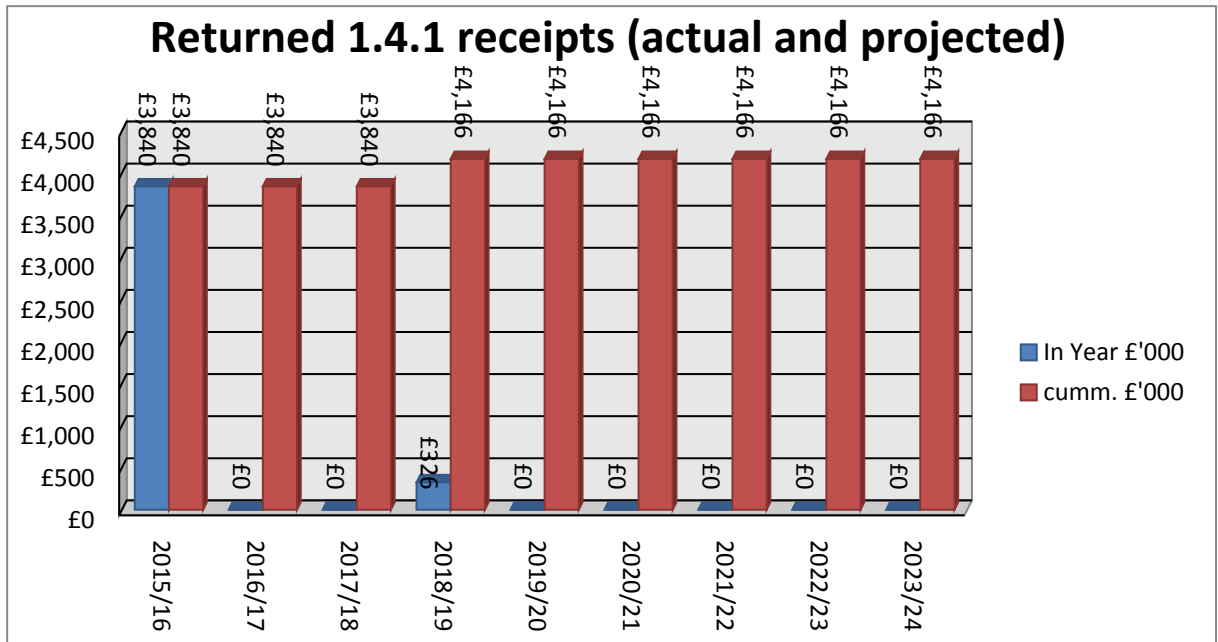
4.5.4 The capital programme funding for 2018/19 and the draft HRA capital programme 2019/20 is summarised in the chart below.



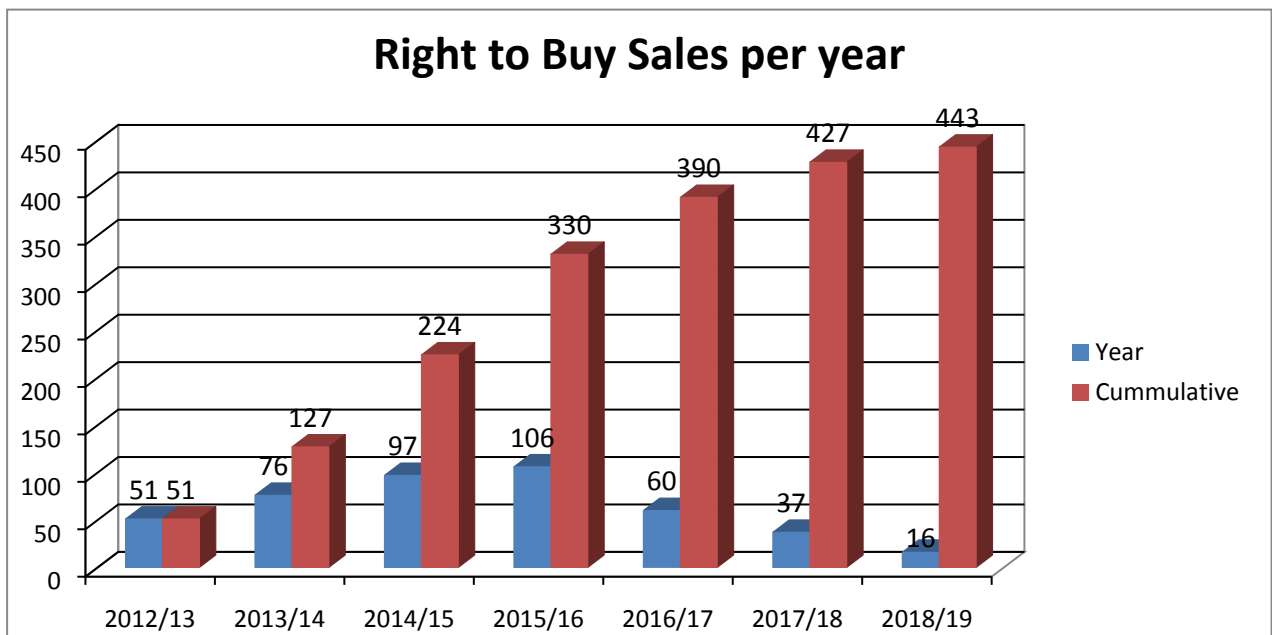
- 4.5.5 The funding of the capital programme may change as a result of the actions outlined in paragraph 4.4.2.
- 4.5.6 Over the next 15 years of the Business Plan the HRA is projected to use £105Million of revenue receipts because prior to the lifting of the debt cap the HRA had very little room to borrow. However, with the subsequent lifting of the cap there is scope to convert this to borrowing to increase the size of the capital programme based on identified need but this must be also based on affordability. This review will come back to Members during 2019/20.
- 4.5.7 The Capital programme for 2019/20 onwards does include two schemes which were submitted to the Government prior to the lifting of the debt cap and this borrowing totals £9.05Million and was also included in the HRA Business Plan to the November Executive.

4.6 Use of One for One Receipts

- 4.6.1 The new build programme was introduced in 2012/13 alongside HRA self-financing and the 2018 Business Plan projects to spend £581Million with an estimated 2,132 new council homes (including 107 replacement properties) over a 30 year period.
- 4.6.2 Despite having an ambitious new build programme, the value of 1.4.1 receipts has continued to increase with house prices and the number of RTBs has increased in previous years, peaking at 106 in 2015/16, with 2018/19 projected to be 25 sales (16 sales as at 26 November). To date only £3.9Million of receipts have been returned to the Government to avoid the punitive interest rate penalties (4% above the Bank of England base rate).
- 4.6.3 Based on the current capital programme and estimated 1.4.1 receipts, £326,000 (a reduction of £97,000 from the November BP update) have to be returned in 2018/19. Projections are very much dependent on the level of sales and profiling of capital expenditure.
- 4.6.4 The chart below identifies that there will be some receipts which may need to be returned in 2018/19.



4.6.5 Future projections on returned receipts are based on future estimated sale receipts, officers will keep this under review to minimise the cost to the HRA, however the level of 1.4.1 receipts projected to be returned as reduced as the level of RTB sales has gradually reduced as shown in the table below.



*2018/19 based on sales at 26 November 2018

4.7 Draft Budget Proposals

4.7.1 The Draft 2019/20 HRA budget is estimated to be a net expenditure of £8,889,450, which is an increase of £450,357 over that reported in the November HRA Business Plan to the November Executive. The reasons for the changes are summarised in the table below.

Summary of 2019/20 budget movements		
November MTFs (21 November Executive)		£8,439,093
Increases in Income/Reductions in Expenditure:		
Additional Rental Income (reduced number of RTB's, refurbishing for temp accommodation, increase number of units in 2019/20 to be delivered)	£(238,860)	
Reduction in borrowing costs from deferral of new debt (now scheduled to be taken March 2019)	£(90,970)	
Roundings	£7	
Decreases in Income/Increases in Expenditure:		
Re-phasing of decant costs to align with redevelopment of Kenilworth Close	£22,720	
Reduction in Income and charges from non-housing rents	£14,190	
Increased inflation pressures	£72,530	
Increase in ICT Licence costs	£64,710	
Adjustment to capital funding (Revenue contribution to capital -RCCO) due to lower RTB receipts and schemes approved November BP (£290K) new capital bids £166K) schemes.	£506,030	
Financial Security Implementation Fund (one year only) approved Financial Security report November Executive.	£100,000	
Total Changes:		£450,357
Draft HRA 2019-20 budget		£8,889,450

4.7.2 The **rental income** projection has increased for the HRA as a result of:

- Lower projected RTB's in 2018/19 (now estimated to be 25 RTBs reduced from 35 RTBs);
- Use of out of management properties for temporary accommodation (15 properties);
- Two schemes projected to be delivered in the last quarter of 2019/20
- An additional eight open market acquisitions in 2019/20 than reported in the November Business Plan;
- Conversion of existing accommodation to produce an additional 10 properties

4.7.2 **Loans** due to be taken in 2019/20 are scheduled to be taken at the end of 2019/20 (rather than the beginning) reducing the cost to the HRA by £90,970.. This will also avoid taking loans after the March Brexit date and any potential volatility in the market.

4.7.3 There has been an increase in **inflation** to the HRA of £72,530, while salary inflation has reduced due to the Senior Management Restructure (SMR) as

services were realigned between the HRA and General Fund , however recharges from the General Fund to the HRA have increased. The recharges are currently being reviewed as part of the General Fund and HRA budget setting process and may change between the draft and final HRA budget.

- 4.7.4 **Revenue Contribution to Capital** (RCCO) has increased by £506,030, this is as a result of increased cost of staff time charged to capital (£75,000) and the two growth bids approved at the November Executive totalling £290,000. In addition there were additional requested budgets of £141,030 relating to fire safety module, infrastructure investment and mobile technology for staff, which will be included in the Draft Capital Strategy to the January Executive for approval.
- 4.7.5 The **2018/19 HRA projected working budget** is estimated to be £3,967,090 which is £424,830 lower than the working budget approved as part of the November BP update. This relates to a revised projection for decant costs which is now projected over the period 2018/19-2020/21, with a reduction of £423,890 in 2018/19.
- 4.7.6 The 2019/20 HRA projected year-end balance is now projected to be £11,258,130, the summary of balances is shown in the table below. All HRA balances in excess of the minimum balances held for assessed risks in year, are required to fund the HRA 30 year capital programme, subject to any review as outlined in 4.4.2.

HRA Balances:	2018/19 £	2019/20 £
HRA Balance 1 April	(24,114,668)	(20,147,580)
Use of balances in Year	3,967,090	8,889,450*
HRA Balance 31 March	(20,147,580)	(11,258,130)
Minimum Balances	(2,074,000)	(2,000,000)*

* *subject to confirmation at the January Executive*

- 4.7.7 The Assistant Director (Finance and Estates) will be risk assessing the level of balances required in 2019/20 for the HRA. This will be included in the final HRA budget report to the January Executive and Council.

4.8 Consultation –review and update as per HRA BP

- 4.8.1 The Council remains committed to working in partnership with council tenants and leaseholders to shape, strengthen and improve council housing services and sets out a range of options to enable housing customers to be involved. The Business Unit review in Communities and Neighbourhoods will seek to further develop the offer of engagement to the wider community.
- 4.8.2 The Housing Management Advisory Board (HMAB) acts as an advisory body to the Executive for council housing-related matters, including participation in the HRA budget-setting process and the development of the HRA Business Plan. HMAB currently includes one leaseholder and five tenant representatives in addition to Member and officer representation. The Board receives quarterly reports on progress in delivering HRA Business Plan commitments. Feedback from resident and STAR surveys (see below) is also considered by HMAB to give a broader context. On 16th August and 25th

October 2018, HMAB received presentations on the HRA Business Plan and MTFs update.

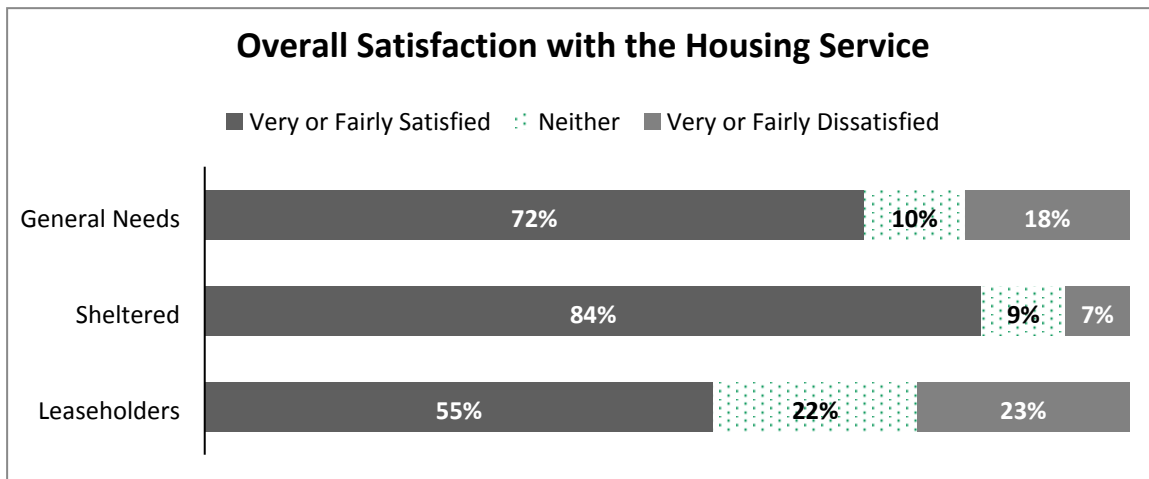
- 4.8.3 The draft HRA budget and rent setting proposals contained in this report are scheduled to be presented to HMB at their meeting on 17 January 2019 and their comments will be fed back to the Executive prior to the final budget report being recommended to the Council.
- 4.8.4 Targeted consultation will be carried out with staff, customers and stakeholders directly affected by the financial security options agreed by the Executive in November 2018. All tenants will be notified of changes to their rent and service charges in February/March 2019.
- 4.8.5 There are plans to review service charges ahead of implementing a new and more transparent service charge model in 2020/21. This review will include consideration of both service charges and support charges and will involve consultation with tenants and leaseholders
- 4.8.6 The Council periodically seeks the views of housing customers through a postal survey of a sample of housing customers. This 'STAR' survey is used across the housing sector and enables the council to assess levels of customer satisfaction and to identify customer priorities. The most recent STAR survey was undertaken in early 2018 and for the first time included leaseholders and sheltered housing tenants in addition to general needs tenants.
- 4.8.7 Respondents were asked to say what was most important to them from a list of options. The top five priorities for each group of customers are shown in the table below:

STAR Survey respondents' top five priorities

Priority*	General Needs Tenants	Sheltered Tenants	Leaseholders
1	Repairs & maintenance (87%)	Repairs & maintenance (60%)	Repairs & maintenance (74%)
2	Overall quality of your home (61%)	Emergency call system (50%)	Value for money for service charges (64%)
3	Value for money for rent and charges (35%)	Supported housing manager (34%)	Overall quality of your block of flats (58%)
4	Neighbourhood as a place to live (26%)	Overall quality of your home (33%)	Dealing with ASB (39%)
5	Keeping residents informed (25%)	Keeping residents informed (33%)	Keeping residents informed (23%)

* 1= most important

- 4.8.8 Overall satisfaction with the housing service is summarised in the following chart and the survey also drilled down into satisfaction with specific areas of the service.



4.8.9 Satisfaction levels with value for money for rent, service charges and support charges were as follows:

- 68% of general needs tenants and 83% of sheltered tenants were satisfied that their rent provides value for money
- 55% of general needs tenants, 72% of sheltered tenants and 33% of leaseholders were satisfied that their service charges provide value for money
- 76% of sheltered tenants were satisfied that their support charges provide value for money

4.8.10 Officers have drawn up action plans in response to the survey outcomes, much of which is closely aligned to the investment and improvement plans associated with the HRA Business Plan and MTFs.

4.9 Leaders Financial Security Group

4.9.1 The LSFG chaired by the portfolio holder for Resources on behalf of the Leader and with cross party representation met in October and the group;

- Reviewed the HRA assumptions regarding the 2019/20 onwards saving target
- Review of the HRA 2019/20 Financial Security package
- Reviewed the HRA 2019/20 Fees and charges

4.9.2 The LSFG considered the options above and scored the Financial Security options, growth and fees and charges for inclusion in the draft HRA budget.

5. IMPLICATIONS

4.3 Financial Implications

5.1.1 Financial implications are included in the body of the report

4.4 Legal Implications

4.4.2 Legal implications are included in the body of the report

5.3 Staffing Implications

5.3.1 The unions are being consulted on the options approved at the November Executive on 19 December 2018. Human Resources staff are co-ordinating centrally the implementation of any staff related savings. However there are no compulsory redundancies within the options for the HRA

5.4 Risk Implications

5.4.1 There is considerable risk in setting HRA spend as there have been so many Government policy changes concerning rent and welfare reforms, making medium to long term planning difficult. Between 2014/15-2020/21 there will be four different rent policies, with an estimated loss of £225Million from the four year 1% rent reduction between 2016/17-2019/20. The HRA has one main income source and changes in Government policy can have a significant impact on the affordability of revenue and capital plans, particularly if there is a move to convert revenue resources into borrowing

5.4.2 There is the impact of Universal Credit (UC) and other welfare reforms on tenants, currently 54% or £20Million of benefit is paid to the HRA from the benefits system rather than to tenants and experience has shown that for other local authorities, arrears have increased significantly with the roll out of UC.

5.4.3 There is a potential adverse financial impact on the HRA as a result of high inflationary pressures, when rents are suppressed. If inflation rises above that assumed in the business plan, as a result of BREXIT, further reductions in spend may need to be made.

5.4.4 Since 2012/13 the RTB discount has increased from £34,000 to £80,900 in 2018/19. Reducing the cost of purchase for a property has a double negative effect on the HRA, not only does it lose the rental supporting the capital programme, it also cannot afford to replace the property with the resulting receipt.

5.4.6 As a result of the number of risks outlined above the authority did not borrow up to the now removed debt cap. With the change in focus on using borrowing rather than using revenue receipts, revenue headroom will be required to be retained for unforeseen events as opposed to borrowing headroom.

5.4.7 The HRA has an annual Financial Security target to achieve, which for 2020/21 is £253,000 and £200,000 thereafter.

5.5 Equalities and Diversity Implications

5.5.1 In carrying out or changing its functions (including those relating to the provision of services and the employment of staff) the Council must comply with the Equality Act 2010 and in particular section 149 which is the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Act replaced three previous equality legislations – the Race Relations Act (section 71), the Sex Discrimination Act (section 76A)

and the Disability Discrimination Act (section 49A). The Council has a statutory obligation to comply with the requirements of the Act, demonstrating that as part of the decision-making process, due regard has been given to the needs described in the legislation. These duties are non-delegable and must be considered by Council when setting the budget in January 2019.

- 5.5.2 To inform the decisions about the Budget 2019/20 officers have undertaken Brief Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) for service-related budget savings proposals. Where there is a potentially negative impact, officers have identified further action needed to inform a final decision and to mitigate the impact where this is possible. These EqIA were included in the November Report and will be appended to the final HRA Budget report together with an EQIA for the rent and service charges increase for the January Executive.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

BD1 Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy (2018/19-2022/23) - November Executive

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Draft HRA Summary

This page is intentionally left blank

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT SUMMARY

	ACTUAL 2017/18 £	ORIGINAL BUDGET 2018/19 £	WORKING BUDGET Q1 2018/19 £	ORIGINAL BUDGET 2019/20 £
SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURE				
SUPERVISION AND MANAGEMENT	9,013,049	9,589,250	9,514,990	9,291,475
SPECIAL SERVICES	4,361,272	4,583,620	4,594,490	4,649,840
RENT, RATES, TAXES AND OTHER CHARGES	506,635	390,600	483,350	445,670
REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE ⁽¹⁾	5,254,612	6,324,680	6,349,110	6,108,190
CORPORATE AND DEMOCRATIC COSTS	210,694	344,280	352,060	338,655
CONTRIBUTION TO THE BAD DEBT PROVISION	146,139	255,270	255,270	217,620
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	19,492,401	21,487,700	21,549,270	21,051,450
SUMMARY OF INCOME				
RENTAL INCOME:				
DWELLING RENTS	(39,680,054)	(39,587,650)	(39,353,930)	(39,258,350)
NON DWELLING RENTS	(192,892)	(123,920)	(124,020)	(110,490)
	(39,872,946)	(39,711,570)	(39,477,950)	(39,368,840)
CHARGES FOR SERVICES & FACILITIES - TENANTS	(1,716,795)	(1,950,940)	(1,977,380)	(2,104,430)
LEASEHOLDER SERVICE CHARGES	(856,933)	(912,820)	(1,051,190)	(940,810)
CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS EXPENDITURE	(360,440)	(304,260)	(295,560)	(320,760)
REIMBURSEMENT OF COSTS	(342,514)	(358,010)	(325,510)	(358,010)
RECHARGE INCOME (GF & CAPITAL)	(1,617,833)	(1,646,880)	(1,646,880)	(1,741,640)
TOTAL INCOME	(44,767,460)	(44,884,480)	(44,774,470)	(44,834,490)
DEPRECIATION	11,620,202	11,792,190	11,792,190	12,156,450
INTEREST PAYABLE	7,016,875	6,960,140	6,867,010	6,960,390
INTEREST RECEIVABLE	(287,341)	(274,360)	(384,110)	(392,460)
NET (SURPLUS)/DEFICIT FOR YEAR	(6,925,323)	(4,918,810)	(4,950,110)	(5,058,660)
APPROPRIATIONS:				
REVENUE CONTRIBUTION TO CAPITAL OUTLAY	60,230	7,675,440	7,675,440	13,948,110
SELF FINANCING CONTRIBUTION TO DEBT REPAYMENT	2,500,000	0	1,241,760	0
HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BALANCE				
NET EXPENDITURE/(INCOME) FOR YEAR	(4,365,093)	2,756,630	3,967,090	8,889,450
BALANCE B/FWD 1 APRIL	(19,749,571)	(24,114,664)	(24,114,664)	(20,147,574)
HRA BALANCE C/FWD 31 MARCH	(24,114,664)	(21,358,034)	(20,147,574)	(11,258,124)

This page is intentionally left blank

Meeting: EXECUTIVE

Portfolio Area: Environment & Regeneration

Date: 12 December 2018

TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION UPDATE

KEY DECISION

Author –	Kevin Langley	Ext.No. 2272
Author –	Dave Wells	Ext.No. 2584
Author –	Rob Gregory	Ext.No. 2568
Lead Officer –	Pat Lewis	Ext.No. 2514
Contact Officer -	Pat Lewis	Ext.No. 2514

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update Executive on the regeneration projects taking place in Stevenage Town Centre and specifically to request:
- a) in principle agreement for the funding for the design and construction of the new bus interchange to be included as part of the draft Capital Strategy in January 2019.
 - b) approval to develop a business case and timetable for the development of a new leisure facility
 - c) approval to undertake an options appraisal for the Stevenage Arts and Leisure Centre

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

That Executive:

- 2.1 Note the progress on regeneration activity across the town.
- 2.2 Note the delay in accessing Growth Deal 3 funding that has been allocated to Hertfordshire LEP to support the regeneration of Stevenage town centre, and the potential implications of this delay continuing.
- 2.3 Agree the proposed approach to development and consultation for a new bus interchange.
- 2.4 Agree to proceed with the next stages of the bus interchange project with an estimated cost in the region of £6.1m, and request Officers to bring forward funding options in the draft Capital Strategy in January 2019 should Growth Deal 3 funding continue to be delayed. This assessment should set out the implications of prioritising funding this infrastructure and mitigation available.
- 2.5 Authority for the necessary purchase or lease of land, together with resolution of any current lease and restrictive covenant and other legal issues to enable

Part I

the sites to be assembled is delegated to the Strategic Director (TP), having consulted with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration.

- 2.6 Approve the Council seeking delegated authority from Hertfordshire County Council to make Traffic Regulation Orders in order to facilitate the delivery of a new bus interchange facility.
- 2.7 Delegates authority to the Strategic Director (TP), having consulted with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration to authorise the sealing of Traffic Regulation Orders following the consultation period and consideration/resolution of any objections received.
- 2.8 Gives approval to develop a business case and associated timetable for the development of a new and enhanced leisure facility to be located on St George's Way.
- 2.9 Approves the undertaking of an options appraisal for the Stevenage Arts & Leisure Centre with a view to developing the theatre and cultural offer within the town centre.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The regeneration of the Town Centre is the top priority for Stevenage's residents, businesses, and for Stevenage Borough Council as highlighted within the Future Town Future Council (FTFC) Programme.
- 3.2 The Council worked closely with its partners including Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Chamber Of Commerce and Industry, Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and Homes England to develop the Stevenage Central Framework ("the Framework") which was approved by Executive on 24 July 2015.
- 3.3 The Framework sets out a clear vision and the scale of opportunity within a regenerated town centre has been used as the basis for the development of planning policy, including the Local Plan as well as the foundation for developing subsequent regeneration schemes.

The Framework set the vision to reinvigorate the centre of Stevenage and ensure that it represents the aspirations of its people and makes provision for the opportunities they seek. The overall vision is to reimagine the town centre, with a range of facilities for people to enjoy, including cultural facilities, places to eat and drink, high quality public realm, celebrating the heritage of the town, creating new and quality homes and office spaces, and improving the retail experience. The Framework identified that the 6 Major Opportunity Areas in the town centre could deliver over 30,000m² of new retail, 60,000m² of new office and over 3000 new homes.

- 3.4 The Framework identifies the need to move the bus station from its current location, both freeing up significant development opportunities, and delivering

Part I

a greatly improved facility for the wider town's transport network. The Framework says *"A public transport hub will allow Town Square to be expanded and rejuvenated to incorporate new development and activities. Its location should be driven by the opportunity to interchange with the railway station but balanced with providing convenient access to the town centre"*

- 3.5 The brief for the Framework also identified the potential to enhance several town centre leisure and cultural facilities including Stevenage Arts and Leisure Centre (SALC), the Swimming Centre and the Stevenage Museum. Stevenage already benefits from a theatre that is highly regarded, well used swimming and leisure facilities, and a highly valued town museum. The Council's proposed approach is to consider how these facilities can be further enhanced or developed to benefit local residents, and to play a role in regenerating the town centre.
- 3.6 This report provides a short overview of how the regeneration plans are progressing for Stevenage town centre. The Council and local partners have been proactive in bringing forward the regeneration of the town centre, initiating a range of projects and through enabling activities such as planning advice to private led developments. Key areas of regeneration activity that have completed in the last two years or are currently underway include:
- **Vision and funding:** Agreement of Stevenage Central Framework by Stevenage Borough Council and local partners, benefitting from £15m Growth Deal 1 funding. A successful bid was made for Growth Deal 3 funding (£19m) in 2016-2017, and Hertfordshire LEP are awaiting this funding.
 - **Public realm:** Completion of public realm works in Littlewood Square and Forum Square.
 - **Market Place:** Completion of new play-trail and high quality public realm in Market Place.
 - **Way finding:** Implementation of new way finding signage which recognises the history and heritage of the town as well as providing accessible and engaging information.
 - **Park Place:** Private developer completing 202 new homes, new retail premises and new public realm.
 - **Queensway:** Planning permission granted for conversion of parts of northern Queensway including new retail occupiers, leisure use, office occupiers and new residential units, as part of an initial £50m redevelopment.
 - **Brickdale house, Vista Towers, Skyline, Six Hills House, Six Hills House extension:** Completion of 366 homes and apartments by private developers, largely through use of Permitted Development rights.
 - **Matalan site:** Sales process underway, led by landowner to regenerate the existing site.
 - **Stevenage Works:** Skills development and employment package in place to support major building contracts and developments in Stevenage and provide opportunities to local people, working in partnership with builders, Job Centre Plus and North Herts College.

Part I

- 3.7 In addition, the Council is leading a major scheme, the SG1 development, having appointed Mace as its preferred bidder for this scheme. This brings forward step change in the town centre as set out below. A range of enabling activities are now required to support the delivery of this scheme including:
- Land assembly
 - Completion of legal agreements between Mace and SBC
 - Preparation of detailed planning application
 - Preparing to decant current occupiers from Swingate house and other sites
- 3.8 As the regeneration plans for the town continue to progress, the Council will also be taking steps to develop a new high quality bus interchange, develop plans to refresh the town square and conservation area using an existing £4.5m budget, and continuing to enhance the offer in the town centre through active town centre management. This includes provision of new free Wi-Fi, a vibrant programme of events and activities, new web-based shopping apps, active engagement with current and potential retailers to promote the town.
- 3.9 The Framework envisaged different phases of work being brought forward to reflect market conditions and deliverability. Individual projects can take some time to develop from an early concept into a funded plan and implemented new building or service. We are now proposing to commence detailed work to prepare for the next phases of regeneration within the town centre, looking in particular at the opportunities to enhance the leisure and swimming offer, and theatre and cultural offer for the town.

SG1

- 3.10 SG1 will be the first major phase of regeneration, delivering two of the six Major Opportunity Areas (MOA) identified within the Framework and acting as a catalyst to deliver major place shaping changes to the town centre.
- 3.11 SG1 is a mixed-use scheme, incorporating active ground floor frontages with residential uses above. The ground floor uses will include creating new places to eat and drink around a new garden square in the heart of the town. The scheme will also help transform the delivery of public services through the delivery of a multi-functional community facility which acts as a one-stop-shop for public services including health, library and Council services and condenses from around five existing sites into a single more efficient facility. The scheme is characterised by high-quality public spaces with the new garden square and a new linear park to the south of the development, and supply of new homes for the town centre.
- 3.12 The redevelopment of SG1 will reinvigorate the town centre, transform the built environment and deliver key buildings of unique character and landmark quality. SG1 will deliver a series of high standard new buildings. This approach allows the heritage assets of the town to be maintained and where possible enhanced by the contemporary new architecture. The SG1 proposals provide the design catalyst for creating exciting new high quality public realm within Stevenage. Maximising opportunities for light penetration

Part I

and 'greening' the urban environment, the new landscape of public spaces will encourage visitors and residents to sit, stay and enjoy being in the Town Centre.

- 3.13 Since Executive approved Mace as the Councils preferred development partner for SG1 in January 2018 a great deal of work has taken place to progress the scheme and the associated legal arrangements.
- 3.14 The final drafting checks are being made to the Development Agreement and supporting documents in order for the Council and Mace to sign the agreement.
- 3.15 Work to facilitate the SG1 development has been ongoing while the legal arrangements for SG1 have been taking place. This has included a range of activities given the size and nature of the SG1 regeneration scheme and some of this work is highlighted in the paragraphs below.
- 3.16 Officers have been progressing land assembly required to bring the scheme forward and the acquisition of the freehold of 1 Town Square was completed on 8th November and discussions are continuing with other land owners over further acquisitions.
- 3.17 Work to gain vacant possession of Swingate House ahead of the first phase of SG1 has also been underway including the development of proposals to move the CCTV function to an alternative location. A contractor has been procured to manage the construction of the new CCTV control room and implement the required transmission solution with work on the new facilities due to start in January 2019.
- 3.18 The Council has been working with the public and private sector tenants of Swingate House to ensure that they can vacate the building ahead of its handover to Mace. Work with partner organisations such as Citizens Advice Stevenage, Stevenage Age Concern and Stevenage Credit Union continues to provide options for temporary relocation in the months ahead.
- 3.19 A cross-partner group has been formed to continue the design development and partnering arrangements for the new public sector hub. This group will work with Mace as the proposals are developed and designs for the new building will be shared with the public in due course.
- 3.20 A bid for £250k of One Public Estate funding, from the Cabinet Office, to create further integration of public sector services and to help speed up the delivery of the public sector hub building has been rated as Herts Property Partnership's top bid and has now gone forward for national consideration.
- 3.21 The Council will be required to fund the delivery of the hub with the monies from the land receipts that the Council will receive from SG1. Partner organisations will be expected to contribute in accordance with the level of space that they will be taking in the new building. Some of the cost of the design work for the new building will need to be spent ahead of receiving the

Part I

first payments from Mace and this will be set out in the February Capital Strategy report.

Stevenage Bus Station

- 3.22 The current bus station is situated in the centre of the SG1 development and its relocation is an essential component of delivering a comprehensive redevelopment of the town centre and provision of better facilities for residents. While a planning application is yet to be submitted by Mace, it is anticipated that the current site is expected to be the location of the 'garden square' and surrounded by new restaurants, cafes, and potentially shops. To achieve and enable the transformation of the town centre, a new and enhanced bus interchange will be needed.
- 3.23 Having funding secured for the design and construction of a new Bus Interchange is one of the Council's obligations to Mace as part of the SG1 agreement, and to enable the delivery of specific phases of delivery. Officers anticipate a new bus station will be required by the end of 2021 as part of the contractual agreements with Mace.
- 3.24 In order to meet this timescale officers propose going out to tender for a contractor to deliver the design and build of a new bus station in March 2019. This timescale should give enough time to complete the OJEU tender process, complete the detailed design stages, resolve any land ownership issues, secure any required statutory approvals such as Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's) and complete the construction of a new facility.
- 3.25 The need to relocate the bus station enables the development of a modern new facility.
- 3.26 The location of the existing bus station creates an obstacle to movement across the town centre, as well as a barrier to development. It is of very basic construction, consisting of a concrete-slabbed, teardrop-shaped apron surrounded by fencing and a series of 8 basic shelters. Other than two small passenger information screens, there are none of the facilities expected in modern bus stations such as ticket information desks, toilets, or electronic gates to separate passengers from the operational area.
- 3.27 Pedestrian links between the bus and rail stations are poor despite a significant proportion of bus station users during peak hours being commuters travelling into the town to access train services to London and elsewhere, and the route between the two is not obvious to visitors to the town. The Framework, agreed by local partners, recognised the opportunity to enhance public transport options and provide greater incentive for use of public and sustainable travel. A high quality bus station for the town centre is a top priority for the Council, providing links into the town centre for shoppers, a point of connections between different types of journey, and access not only to the town centre but the station, leisure park, Gunnells Wood and other parts of the town.

Part I

- 3.28 The professional team were appointed in early 2018 - highway engineers WYG and architects Stephen George, with cost manager Pick Everard – all have expertise and experience in delivering similar high-quality projects.
- 3.29 The agreed objectives of the Bus Interchange project are as follows:
- A modern bus interchange that provides passenger facilities and real-time information display screens.
 - Greater integration of transport services, creating a ‘transport hub’, supporting connectivity.
 - Creating the space for the SG1 development programme to progress.
 - Creating a safe, accessible and fully pedestrianised Town Centre, embracing Stevenage’s heritage.
 - Clear access in to the town centre via new and improved public realm creating an improved and extended visitor experience.
 - Developing the integration of the transport service will produce an attractive offer for businesses who may wish to invest in the town.
 - Encouraging the use of sustainable public transport into our town.
 - Congestion reduction in the town centre resulting in clearer air.
 - Allowing increased capacity for bus services, recognising the increase in new homes across the town, and the expected modal shift towards sustainable transport.
- 3.30 An early element of the SG1 proposals is Plot B, consisting of a mixed use block of ground floor retail and residential on upper floors as well as a new garden square in the area adjacent to the McDonalds restaurant, and including a significant amount of the existing bus station site. Plot B falls into Phase 2 of Mace’s draft programme, which suggests that the bus station would need to be vacated at an early stage. This will mean that the project team will be working to deliver a new bus interchange facility before vacant possession is required by the end of 2021.

GD3 funding

- 3.31 Central government (Cities and Growth Unit) managed a growth funding bid cycle during 2016. As a result of a strong bid put together by Hertfordshire LEP and Stevenage Borough Council, Hertfordshire LEP was allocated £19 million for projects in the Stevenage town centre from Growth Deal 3 (GD3) bidding round. The Growth Deal 3 package for Stevenage included funding of up to £8m to fund a new bus interchange, and the package was agreed in principle by Hertfordshire LEP Board on the December 2016.
- 3.32 In February 2017, a letter from central government was received confirming that new governance arrangements should be put in place for Stevenage First before the funding could be made available, to include the local MP, greater business representation and an independent Chair. The Council has confirmed to Hertfordshire LEP that it will support revision to governance arrangements, reflecting that we are now moving into a delivery-focussed stage of regeneration.

Part I

- 3.33 Hertfordshire LEP and local partners have engaged with government to agree these revised arrangements, however, no formal response has been provided to Hertfordshire LEP by government and as such the funding has not been released. Both the LEP and Stevenage Borough Council will continue to press government for decision and release of this funding.
- 3.34 As £8million of GD3 funding was allocated work has been underway to deliver bus facilities that meet or come under this value. The £8million was broken down into £6.5million for the construction of the new bus interchange £1.5million allocated for interim arrangements, if they were required. A budget of £6.5 million will deliver a bus interchange with the construction value of £5million with the remaining £1.5million been accounted for fees and contingency.

Bus interchange operational costs

- 3.35 When developing the designs for the new bus interchange the running costs of the new facility will be carefully considered and options to minimise any potential revenue costs to the Council will be taken. These include investigating departure charges, revenue from retail units within the site, potentially chargeable facilities, looking at controlling the level of business rates through optimising mix of canopied of building area.

Consultation

- 3.36 To deliver this project, we are working in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council as both Highways and Passenger Transport Authority. Their officers helped develop a specification for the project as well as with the appointment of the design team. Through bi-weekly meetings, HCC Highways are now supporting the project by advising on both the operations aspect of the new bus facility, and acceptability of any potential changes needed to the highway layout.
- 3.37 Consultation with the Bus User Group (BUGs) has been carried out at a number of stages of the project, talking about desirable features for modern bus stations and potential locations. The group was very positive about the opportunities the project will deliver for an improved bus service across the town. They also expressed concern about rumours they'd heard about the bus station moving to the Western side of Lytton Way adjacent to the rail station, suggesting a number of accessibility issues.
- 3.38 The Regeneration Team also met with local bus operators to discuss location options and operations issues. They were pleased with the architect's proposed approach to stand layouts and new features. A challenge they currently experience is with congestion on Lytton Way in peak times, and they would be supportive of any measures that could be taken to give buses priority and shorten journey times, such as bus lanes or signalised turns.

Part I

- 3.39 Public consultation carried out in November and into December as part of RIBA Stage 2, including location and features of the new features. A survey of shoppers on a Saturday in the Westgate Centre was carried out, followed up by separate events at North Herts College and the Rail Station.
- 3.40 The majority of consultees use the bus station when travelling to the shops, but other significant uses included access to the train station and travelling to other parts of the town and further afield to neighbouring towns. The results of the survey show a strong preference for the town centre to have a dedicated bus station (91%), rather than a series of stops spread around the centre. An enclosed waiting area, seating, live information screens and toilets were the four most requested features in a new facility. Further public consultation will take place in early 2019, in the form of an exhibition of design proposals, before the planning application is submitted.
- 3.41 In order to maximise the opportunities created from SG1 and to ensure that the town centre continues to be resilient ahead of the large schemes being delivered a range of other interventions are underway to support the town centre.

3.4 Other planned regeneration projects

Town square and conservation area

- 3.4.1 In addition to the SG1 scheme, the Council will continue to bring forward a range of other regeneration projects and activities as set out in paragraph 3.6. A key project for the Council to focus on is the enhancement of Town Square and parts of the Queensway conservation area. This includes capital investment from both Hertfordshire LEP and Stevenage Borough Council using £4.5m funding to:
- Revitalise the buildings at the north of the Town Square, to give a stronger presence to attract and retain cafes and restaurants, create a new modern flexible working area on the upper floors, and with the potential creation of a new gallery or exhibition spaces on the second floor.
 - Transform the public realm within the Town Square, with a range of options currently being developed for consideration.
 - Investment into frontages within Queensway conservation area to lift the historic centre of the story and restore the heritage interest in the town centre.
- 3.4.2 This project gives a real opportunity to celebrate the heritage of Stevenage, while bringing forward adaptations to help revitalise the town centre. Given the listed structures in the town square and the increased consultation changes to the town square will require the project will take place in two phases with the improvements to the northern block taking place first and then the works to the square itself to follow shortly after.
- 3.4.3 A planning application on the northern block is intended to be submitted in December or early January. Consultation on the changes to the town square

Part I

will take place early in the New Year with a planning application to follow shortly after for that element.

Queensway North

- 3.4.4 The Council's Planning Committee has approved a scheme to regenerate northern Queensway, to create more attractive retail units, introduce a new leisure use and food offer, provide office accommodation and around 120 new homes. This is anticipated to be a £50m regeneration project. This project will start on site in early 2019 and should take around two years to complete, significantly enhancing this part of Queensway and helping to reinforce the town centre.

Matalan site

- 3.4.5 A sale process is underway, with the existing site owner having secured Outline Planning consent for over 500 new homes.

3.5. Leisure and Culture proposals

- 3.5.1 The Stevenage Central Framework set out the Council's aspirations to enhance the leisure and cultural offer within the town centre to give a better range of services for local residents and to attract visitors from outside Stevenage to spend time within the town centre. The Framework envisaged that investment in leisure and cultural offers within the town centre would attract further private investments into similar offers, to create a broader mix, and to help stimulate the evening economy.
- 3.5.2 The Gordon Craig theatre is a highly valued asset to the town. In exploring options to enhance the cultural offer within the town, the council will only consider options which would further enhance the existing offer to Stevenage residents. Similarly, the current swimming centre and leisure offer (the latter being currently located within the SALC) are considered to provide a good service to the town but there is potential to widen the range of facilities available to benefit Stevenage's residents and attract further footfall to the town centre.
- 3.5.3 The aspiration to improve and enhance the town's current indoor leisure builds on the vision for a strong and vibrant town centre, catering to the leisure needs of the town's existing residents and new residents in future years. The age, structure and appearance of SALC and the Swimming Centre limit opportunities to revitalise the leisure offer added to which are the related challenges in terms of repairs, maintenance and operational efficiency.
- 3.5.4 Site appraisal options identified St Georges Way as being the most appropriate location for a new combined Wet and Dry Leisure Centre as reported to the Executive in October 2016.

The key reasons for selecting this site were:

- its proximity to the town centre and the driver to seek to increase footfall

Part I

- the opportunity to improve the appearance of this gateway entrance to the town centre
- the opportunity to the opportunity to replace two old facilities with a state of the art destination leisure centre that meets the increasing demands needs of the town
- to reverse the high level of subsidy required for the current wet and dry leisure provision into generating a significant surplus to the Council offer.
- the potential to generate some capital via a housing scheme to help fund construction costs

- 3.5.5 The Sports and Leisure Consultancy (SLC) were subsequently commissioned to work with the council to develop an early business case and an appropriate facilities mix for a new wet/dry leisure centre with an enhanced offer for the town's residents at St Georges Way.
- 3.5.6 SLC explored a number of options in terms of the facilities mix, based on learning from elsewhere, current and future population projections and leisure industry trends. The council's current leisure provider SLL along with colleagues from Hertfordshire County Council fed into this process through an ideas generation workshop and follow-up engagement.
- 3.5.7 The proposed mix of facilities for a new wet/dry leisure centre would represent an enhancement over the current SALC and Swimming Centre offers by increasing the range of activities offered on the site, including a leisure water feature, enhanced gym/fitness and studio offer and a greater range of activities for children and young people.
- 3.5.8 Post receiving SLC's report in February 2018 officers considered an option to adapt the current SALC site to include the potential provision of a swimming pool, museum, increasing the seating capacity for the Theatre and improved ancillary facilities. The cultural elements of these proposals have been further reinforced through the publication of the town's Cultural Strategy.
- 3.5.9 The resulting report concluded that whilst it would be possible to accommodate the improved mix of facilities within and around the SALC site if the council was so minded, the costs of adapting the facility would be very close to that of building a new venue. The site would also likely be constrained by surrounding development.
- 3.5.10 Having considered the matter further it is recommended that the Council pursues the option to work up a business case and timetable to develop a new Wet & Dry Leisure Centre on St Georges Way. This will be subject to the council securing consent and support from Hertfordshire County Council and Homes England.
- 3.5.11 Members are also asked to agree that officers consider development / redevelopment options for the existing SALC facility including enhancement of the Theatre offer and the consideration of complementary uses. This work will be guided by the Stevenage Re-imagined Cultural Strategy which aims to make the town a destination location over the next 10 years.

Part I

- 3.5.12 In developing options for enhancing the Theatre and wider cultural offer on / around the existing SALC site consideration will also be given to surrounding land uses to ensure a joined up and coherent approach to the regeneration of the station entrance to the town centre. This will explore how the council might stimulate income to develop a cultural scheme from wider regeneration activities or land development.
- 3.5.13 Given the significant amount of investment a new and enhanced leisure facility would require, it is clear that a detailed funding strategy will need to be developed to include a housing enabling scheme in close proximity to the town centre. The premise behind this scheme would be that a surplus would need to be generated to support the leisure investment.
- 3.5.14 A Leisure / Cultural Facilities Programme Board will be formed to guide these pieces of work forward.
- 3.5.15 It is acknowledged that community and stakeholder engagement will be a critical element of these projects. An engagement plan will be developed as part of the business planning process.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

- 4.1.1 It is recommended that the Council proceeds with the options set out in this paper for the following reasons.
- 4.1.2 To enable the transformation of key parts of the town centre through the SG1 redevelopment, replacement and enhanced bus facilities will need to be provided. As set out in this report, the Council worked proactively to secure funding (in principle) from the Growth Deal 3 bidding round, ahead of commencing the procurement of a development partner for the SG1 scheme. It is anticipated that as part of the contractual agreements between Mace and Stevenage Borough Council, that there will be an obligation to provide these relocated and enhanced facilities to benefit the town, and to enable the creation of the new Garden Square.
- 4.1.3 It is also recommended that the Council proceed to consider options to enhance the theatre and leisure options as set out in in this paper.

4.2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 4.2.1 Not providing replacement bus facilities. A condition for the legal agreements between Mace and SBC is for vacant possession of the current bus station site to be provided. Failure to deliver this could result in the Council incurring a financial penalty or significant levels of risk to the delivery of the SG1 scheme.
- 4.2.2 Holding back the bus interchange project pending release of Growth Deal 3 funding. This is not recommended, as the regeneration of Stevenage town

centre is the top priority of local residents and of the Council and further delay could result in significant disruption to the delivery of regeneration. It is recommended that the Council, Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and other local partners continue to seek positive a response from government to release this funding in a timely way.

- 4.2.3 Providing a lower cost bus facility. The design process on a new bus interchange in Stevenage has been underway for four months. This design process has been using a total budget of £6.5m given this is what was allocated through the GD3 process. To change the budget significantly now would require redesign to take place and mean that the procurement for a contractor could not start in March 2019 and therefore present a large risk to SG1.
- 4.2.4 Refrain from progressing options for enhancing the theatre, cultural and leisure provision in the town centre. This is not recommended, as it could result in delays to delivery of the wider ambitions for town centre regeneration – to help create a thriving cultural and leisure offer for the town. It is recommended that the Council carries out a thorough assessment of options to ensure the optimum solutions come forward to enhance the existing offer but also present a business case which is financially sustainable.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

- 5.1.1 Total cost of bus interchange £6.5m - £420k allocated in 18/19 budget with £6.1m required in future years - according to the current programme submitted by the design team, £3m would be spent in 2019/20 and the remainder in the following year.
- 5.1.2 Should the Council conclude that the bus station is integral to the delivery of SG1, due to the redevelopment of the existing site, then the Council faces significant financial challenges in delivering this. Since 2010 the Council's General Fund has seen central government funding reduce by £5.3M or 85% of grant received in 2010/11 (by 2019/20) , this has necessitated a need to make savings of £9.26Million (2010/11-2018/19) in order to maintain services and absorb inflationary pressures, with a further £2.4Million required for the period 2019/20-2021/22. The Council also faces capital constraints as the economic climate for council has limited the ability to invest in bricks and mortar which means there is significant pressure on limited capital funds with only top priority schemes and works that are required to keep buildings operational being approved.
- 5.1.3 The Council's financial position is managed through its Financial Security work stream which seeks to identify and implement a range of options to keep the Council financially stable, however the financial pressure of funding a £6.1Million bus station would necessitate significant cuts to existing plans. The Council does not have £6Million in unallocated capital resources, the existing Capital Strategy is spending £5.3Million of capital receipts/capital resources during the period 2019/20-2021/22, which is before any new need

is identified. The alternative would be borrowing £6.1 Million with an annual cost of circa £330,000, again carrying significant affordability issues in light of the issues identified above.

- 5.1.4 The conclusion by the Council's Chief Finance Officer is that to fund the bus station would require the council to:
- Put a hold on the capital programme stopping all schemes unless third party funded to allow use of some capital resources AND/OR
 - Fund from borrowing and implement service cuts and increase savings target AND/OR
 - Sell assets, however these may be income generating which could lead to a loss of further revenue
- 5.1.5 None of the options outlined above are easy or palatable for the Council and officers are making every effort to seek the release of the GD3 funding earmarked for the bus station.
- 5.1.6 The development of a detailed business case for a new enhanced leisure facility will require further investment. Estimated costs for the RIBA stages are shown below

- Stage 2 £ 302,000*
- Stage 3 £ 744,000*
- Stage 4 £ 594,000*
- Stage 5\6\7 £1,683,675**

* Excludes SBC in house costs

**Design team fees only. Excludes construction cost.

The council will need to consider funding options for these pre-build stages in 2019. Equally a redeveloped SALC site for cultural uses will require appropriate scoping and resourcing arrangements. Any further external support for this work will follow the council's procurement policy.

5.2 Legal Implications

- 5.2. There are no foreseen legal implications at this stage. All appointments and the procurement of contractors will be in line with the Public Contract Regulations and the Council's Contract Standing Orders.

5.3 Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.3.1 An initial Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed, demonstrating that the existing bus station has very poor access arrangements, and by following best practice and the new design being compliant with the Equalities Act 2009, the new facility will greatly improve access for all potential users. A further Equalities Impact Assessment will be completed with submission of a planning application for a preferred site in due course.

5.3.2 Equalities considerations will need to be considered as part of any business case proposal for new leisure and cultural facilities to ensure they meet the needs and aspirations of all parts of the town’s population.

5.4 Risk Implications

5.4.1 The key risks and mitigation can be summarised as follows:

Risk	Mitigation
GD3 Funding not being released would lead to the Council funding the entire project.	Meetings with government offices and LEP to unlock funding
Cost Inflation – uncertainty due to Brexit and rising materials costs could lead to budget overrun.	A cost consultant has been appointed and will regularly benchmark the predicted construction costs against the agreed budget.
Public perception of interchange project – delays or changes to the proposals could lead to public cynicism that the council can deliver any of the regeneration proposals.	Public will be consulted at appropriate stages, and communications strategy implemented to ensure that regular updates are put out to keep residents and businesses informed and engaged.
Technical consents including planning permission and TROs will need to be granted.	Early and regular engagement of all relevant stakeholders to ensure that proposals are compliant with policy.
The enhanced leisure scheme on St Georges Way is unaffordable as a consequence of the detailed business case	Exploration with partners, including HCC to further develop options, including housing development opportunities to part fund the scheme.
The redevelopment of the existing SALC site is unaffordable	Further work with the Arts Council and Heritage Lottery Fund on external funding opportunities. The exploration of complementary land use options to generate income for the scheme.

5.5 Policy Implications

5.6 Planning Implications

5.6.1 It is anticipated that a planning application will be submitted for the new bus interchange in early 2019.

5.6.2 Options for enhanced theatre and leisure provision will be considered in light of existing planning policies and the Council’s draft Local Plan.

5.7 Asset Management Implications

5.7.1 As set out in the report 3.35 – 3.36 the operational running costs of a new bus interchange will be considered in depth as part of the project including options to mitigate costs or generate revenue to cover operational costs.

5.7.2 SALC and Stevenage Swimming Centre are council owned assets with long leases in place with the current operator Stevenage Leisure Limited until 2023.

5.8 Environmental Implications

5.8.1 As part of the planning application, an Environmental Impact Assessment will be presented, together with supporting arboricultural, geological, SuDS and other relevant reports.

5.9 Service Delivery Implications

5.9.1 The new bus Interchange will need an increased cleaning regime and this cost will need to be picked up through the review of running costs that will need to take place in conjunction with the designs being developed. There will also be the requirement for someone to be on site, this will need to be someone from the bus operators and will be put into the new contract with the operators.

5.9.2 A detailed business plan for any leisure proposals will give consideration to any implications for the delivery of the current leisure and cultural offer from the existing sites.

5.10 Engagement and consultation

5.10.1 The main public consultation was carried out in November and into December 2018 to confirm the location of the bus interchange and prioritise features of the new facility (see 3.40), and a second consultation will be carried out in the form of an exhibition of the proposals prior to the submission of the planning application. Also representing passenger transport users, the Bus User Group (BuGs) has been extensively consulted throughout the design development process. The main bus operators have also been consulted on a number of occasions to ensure that they are happy with the operational arrangements in the new facility.

5.10.2 Additional details on the consultation that has been undertaken to date is included in 3.36 – 3.41.

5.10.3 A wide community consultation will be undertaken as part of the development of any further leisure / cultural proposals. As part of the council's cooperative ethos the process will also include co-design opportunities to ensure that existing leisure/cultural users, residents and young people also shape the design and feel of new facilities.

Meeting: EXECUTIVE

Agenda Item:

Portfolio Area: All

Date: 12 December 2018

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE QUARTER TWO 2018/19

NON-KEY DECISION

Author – Elaine Wright Ext. 2192

Contributors – Richard Protheroe/Charlie Smith/Chloe Norton Ext. 2938/2457/2501,
All Assistant Directors

Lead Officer – Scott Crudgington Ext. 2185

Contact Officer – Richard Protheroe Ext. 2938

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To highlight the Council’s performance across key priorities and themes for quarter two 2018/19.

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 for quarter two 2018/19 together with the latest achievements be noted.
- 2.2 That the review of contractual arrangements for the management of health and safety compliance and measures implemented to ensure regulations continue to be met are noted and endorsed (para 3.88 to 3.91).
- 2.3 That the resource planning implemented to provide a sustainable solution to meeting the level of customer contacts through the Customer Service Centre and provide a more consistent level of service to customers are noted and endorsed (para 3.107 to 3.113).
- 2.4 That the improvements in sickness management practice be noted and endorsed (para 3.122 to 3.127).

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Members approved the 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.

Future town future council



Figure 1: Future Town, Future Council Programme

- 3.2 The FTFC Programme was reviewed at March 2018 to ensure that it continued to reflect the Council's priorities. As it was apparent that working in partnership is embedded in the culture of the Council and there is a strong framework for future collaboration with other public sector bodies, the Partner of Choice Programme was closed. Development of partnerships continues as part of day-to-day business and any new shared service proposals will be considered and implemented within the Financial Security Programme.
- 3.3 Council services are organised into nine Business Units across three themes: Customer, Place and Transformation and Support. This structure is focused on 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 In addition to monitoring progress on the delivery of the FTFC Programme, performance across these (Council Service) themes is monitored throughout the year to highlight achievements and identify any areas for improvement.
- 3.5 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. Summaries of performance measure result status are outlined at paragraph 3.7 (FTFC focus) and paragraph 3.80 (Corporate Focus).

Future Town, Future Council Programme progress update

- 3.6 The focus and scope of the FTFC programmes is outlined in Appendix Two. Delivery of the agreed outcomes is monitored to ensure that the Programme remains on track.
- 3.7 In addition to the monitoring of programme milestones, fifteen measures aligned to FTFC delivery were monitored and reported on for April to September 2018. The overview of FTFC focused results for April 2018 to September 2018 is outlined below:

Part I **Release to Press**

Number of Measures Reported	Meeting or exceeding target	Amber Status (within a manageable tolerance)	Red Status (urgent improvement action required)
15	12	1	2

3.8 Improvement activity for the performance measure results that did not achieve target is outlined in the relevant programme - Paragraphs that refer are indicated below:

- CNM2g: Garage void rate: April to September 2018 target 12%, achieved 12.62% - paragraph 3.45 refers
- CTOC1: Customer complaints responded to within corporate deadline, April to September 2018 target 95%, achieved 88.02% - paragraph 3.56 refers
- EoCInt: Percentage of roles recruited to that were filled by staff within the Council, September 2018 target 20%, achieved 39.02% - paragraph 3.73 refers

3.9 Programme delivery updates for the FTFC Programmes together with an outline of any focused activity being implemented to keep the programmes on track are set out in the following paragraphs.

External Facing Future Town, Future Council Programmes

Stevenage Town Centre Regeneration Programme

3.10 Programme Outcomes

- A new vibrant town centre delivered through a phased regeneration programme.
- Two major regeneration schemes to advance – one completed by 2021 and one to begin 2019/20.

3.11 During 2018/19 the programme is primarily focused on:

- Beginning the first phase of the town centre regeneration, working with our development partner
 - Signing off the Development Agreement for SG1
 - Working with Mace to develop and consult on plans for SG1
 - Opening the visitors' centre to showcase our history as well as our ambitious future
- Progressing more detailed plans for a public sector hub in the town
- Progressing the public realm improvements within the town centre

Part I

Release to Press

- Completing improvements to the Market Place and wayfinding signage
- Developing plans to improve the Town Square
- Establishing the 'Stevenage Works' local labour market and employment initiative in conjunction with partners

3.12 Programme Delivery Update

- 3.13 The Regeneration team are working closely with developer Mace, the international development and construction company behind some of the world's landmark developments, to progress the development agreement for the first phase of town centre 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.
- 3.14 Planning permission for the redevelopment of Queensway North was granted by the Council in September. The scheme will refurbish the retail units on the ground floor as well as create new leisure and office opportunities on the first floor. The scheme will also bring forwards over 100 residential units which will help to add further footfall through the town centre. It is expected that construction will commence early in 2019.
- 3.15 Planned public realm improvements to Market Place have now been completed. The revitalised Market Place is now a 'family-fun' orientated street that will encourage family visits to the town centre through a new adventure themed play space for families as well as an attractive space to relax and enjoy the town centre that will give new life to a central part of the town's retail core.
- 3.16 The installation of thirty (wayfinder) signs to help residents and visitors find town centre shops and services is near completion. The Wayfinding system couples the provision of an accurate functional system of navigation with high quality design.
- 3.17 The Stevenage Works Board which comprises of senior officers from North Herts College (NHC), SBC and Job Centre Plus met for the first time at the end of October. The meeting was also attended by the Major Refurbishment Contract (Flat Block) contractors. The terms of reference have been finalised and the arrangements for establishing targets and tracking the performance of the initiative were discussed. Opportunities for contractor related training to be channelled through the College were also highlighted

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 2018/19 the programme is primarily focused on:

- Completing and letting 54 new high quality homes across a number of design and build schemes.
- Starting design work on a further 267 new/replacement homes across a range of planned schemes that deliver wider place shaping benefits.
- Consulting with the public and securing planning permission for the Kenilworth Close site, including plans for the flagship older persons housing scheme to meet the needs of the town's ageing population.
- Exploring the viability of other potential areas of development across the town including opportunities to work in partnership with other providers.
- Continuing to work with partners to enable the delivery of affordable homes.

3.20 Programme Delivery Update

3.21 Consultation on the Kenilworth Scheme, incorporating a flagship older persons housing scheme, has now been completed. The public consultation event was attended by more than 100 people, with 70% in favour of the development. Further public consultation was carried out at a Bragbury End resident day, and a meeting of the Bragbury End resident association. The planning application has now been submitted that includes changes reflecting some of the consultation, and architectural and planning officers' advice.

3.22 The six new build homes at the Wedgewood Way site are complete and now available for the Council to acquire. Contracts are with the Council's legal department and on track to exchange in quarter three.

3.23 The Twin Foxes Scheme to deliver 14 apartments (8 for affordable rent and 6 for social rent) has been completed. All the units have been let to applicants on the Housing Register. Prior to handover, the Housing Portfolio Holder and local ward councillors were invited to have a tour around the site and an open day was held at the site. Approximately eighty local residents attended with feedback being extremely positive and many seeking to try and purchase the new flats outright.

3.24 The March Hare Scheme to deliver fifteen new homes was granted planning permission on 5 December 2017. Initial foundation work is being completed. However, progress has been impacted by contractor liquidation. Officers have put the site back out to tender for a suitable contractor to ensure the scheme

Part I **Release to Press**

is delivered effectively with minimum delay. It is estimated that the scheme will complete during summer 2019 following retender.

- 3.25 Architectural and site preparation work is currently being completed for the three sites prioritised for development during 2018: Symonds Green, Shephall Way, North Road.
- The North Road Scheme for 21 apartments in a blended modern and period style: A positive pre-application meeting has been held and the planning application is being prepared. Site preparation is progressing well with demolition of the old structure being completed and site remediation works ongoing.
 - The Symonds Green Scheme: Architects are developing proposals. The initial proposals of 18 units on the site have been increased with current proposals for 29 units. Formal pre-application advice is scheduled during November.
 - The Shephall Way Scheme: The development proposal is currently for 9 units. Pre-application advice is complete and the planning application is being prepared, there has been little objection to this scheme.
- 3.26 The Ditchmore Lane Scheme to convert three existing properties into ten apartments has been out to tender and the selection process for the principal contractor is nearing completion.
- 3.27 The Council's Housing Development programme has facilitated the completion of 149 homes to June 2018.

Excellent Council Homes Programme

3.28 Programme Outcome

- Transforming the Housing and Investment service to better meet the needs of its customers.
- 3.29 During 2018/19 the programme is primarily focused on:
- Using customer insight information to develop a better understanding of customers' views and requirements, to enable provision of a more bespoke housing service for each individual customer and improved cohesion with services to the neighbourhood.
 - Continuing to improve the way staff and customers use technology.
 - Commencing implementation of mobile working in order to save time and enable staff to access information whenever and wherever it is needed.
 - Beginning to digitalise the housing service offer in order to provide customers with an additional channel of communication and an opportunity to self-serve.
 - Working with members of staff to create a lean, efficient and cohesive workforce that will work towards a 'One Team' approach and a 'Customer First' culture.

Part I **Release to Press**

3.30 Programme Delivery Update

- 3.31 A contractor, Hamilton Mercer, delivered customer service training to staff. Initial training with officers across Housing, Investment, the Customer Service Centre and Customer Focus Teams focused on strengthening customer service skills to ensure staff are helpful, efficient and professional. The provision of the training will help staff deal with customer feedback and enquiries more professionally, equip staff with more assertive and professional language and make sure staff members have tools which will help them not to be personally affected by any potential difficult conversations.
- 3.32 Customer champions will ensure that the skills attained are fully embedded in approaches to customer service and dealing with customer feedback. The nature and quality of customer feedback will be monitored to determine any further development opportunities.
- 3.33 The enhancement of Housing IT systems to ensure that new services are being captured on the IT modules has been implemented. The enhancements will support customers to self-serve in the future, enabling customers to take responsibility for their Personal Housing Plans which is now a requirement through the Homelessness Reduction Act. The following modules have been implemented:
- Task Manager Module– this will enable better workflow management where the right officer is allocated the right task in a timely way. It will enable better casework monitoring and improved customer communication.
 - Housing Advice Module - this automates the creation of personal housing plans for customers and enables clients to update their own progress against the plan themselves.
 - Key Details Module – will capture customer information in one place and will enable officers to make more informed decisions and provide a more effective response to customer enquiries.
- 3.34 The Northgate online system will also be implemented to provide customers with an opportunity to access information in their housing account through the Council website in order to make changes to personal information, apply for a council home (or garage), report a repair, pay their rent and complete additional functions.
- 3.35 To help enhance Housing & Investment service efficiency an electronic document management system has been procured following a review of the current systems used in the Housing service for document management. The system, already used by the Revenues and Benefits team, is directly linked to Northgate, which will allow teams to upload customer/property/case documents and access and search for them easily. This will allow them to process and store fewer documents; establish a sound process for allocating tasks and tracking the progress of complaints; and contribute to compliance with General Data Protection Regulations. Documents are being scanned to facilitate use of the system.

Part I
Release to Press

3.36 Mobile IT devices are being used by staff to provide a more efficient service to customers to include a range of beneficial services such as showing residents their rent accounts, completing on-line housing benefit forms, reporting repairs and directly recording case notes.

Co-operative and Neighbourhood Management Programme

3.37 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.

3.38 During 2018/19 the programme is primarily focused on:

- Responding to priorities identified through engagement with residents of St Nicholas and Martins Wood in 2017/18, by making significant investment in those wards to improve public spaces and the quality of life of local people. The focus will be on youth engagement/ provision, street lighting, parking issues resolution, open spaces and grounds maintenance and health and wellbeing.
- Engaging with ward Members, partners and communities on the next phase of planned investment in the wards of Bedwell and Longmeadow.
- Investing £230k in outdoor play sites in Bedwell and Longmeadow.
- Seeking Council agreement to a sustainable model for the provision and management of community centres.
- Award and alignment of the works contract for the Garage Improvement Programme with the delivery of the Major Refurbishment Contract works to achieve economies of scale including an enhanced social value offer.
- Supporting residents in becoming more active members of their community, who make a positive contribution to the town and local area.
- Designing a council-wide framework to support officers and Members in effective and meaningful community engagement.
- Creating a more streamlined approach to increase and enhance volunteering within the Council.

3.39 Programme Delivery Update

3.40 Two Neighbourhood Action Groups are being established in St Nicholas and Shephall. Neighbourhood Forums will bring together a range public sector services, voluntary organisations and local residents to develop

Part I

Release to Press

neighbourhood plans outlining community priorities and associated neighbourhood enhancement projects.

- 3.41 Council officers have continued discussions throughout the Summer with partners, local groups and neighbourhood residents of Hampson Park and St Nicholas, the Oval and the Hyde shopping centres in order to gain a better understanding of local people's priorities for their neighbourhood. Areas of focus include:
- The need for a community hub in the Hyde area.
 - Responding to community safety concerns.
 - Strengthening activity to deal with litter and street cleaning.
- 3.42 To determine local improvement priorities officers are working in partnership with the community engagement worker of the Oval Co-op supermarket on consultations. A business network group is being established at the Oval with match funding (to Council funding) being made available by the Co-op to deliver enhancement activity.
- 3.43 The review of Community Centres to develop a more sustainable model of operation for the future has progressed well. Initial analysis has now been completed and potential models discussed with Executive. Officers and members are working together to outline the process and structure of the review and the approach to consultation with community associations.
- 3.44 Council officers are working with Members of the Community Select Committee to identify an improved approach to engaging with Stevenage communities in a new Community Engagement Framework, with the aim of encouraging more co-operative working and input to Council decision-making. Holy Brook Associates carried out research on potential models that were presented to the Committee in September 2018. The Community Select Committee are now working with officers to develop the recommended approach for Executive consideration in quarter three.
- 3.45 At their October meeting, Executive agreed for the garage refurbishment work to be added to the Council's major refurbishment contract for flatblocks. The project team are working with the contractors to survey the garage blocks that are to receive improvement in early 2019 and are liaising with the tenants and private garage owners to make necessary access arrangements. These 33 blocks have a collective void rate of 38% and (fully-let) should yield an additional income of £100k per year. To support the programme's outcome that garage sites are more attractive and better cared for, the Council is inviting the owners of sold garages in our blocks to take advantage of the reduced rates that it has obtained and pay to have their own garages refurbished as part of our programme. Via the Cooperative and Neighbourhood Management programme, officers are working together to identify garage sites that attract anti-social behaviour so that by working co-operatively with local residents alongside the refurbishment work, these issues can be removed.

Part I

Release to Press

- The garage void rate is slightly higher than projected: April to September 2018 target 12%, achieved 12.62%

Connected to our Customers Programme

3.46 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.

3.47 During 2018/19 the programme is primarily focused on:

- Launching a new customer strategy that sets out our ambitious plans to improve customer service, including a 'Promise' to our customers about how we aim to deliver a consistent customer service standard across the Council.
- Improving our online offer by delivering a simple and clearer website and straightforward on line self-service options for key routine transactions, helping our customers to self-serve on line and involving customers and staff in designing and testing new digital products and services before we launch them.
- Making sure our customer service centre is effectively resourced to meet customer demands and answer calls in a reasonable time; and is easy to use, especially for people who need it the most.
- Supporting our overall customer service offer and efficiency by improving back office processes and technology within the Council, and making sure all personal data is secure.

3.48 Programme Delivery Update

3.49 Arrangements for an improved Council website are progressing in partnership with East Hertfordshire Council. Senior management agreed the key development requirements that will guide delivery of a website that better meets customer needs. A new website platform has been procured and its content is scheduled to be developed between December 2018 and May 2019 and the launch is planned for July 2019.

3.50 Slippage has occurred within the programme mainly due to reduced staffing capacity and legacy IT infrastructure challenges. This will be partially resolved through the recruitment of a new Assistant Director (Digital Services and Transformation) who will be responsible for reviewing and rebasing the programme. In addition two project managers have been recruited who will help move a number of the digital projects forward.

Part I
Release to Press

- 3.51 Customer Service team leaders and senior advisers were trained on the self-service module for Revenue and Benefits customers 'Connect and Serve' in August and scoping for a customer 'self-scanning' solution started in September 2018.
- 3.52 Training is well underway to develop digital champions at SBC that include representatives from all service areas to help deliver best practice web content.
- 3.53 A series of IT Infrastructure enhancements are being implemented to provide a more reliable and secure service that supports delivery of more digital solutions for customers and staff. Elements of capital funding required have been established in the Capital Programme and the Shared IT Partnership Board has agreed buy-in of additional resources.
- 3.54 Work has been carried out to ensure Stevenage Borough Council is General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliant and to make sure staff are aware of their responsibilities with regards to the management of customer data. Training to help service teams understand the importance of good customer information handling has included:
- Mandatory GDPR e-learning
 - Bespoke training delivered to field –based operatives (Cavendish Depot)
 - Bitesize lunchtime learning sessions
- 3.55 Training initially being offered to officers across Housing, Investment, the Customer Service Centre and Customer Focus Teams in quarter three focused on strengthening customer service skills to ensure staff are helpful, efficient and professional (referred to in paragraph 3.31) will be offered to relevant staff in other business units later in the year.
- 3.56 The Senior Leadership Team monitor the performance and management of customer feedback across business units and direct that responsible officers respond promptly, professionally and comprehensively within a reasonable timeframe.
- CTOC1: Customer complaints responded to within corporate deadline, April to September 2018 target 95%, achieved 88.02%.

Internal Facing Future Town, Future Council Programmes

Financial Security Programme

3.57 Programme Outcomes

3.58 As set out in Figure 2: Financial Security Work streams.



Figure 2: Financial Security Work streams.

3.59 During 2018/19 the programme is primarily focused on:

- Identifying Financial Security options that meet the three year target (£2.2 million General Fund and £1 million Housing Revenue Account)
- Managing budgetary efficiency through regular monitoring, analysis of trends and robust challenge of spend as part of the efficiency work stream.
- Setting targets and deliver savings against each individual Financial Security work stream including Fees and Charges.

3.60 Programme Delivery Update

3.61 The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was reported to the September Executive setting out the Financial Security Target and General Fund reserves and outlining the need to prioritise resources to continue to meet the Council's Future Town, Future Council (FTFC) priorities.

3.62 The financial security process is a year round process and officers and Members (Leaders Financial Security Group) have met during 2018/19 to test options and support managers in working up business cases. The budget setting timetable dictates that recommended assumptions are approved by Members and locked in at budget setting stage.

3.63 The Financial Security Programme saving options aligned to the various strands have been considered by senior management and reported to (November) Executive.

Part I

Release to Press

3.64 The proposals for Fees and Charges have been through a rigorous challenge process by the Fees and Charges Group and considered by the Leader's Financial Security Group.

3.65 Employer of Choice Programme

3.66 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.

3.67 During 2018/19 the programme is primarily focused on:

- Establishing a compelling employer brand with a competitive pay and benefit offer.
- Developing and implementing a competency framework for staff from Grade 1- 9 of the Council's pay structure.
- Managing Organisational Change effectively with a new appraisal process and valuing staff's health and wellbeing.
- Enabling new ways of working to equip staff for the future including policies, practices and culture.
- Developing digital skills and tools to enable staff self-service.
- Creating a new Learning and Development Strategy.

3.68 Programme Delivery Update

3.69 Work to build the new Intranet with improved content is progressing well. Service managers were provided with an opportunity to see initial development at the Leadership Forum in July and launch of the new Council Intranet is planned during quarter three.

3.70 Working collaboratively with the Council's recognised Trade Unions, staff have been offered the opportunity to develop their literacy, maths and computing skills and attain formal qualifications.

3.71 A calendar of charitable events in the workplace has been established with 'dress-down' days to encourage engagement and raise money for charities. A Volunteering Policy has been developed to incentivise staff to carry out charitable activities. The Senior Leadership Team have led the way by undertaking a pond clean up in Stevenage in September 2018.

3.72 Staff were provided with an opportunity to share their views about how the Council works and whether they feel that their contributions are properly valued and rewarded through the organisational staff survey. The Council has seen a positive direction of travel in the feedback received from staff. There is a solid awareness and understanding of the Council's objectives and priorities

Part I **Release to Press**

and individual employees understand how their roles contribute to the Council's objectives. The majority feel challenged at work and their work gives them a sense of achievement. Most also feel that they are treated fairly and with respect at work and feel valued. The views expressed by staff are being assessed and where necessary improvement plans are being developed.

3.73 The Council aims to maintain a balance between the development of current staff, retaining existing skills and knowledge and the introduction of new staff with new skills and knowledge. The number of roles recruited to that are filled by existing staff is currently exceeding a threshold assigned to help achieve this balance. This demonstrates the retention of existing skills and knowledge and our commitment to supporting the continuous development of our employees. The implementation of annual Workforce Plans, which are being developed by Assistant Directors, will help to ensure we have the right people, with the right skills.

- EoCInt: Percentage of roles recruited to that were filled by staff within the Council, September 2018 target 20%, achieved 39.02%

Performing at our Peak Programme

3.74 Programme Outcomes

- The provision of high quality performance management tools.
- Streamlined governance structures that ensure effective and timely decision making.
- A strong performance culture is embedded across the organisation.

3.75 During 2018/19 the programme is primarily focused on:

- Enhancing business insight through data connectivity and ensuring service managers have the right skills to use the performance management tool robustly to analyse information and make informed decisions that result in improved services for customers.
- Embedding the performance culture through the effective use of new tools and procedures, to enable lasting performance improvement.
- Completing a review of arrangements for decision making (scheme of delegation) to ensure continued robust and efficient decision-making by council officers at the appropriate level of seniority.

3.76 Programme Delivery Update

3.77 The performance and governance system (InPhase) was upgraded to a new major version called Halo in August. This provides major advances in usability and use of visualisations. A particular improvement is the automatic new dashboard tool MyPage. This makes it easier for users to visually monitor performance and risk across services and programmes, with InPhase highlighting key areas for review.

3.78 Arrangements for the update of business unit risk and associated mitigation activity through InPhase are progressing. An initial trial has been completed

Part I **Release to Press**

and will now be progressed across all business units. Implementation will enhance organisation-wide transparency that will inform decision making.

3.79 The arrangements in place for decision making (scheme of delegation) are being outlined for approval at Council in December. The Scheme of Delegation will ensure continued robust and efficient decision-making by Council officers at the appropriate level of seniority.

3.80 Corporate Performance highlights and areas for improvement

3.81 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 corporate focused results for April 2018 to September 2018 is outlined below:

Number of Measures Reported	Meeting or exceeding target	Amber Status (within a manageable tolerance)	Red Status (urgent improvement action required)
39	30	1	8

(Results for three measures relating to Community Safety are not available – paragraph 3.97)

3.82 A summary of highlights and areas for improvement for April 2018 to September 2018 is set out in the following paragraphs across the three key delivery themes: Customer, Place, and Transformation and Support.

A: Customer Theme

3.83 The Customer Theme incorporates the following Business Units:

- Housing and Investment
- Communities and Neighbourhood

Housing and Investment

3.84 The restructuring of the Housing Advice and Homelessness Team (to Housing Options and Supply) is nearing completion with the new team expected to be in place during quarter three. The team will continue to enhance service delivery to ensure that those that present as homeless receive the best possible service. The feedback received from Human Resources on the review has been mainly constructive and positive, and staff members have felt they have been listened to.

Homelessness Preventions (BV213)

3.85 As a result of focused improvement activity and the implementation of the Housing Advice and Homelessness Team restructure referred to above (paragraph 3.84) the results for homelessness preventions (previously a performance improvement 'Spotlight' area), have achieved target for two consecutive quarters.

Part I

Release to Press

- 3.86 The service established a number of actions to improve performance:
- A training programme for all housing advice staff was carried out during quarter 1 2018/19.
 - Training on the Homelessness Reduction Act which came into force 3 April 2018 was provided for other housing teams and services during quarter 1 2018/19.
- 3.87 Council officers continue to monitor the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act and the use of new IT software. Stevenage Borough Council is collaborating county wide to meet the demand of the new legislation through the Hertfordshire Heads of Housing Group meetings.
- BV213: Homelessness preventions, April to Sept 2018, target 180, achieved 182.

Spotlight: Health and Safety compliant Council buildings

- 3.88 The Council's new Compliance Manager has reviewed contractual arrangements for the management of health and safety compliance. To monitor performance two new measures have been established in the corporate set:
- Assets 5a: Percentage of (Council) assets known to be Health and Safety compliant (statutory), September 2018 target 100%, achieved 90%
 - Assets5b: Percentage of (Council) assets known to be Health and Safety compliant (as per SBC enhanced definition), September 2018 target 100%, achieved 91.70%
- 3.89 The Council are working with the contractor to ensure that regulations are met with some site activity (reparation functions) being carried out by Council teams. Performance is now improving steadily and the majority of outstanding actions as at 30 September 2018 have been completed and certification is being uploaded on the Council's business system to confirm compliance. Third party audits will be completed to provide quality assurance.
- 3.90 The current contract expires at the end of the year and the team are working with the exiting contractor to ensure a smooth transition as well as beginning the mobilisation of the new contract to ensure that it is fit for purpose and the monitoring arrangements are clear.
- 3.91 To ensure and maintain corporate wide oversight and clarity on health and safety compliance and performance across the Council, a new corporate health and safety governance structure is in place that provides assurance to senior management that health and safety assessments and activity across the Council are being effectively managed.

Part I **Release to Press**

Communities and Neighbourhood

- 3.92 Stevenage Museum, working with North Hertfordshire Museum, Knebworth House, the Garden City Collection and YC Hertfordshire, attained Heritage Lottery Fund support to celebrate *Stevenage and North Herts Suffrage Stories: 100 years of votes for women*. During the Summer young people aged 14 to 24 were provided with an opportunity to get involved in research including trips to Knebworth House Archive, the Museum of London and the Women's Library at the London School of Economics. Working with an artist, the young people created a celebration in light for the town centre during November.
- 3.93 Arts Council England awarded the Council £10,000 to support the implementation of the Cultural Strategy, *Stevenage re-imagined*. An Arts and Heritage Forum has been established and further bids are being prepared for external investment in arts and culture for the town.
- 3.94 Stevenage against Domestic Abuse (SADA) has been commissioned by North Hertfordshire District Council reflecting the value that partners place on the service that Stevenage provides. SADA works in partnership with Hertfordshire Police, North Hertfordshire District Council and a number of volunteers to support victims of domestic abuse.
- 3.95 Four young people attending North Hertfordshire College completed their Community Safety Ambassador accreditation. Ambassadors deliver key community safety messages across Stevenage whilst gaining valuable skills and experience with a variety of community safety partners.
- 3.96 The Council's summer holiday play schemes continue to be popular with an average weekly attendance of more than 900 young people at play centres during the school holidays.

Community Safety

- 3.97 The Police have been implementing a new Crime Recording System called ATHENA and a revised approach to reporting. Complete results for April to September 2018 have not yet been advised. An update is not expected until January 2019.

B: Place Theme

- 3.98 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 3.13 to 3.16 and 3.20 to 3.26 respectively.)

Planning and Regulation

- 3.99 Planning applications continue to be determined within corporate and statutory targets.

Stevenage Direct Services

- 3.100 Coveted green flag awards continue to fly at Fairland's Valley Park, Hampson Park and Town Centre Gardens. The Green Flag Award scheme recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces. Council officers worked together with the volunteer groups of each park to maintain the parks and successfully retain the awards.
- 3.101 During quarter 2, the Environmental Performance and Development Team delivered activities with Green Space Volunteers that amounted to approximately 250 hours of Green Space Volunteer time being given to enhance community green spaces around the town, five new volunteers opted in to the team and officers worked with the volunteers to develop the Winter programme of activity.

Repairs and Voids

- 3.102 Turn-around times for property repairs and voids remain a major area of focus for the team. The team have placed major focus on a case management approach to each case dealt with. This coupled with efforts to review and improve processes has improved performance and productivity:
- RepTime1: Emergency Repairs - Average end to end repairs time (days), target 1 day, achieved 0.45 day.
 - RepTime2: Urgent Repairs - Average end to end repairs time (days), target 5 days, achieved 4.5 days.
 - RepTime3: Routine Repairs - Average end to end repairs time (days), target 20 days, achieved 10.83 days.
- 3.103 The time taken to re-let general needs standard voids (requiring minor works prior to re-let) continues to improve (Target 32 days, April to June achieved 29 days, April to Sept achieved 27.5 days). However, turn-around times for general needs properties requiring major works and sheltered properties continue to exceed target.
- 3.104 Officers have introduced a number of initiatives to reduce these void times including:
- Seeking to relet properties (that meet the lettable standard) and schedule major works while the tenant is in the property and not when void.
 - Collaborative approach between investment and empty homes teams, including relocating repairs and voids team to Daneshill House to improve communication.

Part I **Release to Press**

- General Needs Voids – Major Works, April to Sept 2018 target 65 days, achieved 93.53 days.

3.105 Key Performance Indicators that are impacted by hard to let properties will be reviewed. Proposals will be developed for new indicators that highlight the Council's work to adapt or convert certain housing types to better match demand in the market place (e.g. conversion of studio apartments to one bedroom flats). Conversion works require more time than a major works repair and skew actual performance data under the existing arrangements where data relating to conversions is incorporated with repair data. Proposals will be considered with a view to new measures being agreed for the 2019/20 financial year.

C: Transformation and Support Theme

3.106 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

3.107 Service delivery through the Customer Service Centre (CSC) was identified as a focus for improvement (spotlight) at quarter 3 (March 2018 Executive). This focus will be retained until initial performance improvement is sustained across the full set of CSC measures.

3.108 The Assistant Director (Corporate Services and Transformation) is continuing to work closely with the CSC and back office service teams to review the Council's customer service approach and to identify additional governance and operational interventions that could further strengthen the CSC Improvement Plan.

3.109 Historical performance data demonstrates performance in the Customer Service Centre (CSC) is closely related to the amount of skilled advisers available.

3.110 Activities to recruit, train and on-board specialist skills took place during quarters one and two 2018/19 which has reduced the number of vacancies down to one at the end of November 2018. Initial improvement is now evident. However, performance is not forecast to achieve the 2018/19 targets.

- CSC4: Percentage of telephone calls to the Customer Service Centre answered within 20 seconds, April to Sept 2018 target 55%, achieved 40.9%.

Part I
Release to Press

Initial improvement - monthly performance for July to October				Forecast if staff levels remain at full establishment level	
July	August	September	October	April 2018 to December 2018	April 2018 to March 2019
32.8%	40.5%	52.9%	55.7%	47.3%,	49.6%

- CSC12: Percentage of calls abandoned in the Customer Service Centre, April to Sept 2018 target 8%, April to June 2018 achieved 13.9%, April to Sept 2018 achieved 17.1%.

Initial improvement - monthly performance for July to October				Forecast if staff levels remain at full establishment level	
July	August	September	October	April 2018 to December 2018	April 2018 to March 2019
21.4%	21.4%	17.1%	15.1%	14.8%	15.1%

3.111 Self service facilities are being planned to help meet service demand for walk-in customers.

- CSC5: Percentage of walk-in customers to the Customer Service Centre served within 20 minutes, target 80%, April to June 2018 achieved 69.7%, April to Sept 2018 achieved 65.2%.
 - Forecast April 2018 to March 2019: 78%

3.112 Effective resource planning will help ensure that sufficient staff are available to meet the rise and demand of customer contacts to provide a more consistent level of service to customers and a 365 day approach to recruitment is being put in place to include a social media campaign and open days.

3.113 Customer satisfaction with Customer Service Centre remains high (88.4%).

Technology

3.114 The Shared IT Partnership governance arrangements continue to be enhanced during 2018/19. The Shared Services Partnership Board is overseeing the development and implementation of a single IT strategy that will deliver the Council's digital transformation ambitions and ensure that services are delivered that meet customer needs and are fit for the future.

3.115 The IT Steering Group and the IT Programme Management Office (IT PMO) function facilitates delivery of the projects that support the Council's Future Town, Future Council programme and the Council's Business Unit Reviews (and their equivalent programmes at East Herts Council) alongside the day to day IT service.

3.116 The Shared IT Service is working with Microsoft to develop a programme of activity to enhance IT infrastructure and resilience. A draft ICT strategy & road map is anticipated by February 2019. This will outline a two year plan for approval due to the scale of the work and level of financial resource required.

Part I

Release to Press

3.117 The new Strategic IT and Partnerships Manager is assessing performance management arrangements to ensure that robust information is provided to support delivery of the Council's digital transformation ambitions, operational frameworks to drive forward service improvement using International IT Service Management Standards and core service delivery.

3.118 Corporate Services and Transformation

Our staff

3.119 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 and status is monitored by the Senior Leadership Team. A number of appraisals in the Corporate Projects, Customer Service and Technology business unit are outstanding due to the vacant AD post associated with transition to the new Digital Services and Transformation business unit. The AD Corporate Services and Transformation is working specifically with the IT management team to ensure objective setting meetings and 'REAL' conversations (appraisal meetings) are taking place.

- Appraisal completion rate to corporate deadlines, April to Sept 2018 target 100%, achieved 90.1%

3.120 Agency Usage: The primary reason for the use of agency staff is to ensure continuous service delivery where there are staff vacancies or sickness absence, particularly for refuse and grounds maintenance services. The Stevenage Direct Services Business Unit Review (Autumn 2018) will aim to reduce the need to engage agency staff.

3.121 Recruitment is underway for a number of key posts across the Council that will enhance capacity and key skills. The Fourth Tier management reviews are nearing completion, with Stevenage Direct Services consultation on proposals commencing November and Corporate Services and Transformation planning to consult on the next set of proposals before the end of the year.

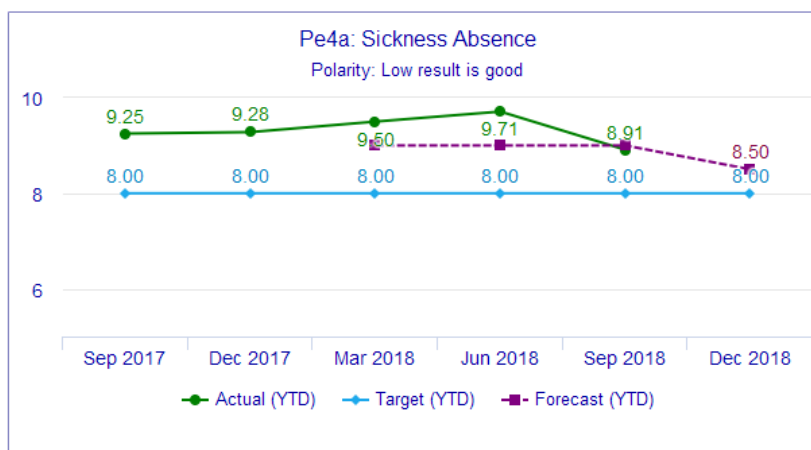
- Agency usage as a percentage of the total workforce, April to September 2018 target 10%, achieved 14.4%.

Spotlight: Sickness Absence

3.122 The level of sickness absence has reduced for the last five consecutive months.

- Sickness absence rate threshold for twelve months to September 2018 2018 per fte 8 days, achieved 8.91 days, twelve months to October achieved 8.26 days.

Part I Release to Press



3.123 At September 2018,

4 out of 10 business units were achieving their new individual sickness absence service targets. Service managers are provided with access to real time sickness information to support absence management through the HR system 'MyView'.

- 3.124 The Senior Leadership Team continues to monitor the performance and management of sickness absence. Focus will be retained until revised policy and practice results in a sustained reduction in levels of sickness absence.
- 3.125 The significant levels of staff restructuring through the Future Council Business Unit Reviews is believed to be impacting on sickness absence levels and analysis of sickness absence has shown that on average 1.5 days of the total absence is a result of the impact of change. Staff affected through the reviews are offered support and advice and are consulted on the proposals that are presented.
- 3.126 Officers from the Human Resources Team are supporting managers with managing sickness absence cases and have organised health and wellbeing events to support and promote employee wellbeing. The Council are also in the progress of preparing to implement a third party sickness absence provider (First Care) who will provide a nurse led sickness reporting facility for all employees, which will provide advice and challenge on fitness for work to both individuals and managers and ensure consistency of approach/advice on sickness absence. They will also follow up to ensure appropriate application of policy and return to work and provide regular and timely management information. First Care advise that they are likely to reduce sickness absence by somewhere between 15-25% over a 5 year period, with a predicted 2% reduction in year one.
- 3.127 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed on 10 September 2018 to bring forward a scrutiny review of the Council's sickness management arrangements following encouragement from the Executive when it considered the quarter 1 corporate performance report at its meeting on 5 September 2018. The review is to give consideration to the specific factors that are or may be affecting sickness absence within the organisation. The aim for the committee is to identify any potential changes required to the current Absence Management Policy and its application. In addition it will be

Part I **Release to Press**

aiming to make recommendations on future data collection and performance management requirements in respect of sickness absence

Finance and Estates

3.128 The Revenues and Benefits service continue to exceed targets for Housing Benefit processing times.

- Time taken to process Housing Benefit new claims and change events (NI181)
 - April to June 2018 target 14 days, achieved 10.35 days.
 - April to September 2018 target 12 days, achieved 8.88 days.

Senior Leadership Team perspective

3.129 High levels of performance across all three key delivery themes (Customer, Place, Transformation and Support) that were evident at the end of 2017/18 have been sustained for April to September 18, to include the following:

- The number of households in temporary accommodation has been maintained below the thresholds set.
- The determination of planning applications exceeded national targets.
- The time taken to process Housing Benefit new claims and change events continues to exceed target.

3.130 The Senior Leadership Team request that the Assistant Directors responsible for areas of improvement focus assess the factors impacting on performance and develop/implement plans that will provide sustainable performance improvement.

3.131 At September 2018, the following improvement plans were identified for ongoing focused monitoring by the Senior Leadership Team:

- Implementation and application of the Homelessness Reduction Act.
- Improving the performance in the Customer Service Centre through a revised service model that will enhance resilience and increase the availability, skills and knowledge of customer service advisers.
- The management of sickness absence and alignment to council health and well-being policy.

3.132 The activity carried out to implement the Homelessness Reduction Act and the restructuring of the Housing Advice and Homelessness Team (to Housing Options and Supply) have contributed to an improvement in the number of homelessness preventions over the last two quarters and this level of performance is forecast to be sustained.

3.133 The Customer Service Centre has started to implement improvement activity that is having an initial positive impact on performance but this will continue to be monitored until sustained performance improvement is evident.

Part I

Release to Press

- 3.134 The rate of sickness absence has improved for each of the last five consecutive months. Additional improvement activity for the management of sickness absence is yet to be implemented and impact will continue to be monitored.
- 3.135 The Senior Leadership Team are also monitoring the impact of the improvement plans implemented to ensure that compliance with Health and Safety regulations is effectively monitored and recorded.
- 3.136 In addition, the development and implementation of the IT strategy will be monitored by the IT Shared Service Partnership Board to ensure that services are delivered that meet customer needs and are fit for the future.
- 3.137 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 framework enables the Senior Leadership Team to amend targets to ensure that they continue to reflect revisions to service delivery models where necessary and to support and drive forward additional improvements in services 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 Programme 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.
- 4.3 A number of areas have been identified in section 3 of this report where a particular focus on improvement is required and outline plans have been set out. The Executive is recommended to note and endorse these improvement plans.

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.

Part I

Release to Press

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 Equalities and Diversity Implications

5.3.1 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.

5.4 Risk Implications

5.4.1 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.

5.4.2 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.

5.5 Other Corporate implications

5.5.1 Improvement activity outlined may impact on the development of future policy or procedure.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Executive Report - 5 September 2018: Corporate Performance Quarter One

APPENDICES








- Appendix 1: Compendium of performance results
- Appendix 2: Future Town, Future Council Programme Scope/Focus

This page is intentionally left blank

Executive Report Appendix One

Key to Performance Status

Symbols

-  Red Status - Focus of improvement
-  Amber Status - Initial improvement activity identified
-  Green Status - Any variance from target manageable
-  Green Plus Status - Exceeding expectations
-  New measure - Performance results not required
-  No data results
-  Missing value

	Corporate Theme	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	Actual to 31/03/18	Status at 31/03/18	Target to 30/06/18	Actual to 30/06/18	Status at 30/06/18	Target to 30/09/18	Actual to 30/09/18	Status at 30/09/18	Target to 31/12/18	
+	VGC1: Percentage of dwellings with a valid gas certificate	Customers	100.0%	100.0%	★	100.0%	100.0%	★	100.0%	100.0%	★	100.0%	100.0%	★	100.0%	100.0%	★	100.0%
	Assets5b: Percentage of assets known to be health and safety compliant (as per SBC definition)	Customers			»			»			»			»	100.00%	91.70%	▲	100.00%
	Assets5a: Percentage of assets known to be health and safety compliant (Statutory)	Customers			»			»			»			»	100.00%	90.00%	▲	100.00%
	CS8: Anti-social behaviour per 1,000 population	Customers	19.10	23.27	▲	29.75	31.49	●	33.10	37.75	▲	10.50	8.21	☆	22.00	?	?	31.00
	NI15b: The rate of violence against the person (victim based crime) per 1,000	Customers	15.93	17.02	●	30.13	25.65	☆	33.07	33.58	★	8.50	?	?	17.00	?	?	26.00
	BV213: Homelessness preventions	Customers	180.0	85.0	▲	270.0	177.0	▲	360.0	231.0	▲	90.0	101.0	☆	180.0	182.0	★	270.0
	CS9: Criminal damage per 1,000 population	Customers	6.13	6.80	▲	7.75	9.93	▲	9.13	12.86	▲	3.50	?	?	6.70	?	?	9.80
+	ECHFL-EW1: Percentage of tenants satisfied with external works completed (for the current quarter)	Customers	85.0%	98.1%	☆	85.0%	96.7%	★	85.0%	95.5%	★	90.0%	93.9%	★	90.0%	89.0%	★	80.0%
+	ECHFL-IW1: Percentage of tenants satisfied with internal works completed (for the current quarter)	Customers	80.0%	100.0%	☆	80.0%	36.4%	▲	80.0%	44.0%	▲	80.0%	93.9%	☆	80.0%	94.3%	☆	80.0%
+	ECHFL1: Percentage of Homes maintained as decent	Customers	82.3%	82.2%	★	83.8%	83.7%	★	75.4%	75.8%	★	77.2%	77.3%	★	79.8%	80.0%	★	82.6%
	NI15a: Number of households in temporary accommodation at end qtr	Customers	110.00	78.00	☆	110.00	85.00	☆	110.00	46.00	☆	100.00	60.00	☆	100.00	65.00	☆	100.00
+	BV66a: Rent collection rate	Customers	96.5%	96.3%	★	97.8%	98.3%	★	98.8%	98.9%	★	93.6%	94.4%	★	96.3%	96.8%	★	97.8%
	EAA1: Customer satisfaction with CSC customer service	Future Town, Future Council	90.0%	88.5%	★	90.0%	88.5%	★	90.0%	89.0%	★	90.0%	89.7%	★	90.0%	88.4%	★	90.0%
	EoCrec: Time to recruit	Future Town, Future Council			»			»			»	45.00	34.50	☆	45.00	38.50	☆	45.00
	FS1a (LACC1): Percentage GF approved savings removed from GF budget for current year	Future Town, Future Council			»			»			»	98.00%	98.64%	★	92.00%	89.90%	★	92.00%
	FS2a (LACC2): Percentage HRA approved savings removed from HRA for current year	Future Town, Future Council			»			»			»	91.00%	91.15%	★	91.00%	86.70%	★	91.00%
	CTOC1: Percentage of customer complaints responded to within deadline	Future Town, Future Council	95.00%	92.18%	★	95.00%	97.10%	★	95.00%	94.40%	★	95.00%	83.66%	▲	95.00%	88.02%	▲	95.00%
	WebSat1: Customer satisfaction with Council website	Future Town, Future Council			»			»			»	0.11	0.24	☆	0.11	0.26	☆	0.15
	EoC4c: Percentage of flexible working arrangements in place	Future Town, Future Council			»			»			»	25.00%	22.76%	★	25.00%	33.86%	☆	25.00%
	FS4 (Futsav2b): Percentage of HRA savings identified to meet three year target	Future Town, Future Council	54.0%	34.2%	▲	64.0%	27.6%	▲	41.3%	40.6%	★	2.5%	5.2%	☆	29.3%	56.6%	☆	33.5%

	Corporate Theme	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	Actual to 31/03/18	Status at 31/03/18	Target to 30/06/18	Actual to 30/06/18	Status at 30/06/18	Target to 30/09/18	Actual to 30/09/18	Status at 30/09/18	Target to 31/12/18
EoC4a: Percentage of apprentices in post as percentage of workforce.	Future Town, Future Council	2.3%	1.8%	★	2.3%	2.2%	★	2.3%	1.6%	●	2.5%	1.4%	▲	2.5%	2.7%	☆	2.5%
HDD1b (formerly NB1) - New Build Spend v Budget of development activity that is contracted	Future Town, Future Council	95.0%	82.7%	▲	95.0%	91.6%	★	95.0%	97.9%	★	90.0%	96.3%	★	90.0%	95.5%	★	90.0%
CNM2g: Garage Voids as a percentage of stock	Future Town, Future Council	12.00%	12.32%	★	12.00%	12.05%	★	12.00%	12.06%	★	12.00%	12.62%	●	12.00%	12.62%	●	12.00%
EoCint: Percentage of roles filled by staff employed within the Council	Future Town, Future Council			»			»			»	20.00%	38.30%	▲	20.00%	39.02%	▲	20.00%
FS3 (Futsav1b): Percentage of GF savings identified to meet three year target	Future Town, Future Council	48.0%	53.4%	☆	63.0%	59.1%	●	62.6%	63.2%	★	21.1%	30.3%	☆	39.8%	78.7%	☆	47.4%
Compl4: Percentage of stage 2 & 3 complaints upheld fully or partially (Housing)	Future Town, Future Council	40.00%	61.76%	▲	40.00%	58.24%	▲	40.00%	51.28%	▲	40.00%	44.00%	●	40.00%	38.30%	★	40.00%
HDD1d: Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) by the Council (since 2014)	Future Town, Future Council			»			»			»	133.00	134.00	★	148.00	149.00	★	148.00
Rep-Time3: Average end to end repairs time (days) - Routine Repairs	Place			»			»			»	20.00	14.84	☆	20.00	10.83	☆	20.00
NI191: Residual household waste per household (kgs)	Place	265.00	257.60	★	392.00	383.00	★	510.00	522.00	●	133.00	134.95	★	254.00	257.00	★	386.00
NI192: Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	Place	42.0%	41.8%	★	43.0%	40.3%	●	43.0%	38.0%	▲	42.1%	43.6%	★	43.5%	43.0%	★	41.5%
Rep Cost1: Average responsive repair cost per dwelling	Place	137.82	164.27	▲	206.73	237.18	▲	275.69	327.07	▲	80.25	59.77	☆	160.50	146.03	☆	240.75
Rep-Time2: Average end to end repairs time (days) - Urgent Repairs	Place			»			»			»	5.00	4.97	★	5.00	4.50	☆	5.00
VoidsGN: The time taken to relet standard general needs voids	Place	29.00	33.84	▲	27.78	33.18	▲	26.00	32.11	▲	32.00	29.89	☆	32.00	27.49	☆	32.00
VoidsGNMW - The time taken to relet major works general needs voids	Place	60.00	94.35	▲	55.00	98.38	▲	51.25	105.35	▲	65.00	72.25	▲	65.00	93.53	▲	65.00
BTC1a: New jobs created through Business Technology Centre	Place			»			»			»	10.00	51.00	☆	20.00	36.00	☆	40.00
ELL1: Percentage of known HMOs that are free from category 1 hazards	Place	98.0%	99.0%	★	98.0%	100.0%	☆	98.0%	99.7%	★	98.0%	99.7%	★	98.0%	99.6%	★	98.0%
BTC1b: New business start up in Business Technology Centre	Place			»			»			»	5.00	30.00	☆	10.00	19.00	☆	15.00
NI157b: Percentage of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks	Place	65.0%	98.0%	☆	65.0%	98.6%	☆	65.0%	94.9%	☆	65.0%	89.5%	☆	65.0%	90.2%	☆	65.0%
NI157c: Percentage of other planning applications determined within 8 weeks	Place	80.0%	96.3%	☆	80.0%	96.8%	☆	80.0%	96.8%	☆	80.0%	96.4%	☆	80.0%	96.8%	☆	80.0%
NI18a: Food establishments in the area broadly compliant with food hygiene law	Place	95.0%	96.3%	★	95.0%	96.0%	★	95.0%	96.0%	★	95.0%	97.0%	★	95.0%	96.0%	★	95.0%

	Corporate Theme	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	Actual to 31/03/18	Status at 31/03/18	Target to 30/06/18	Actual to 30/06/18	Status at 30/06/18	Target to 30/09/18	Actual to 30/09/18	Status at 30/09/18	Target to 31/12/18	
+	ECH-Rep3: Percentage repairs appointment made and kept	Place	95.00%	96.87%	★	95.00%	97.08%	★	95.00%	96.98%	★	95.00%	96.23%	★	95.00%	95.76%	★	95.00%
+	ECH-Rep4: Percentage repairs fixed first time	Place	87.50%	84.00%	●	90.00%	84.88%	▲	90.00%	83.82%	▲	87.50%	89.35%	★	87.50%	92.13%	★	87.50%
+	ECHFL5: Percentage of Repairs service customers satisfied (telephone survey)	Place	95.00%	90.61%	★	95.00%	92.50%	★	95.00%	94.05%	★	90.00%	89.84%	★	90.00%	93.44%	★	90.00%
+	Rep-Time1: Average end to end repairs time (days) - Emergency Repairs	Place			»			»			»	1.00	0.28	☆	1.00	0.45	☆	1.00
+	NI157a: Percentage of major planning applications determined in 13 weeks	Place	60.0%	100.0%	☆	60.0%	87.5%	☆	60.0%	90.0%	☆	60.0%	100.0%	☆	60.0%	100.0%	☆	60.0%
	CSC4: Percentage of telephone calls to the CSC answered within 20 secs	Transformation and Support	55.0%	51.9%	●	55.0%	51.8%	●	55.0%	52.8%	●	55.0%	39.8%	▲	55.0%	40.9%	▲	55.0%
	CSC13a: Percentage of calls to the CSC resolved within the CSC (by CSC advisors)	Transformation and Support			»			»			»	65.00%	64.20%	★	65.00%	64.20%	★	65.00%
	CSC5: Percentage of walk-in customers to the CSC served within 20mins	Transformation and Support	85.0%	77.2%	▲	85.0%	73.6%	▲	85.0%	71.5%	▲	80.0%	69.7%	▲	80.0%	65.2%	▲	80.0%
	NI181: Time taken (days) to process housing benefit new claims and change events	Transformation and Support	12.00	11.24	★	12.00	9.95	★	10.00	7.16	☆	14.00	10.35	☆	12.00	8.88	☆	11.00
	Pe1: Total Human Capital - measures Workforce Stability	Transformation and Support	85.0%	85.0%	★	85.0%	85.3%	★	85.0%	89.0%	★	85.0%	85.6%	★	85.0%	86.0%	★	85.0%
	Pe2: Agency Usage as a percentage of total workforce	Transformation and Support	14.0%	12.5%	★	12.0%	9.6%	☆	10.0%	11.1%	●	10.0%	13.0%	▲	10.0%	14.4%	▲	10.0%
	BV9: Percentage of council tax collected	Transformation and Support	61.0%	61.3%	★	88.5%	88.8%	★	96.5%	96.4%	★	33.0%	33.7%	☆	61.0%	60.8%	★	89.0%
	BV10: Percentage of non-domestic rates due for the financial year received by the authority	Transformation and Support	62.0%	62.0%	★	89.0%	89.1%	★	98.5%	98.6%	★	36.0%	36.4%	☆	62.0%	61.6%	★	89.0%
	Pe4a: Sickness Absence Rate for the Current Workforce (FTE)	Transformation and Support	8.00	9.25	▲	8.00	9.28	▲	8.00	9.50	▲	8.00	9.71	▲	8.00	8.91	●	8.00
	Pe6: Appraisal completion to meet corporate deadlines	Transformation and Support	100.0%	98.7%	★	100.0%	99.8%	★	100.0%	100.0%	★	100.0%	73.3%	▲	100.0%	90.1%	▲	100.0%
	Cust1: Percentage complaints progressing to stage 2 and 3 that are upheld or partially upheld	Transformation and Support	40.0%	52.8%	▲	40.0%	42.9%	●	40.0%	43.7%	●	40.0%	38.2%	★	40.0%	37.3%	★	40.0%
	CSC12: Percentage of calls abandoned in the Customer Service Centre	Transformation and Support	4.0%	8.9%	▲	4.0%	9.2%	▲	5.5%	9.7%	▲	8.0%	13.9%	▲	8.0%	17.1%	▲	7.0%

Appendix Two.

Future Town, Future Council Outcomes and Focus for 2018/19

External Facing Programmes

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. Regeneration of the town centre is the Council's number one priority and was the priority most often placed in residents' 'top three' in the town-wide survey undertaken this year. The Council wants to make Stevenage a destination of choice through delivering a new vibrant town centre, with quality shopping, office and leisure facilities.
- 1.4. The Council officially announced the appointment of Mace as the development partner for Town Centre regeneration in February. Mace, the international development and construction company behind some of the world's landmark developments, will be undertaking the first phase of regeneration (SG1).
- 1.5. Stevenage is now the single largest regeneration zone in the East of England. 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.
- 1.6. During 2018/19 the programme will primarily focus on:
- Signing off the Development Agreement for SG1.
 - Working with Mace to develop and consult on plans for SG1.
 - Progressing more detailed plans for a public sector hub in the town.
 - Completing improvements to the Market Place and wayfinding signage as well as developing plans to improve the Town Square.
 - Establishing the "Stevenage Works" local labour market employment & training initiative in conjunction with North Herts College and Job Centre plus.

- Opening the visitors' centre to showcase the history of Stevenage as well as ambitious future plans.

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 delivering its own new build programme.

2.4. The Council progressed well with the adoption of the new Local Plan during 2017/18. A successful Public Examination of the plan was held, with the independent Planning Inspector giving a positive report after listening to the views of residents and businesses. The Council is now working with the Government to get the plan adopted. The plan should then provide the certainty to encourage developers to bring forward their schemes to provide a range of housing, including a proportion of affordable homes.

2.5. During 2018/19 the programme will primarily focus on:

- Completing and letting 54 new high quality homes across a number of design and build schemes.
- Starting work on a further 267 new/replacement homes across a range of planned schemes that deliver wider place shaping benefits.
- Consulting with the public and securing planning permission for the Kenilworth Close site, including plans for the flagship older persons housing scheme to meet the needs of the town's ageing population.
- Exploring the viability of other potential areas of development across the town including opportunities to work in partnership with other providers.
- Continuing to work with partners to enable the delivery of affordable homes.

3. Excellent Council Homes Programme

3.1. Programme Outcomes

- Transforming the Housing and Investment service to better meet the needs of its customers.

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.
- 3.4. During 2017/18 work started on Phase 1 of the programme to implement digital improvements and new ways of working and to provide staff with tools and skills to deliver excellent customer service. These improvements lay the essential foundations for Phase 2 of the programme, which will continue the delivery of digital improvements, embed new ways of working and enable customers to benefit from improved access to services through a wide range of methods, including online self-service services and additional support for those who need it.
- 3.5. During 2018/19 the programme will primarily focus on:
- Using customer insight information to develop a better understanding of customers' views and requirements, to enable provision of a more bespoke housing service for each individual customer and improved cohesion with services to the neighbourhood.
 - Continuing to improve the way staff and customers use technology.
 - Commencing implementation of mobile working in order to save time and enable staff to access information whenever and wherever it is needed.
 - Beginning to digitalise the housing service offer in order to provide customers with an additional channel of communication and an opportunity to self-serve.
 - Working with members of staff to create a lean, efficient and cohesive workforce that will work towards a 'One Team' approach and a 'Customer First' culture.

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 Council's 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. The programme was formally launched at Stevenage Day in June 2017 and is complemented by a new 'Our Neighbourhood' area on the Council's website.

4.4. Expenditure on the programme in 2017/18 amounted to £459,353, which was used for public realm and playground improvements in addition to the neighbourhood warden scheme. A total of £491,600 New Homes Bonus (NHB) has been allocated to fund further improvements and the neighbourhood wardens in 2018/19. In addition, £40,000 NHB will fund a pilot to trial community involvement in decision making in the wards where the programme has been implemented.

4.5. During 2018/19 the programme will primarily focus on:

- Responding to priorities identified through engagement with residents of St Nicholas and Martins Wood in 2017/18, by making significant investment in those wards to improve public spaces and the quality of life of local people. The focus will be on youth engagement/ provision, street lighting, parking issues resolution, open spaces and grounds maintenance and health and wellbeing.
- Engaging with ward Members, partners and communities on the next phase of planned investment in the wards of Bedwell and Longmeadow.
- Investing £230k in outdoor play sites in Bedwell and Longmeadow.
- Seeking Council agreement to a sustainable model for the provision and management of community centres.
- Award and alignment of the works contract for the Garage Improvement Programme with the delivery of the Major Refurbishment Contract works to achieve economies of scale including an enhanced social value offer.
- Supporting residents in becoming more active members of their community, who make a positive contribution to the town and local area.
- Designing a council-wide framework to support officers and Members in effective and meaningful community engagement.
- Creating a more streamlined approach to increase and enhance volunteering within the Council.

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 accessibility of Council services and the customer experience. It will enhance the way residents can access Council services through increasing the use of digital options, whilst ensuring that officers continue to spend time with those customers who require additional assistance.
- 5.4. The town-wide Resident Survey demonstrated support amongst residents for improved digital services: 39% of respondents put 'interacting more with residents and customers on-line' first on their list of ways the Council could save money, whilst 33% indicated that their preferred way to be kept informed was via the website and a further 29% viewed social media as the best channel of communication.
- 5.5. In February 2017 Members agreed to invest £2.1m over three financial years, of which a significant proportion was for the delivery of the Connected to our Customers Programme.
- 5.6. In 2017/18 it was recognised that IT improvements were needed to enable the delivery of the wider Connected to Our Customers programme. Therefore the majority of the programme was put on hold pending delivery of these improvements. In November 2017 an IT improvement plan was approved by the Executive. The overarching plan was informed by a range of activity to test the current position and set direction for the future. The improvement plan is based on four key areas of activity: improving resilience, strengthening security, adopting best practice management, and developing a longer-term forward strategy.
- 5.7. In partnership with East Herts District Council a series of IT infrastructure enhancements were delivered during 2017/18 including the installation of new storage capacity and the decommissioning of legacy business systems.
- 5.8. During 2018/19 the programme will primarily focus on:
- Improving the online offer by delivering a simple, clearer website and straightforward online self-service options for key routine transactions, helping customers to self-serve.

- Involving customers and staff in designing and testing new digital products and services before launching them.
- Launching a new customer strategy that sets out the Council’s ambitious plans to improve customer service and promises to deliver a consistent customer service standard across the Council.
- Supporting the overall customer service offer and efficiency by improving back office processes and technology within the Council, and making sure all personal data is secure.

Internal Facing Programmes

6. Financial Security Programme

6.1. Programme Outcomes

- As set out in Figure 1: Financial Security Work streams



Figure 1: Financial Security Work streams

6.2. Programme Overview

6.3. This programme aims to ensure that the Council has sufficient funds available to deliver quality services that residents want and need. The Council aims to break away from the cycle of dependency on Government grant through becoming more efficient in its processes and developing new and innovative funding streams to ensure it has the resources it needs to be a Council fit for the future and build a vibrant town that residents deserve.

6.4. During 2018/19 the programme will primarily focus on:

- Identifying Financial Security options that meet the three-year Financial Security targets (£2.2Million General Fund and £1Million HRA).
- Managing budgetary efficiency through regular monitoring, analysis of trends and robust challenge of spend as part of the efficiency work stream.
- Setting targets and delivering savings against each individual Financial Security work stream including Fees and Charges.

7. Employer of Choice Programme

7.1. 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.

7.2. Programme Overview

7.3. The Council aims to create a flexible, collaborative, creative and modern workforce to ensure it 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.

7.4. During 2016/17 the Senior Management Review was completed and a new leadership team is now in place. Through Future Council Business Reviews, work began during 2017/18 on shaping the next stage of the transformation programme to ensure the Council has the right structures, teams and people in place.

7.5. During 2018/19 the programme will primarily focus on:

- Establishing a compelling employer brand with a competitive pay and benefit offer.
- Developing and implementing a competency framework for staff from Grade 1- 9 of the Council's pay structure.
- Managing Organisational Change effectively with a new appraisal process and valuing staff's health and wellbeing.
- Enabling new ways of working to equip staff for the future including policies, practices and culture.
- Developing digital skills and tools to enable staff self-service.
- Creating a new Learning and Development Strategy.

8. Performing at our Peak Programme

8.1. 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.

8.2. Programme Overview

8.3. 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.

8.4. During 2018/19 the programme will primarily focus on:

- Enhancing business insight through data connectivity and ensuring service managers have the right skills to use the performance management tool robustly to analyse information and make informed decisions that result in improved services for customers.
- Embedding the performance culture through the effective use of new tools and procedures, to enable lasting performance improvement.
- Completing a review of arrangements for decision making (scheme of delegation) to ensure continued robust and efficient decision-making by council officers at the appropriate level of seniority.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank