

Public Document Pack

Daneshill House
Danestrete
Stevenage
Hertfordshire

Date of Publication

Dear Sir/Madam

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of Stevenage Borough Council will be held virtually via Zoom on Wednesday, 20 May 2020 at 7.00pm and you are summoned to attend to transact the following business. Access codes will be circulated to Members prior to the meeting. Public access to this meeting will be via the Stevenage Borough Council YouTube Channel.

Yours faithfully

Matthew Partridge
Chief Executive

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. MINUTES - 26 FEBRUARY 2020

To approve as a correct record the attached Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 26 February 2020 for signature by the Mayor.

Page Nos. 5 - 20

3. ELECTION OF MAYOR

To elect the Mayor for the Municipal Year 2020/21.

4. ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR

To elect the Deputy Mayor for the Municipal Year 2020/21.

5. APPOINTMENT OF YOUTH MAYOR

To appoint a Youth Mayor for 2020/21, as nominated by the Stevenage Youth Council.

6. APPOINTMENT OF LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

To note the appointment of the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Opposition for the Municipal Year 2020/21.

7. APPOINTMENT OF LEADERS AND DEPUTY LEADERS OF THE POLITICAL GROUPS ON THE COUNCIL

To note the appointment of the Leaders and Deputy Leaders of the Political Groups on the Council for the Municipal Year 2020/21.

8. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

To consider various issues concerning the Council's political management structure and the Constitution for 2020/21.

Page Nos. 21 - 76

9. APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL

A. To appoint Members to the Standing Committees of Stevenage Borough Council for the Municipal Year 2020/21; and

B. To appoint to the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair for each of those Committees.

DETAILS TO BE AVAILABLE AT THE MEETING

10. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

To appoint Council representatives onto various outside bodies for the Municipal Year 2020/21.

SCHEDULE TO FOLLOW

11. CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) INCIDENT MANAGEMENT REPORT

The attached report on the COVID-19 crisis is to be considered by the Executive at its meeting on 13 May 2020. The decisions of the Executive will be circulated on a supplementary agenda.

Page Nos. 77 - 104

12. PRESENTATION OF MEMORIAL PLAQUE TO THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

13. CLAP FOR KEYWORKERS

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, 26 February 2020

Time: 7.00pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present: Councillors: Simon Speller (Mayor), Jim Brown (Deputy Mayor), Sandra Barr, Philip Bibby CC, Stephen Booth, Lloyd Briscoe, Rob Broom, Teresa Callaghan, Laurie Chester, Michael Downing, Alex Farquharson, John Gardner, Michelle Gardner, Jody Hanafin, Liz Harrington, Richard Henry, Jackie Hollywell, Graham Lawrence, John Lloyd, Mrs Joan Lloyd, Lin Martin-Haugh, Sarah-Jane McDonough, Andy McGuinness, Maureen McKay, John Mead, Sarah Mead, Adam Mitchell CC, Margaret Notley, Robin Parker CC, Claire Parris, Loraine Rossati, Graham Snell, Sharon Taylor OBE CC, Jeannette Thomas and Tom Wren

Start / End Start Time: 7.00pm
Time: End Time: 9.50pm

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

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Doug Bainbridge, Adrian Brown, Dave Cullen and Lizzie Kelly.

There were no declarations of interest.

At this juncture, Council agreed to suspend Standing Order 19 (c) so that Members could stay seated when speaking.

2 **MINUTES - 29 JANUARY 2020**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 29 January 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

3 **MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Mayor introduced a short film entitled "The Canyon". The film featured Stevenage District Scouts at the Activity Centre. It was noted that the centre had received Local Community Budget funding from some Members. The Leader thanked Stevenage District Scouting for a wonderful addition to the young people offer in Stevenage.

The Mayor highlighted the following upcoming events:

- Mayor's Charity Concert – 11 March 2020

- Environment Action Day – 26 March 2020
- Litter picks with Stevenage District Scouts – 28 March 2020
- Mayor's Reception for Stevenage Community Trust and Stevenage Kadoma Link Association – 21 April 2020

The Mayor reported that Climate Change was the main debate item at the Schools Parliament event that was held at the Council offices on 25 February 2020. The school children expressed interest in growing their own vegetables. Cllr Speller informed Council that the Mayor's Reception in April would be an opportunity to celebrate the corporate and civic history of Stevenage. The Community History Project would capture stories of past Mayors, town pioneers and community champions. The Mayor informed Council that several events to mark the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day were lined up between 8 May and 10 May 2020.

4 **MAIN DEBATE - 2020/21 COUNCIL TAX AND GENERAL FUND AND CAPITAL BUDGETS**

The Main Debate related to item 4 on the agenda. The Leader of the Council, Councillor S Taylor OBE CC opened her climate change-themed budget speech by announcing that Stevenage had received the regional Labour Party's Merit Award for Council of the Year in recognition of the Council's work on regeneration, housing development and neighbourhood management. Councillor Taylor highlighted the Council's commitment to tackling climate change with a robust four step plan to meet the challenging target of net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

Councillor Taylor noted that austerity remained a challenge for families, for business, for the public sector in general and local government in particular. She raised concerns about uncertainty surrounding the business rates review, future New Homes Bonus allocation and the short window between the announcement of the government's financial settlement and delivery of the budget to Council.

The Leader's announced the following budget initiatives:

- £54,000 had been allocated in the budget for an officer to drive our climate action and £20,000 will be ring-fenced towards quick wins on climate change and the work of a citizen-led forum called the People's Climate Action Forum
- The Chief Financial Officer had granted permission for Members to carry forwards their 2019/20 Local Community Budgets where they are committed to the Council's climate change programme
- £20,000 to help Stevenage Citizen Advice with the funding cuts they are dealing with and to enable them to deliver more support for the people of Stevenage
- Supporting the Royal British Legion with events to mark the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day

Councillor Taylor also highlighted the following climate change initiatives:

- Exploring opportunities to become Britain's first all-electric bus town
- Establishing community orchards
- Collaboratively working with local traders to offer free water refills
- Future plans to introduce free drinking water refill stations in the town centre, High Street and parks
- Banning the use of plastic at Council events and using biodegradable plates and cutlery
- Exploring opportunities to provide a cycle hire scheme
- Installing four more electric car parking bays later this year
- Consultations with the Old Town Business and Community Partnership to make an area plan for the High Street and when funds allow, bring in a High Street Co-ordinator to bring together the efforts of the council and the retailers
- Encouraging commuters to 'Park and Stride' from the currently underutilised Primett Road car parks

The Leader of the Council reported that Stevenage remained on track to build 550 council, affordable and private homes by 2025. The Co-operative Neighbourhoods Programme was set to benefit from the investment of £387,000 to continue the work of localising teams and services. The Housing and Investment team had been awarded a Rough Sleeper programme grant of £177,000.

The Stevenage Works Partnership had been offered £330,000 by the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) to establish a Hub that will support local people into training and employment opportunities over the next 3 years with support from our major developers and contractors. Since 2007, the Council had taken on more than 50 apprentices with many being employed permanently in a variety of roles. Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) had won further funding through expansion and had been contracted to deliver services for neighbouring councils. Young people of Stevenage continued to be involved in the design of playgrounds as part of the £1.5million playground improvement programme. The Leader of Council commended the Mayor, Simon Speller, for his work on the 'real history' project documenting the lives and events that shaped the town.

Councillor Taylor informed Council that the budget included proposals to increase Council tax by 2.37% for a band C property, a County Council increase of 3.99%, and 5.32% from the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Leader thanked Sandy Eaton, Clare Fletcher and the finance team for their help with budget preparations for the budget. She extended thanks to staff, Councillors and Member Services team for their support throughout the year. Councillor Taylor particularly thanked her Personal Assistant (PA), Gill Harrison, for her patience, skill and support over the last years. She announced that her PA would be moving to a new job at Hertfordshire County Council.

In conclusion, Councillor S Taylor formally moved the recommendations from the Executive on the General Fund and Capital Budgets, together with the formal Council Tax resolution circulated around the Chamber.

The Motion was formally seconded by Councillor Mrs J Lloyd who advised that the budget before Members ensured a prudent level of General Fund balances in the

Council's reserves. She advised that the Council still needed to deliver the £2.1million of Financial Security savings of which £1.1million had still to be identified. Councillor Mrs Lloyd informed Members that Stevenage maintained 120 services in spite of the budget constraints. She thanked the Members of the Leader's Financial Security Group and staff involved in the budget preparation.

The Mayor then invited the Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Phil Bibby to address the meeting. Councillor Bibby advised that his Group would not be supporting the Budget. He stated that austerity measures were put in place to reduce national debt and as a result of the measures the UK's budget deficit was now at its lowest since 2002. Councillor Bibby suggested that cost-cutting measures such as holding elections once every four years and outsourcing the refuse collection service should be explored. He pointed out that the electric car club scheme was not self-financing the benefits of car parking charge increases would diminish with time.

The Leader of the Minority Opposition Party, Councillor R Parker CC stated that his Group would be supporting the budget. He reported that his Group had carried out research on the feasibility of electric buses in Stevenage and it appeared current guideline precluded Stevenage from becoming an all-electric bus town. Councillor Parker welcomed the homelessness grant and the revised graphic presentation of the Council's financial reserves. He expressed concerns about the late notification of central government financial support to local authorities, the withholding of Growth Deal funds and the proportion of Council Tax allocated to the Police and Crime Commissioner. Councillor Parker sought clarification on the grant to Stevenage Citizens Advice.

A full debate then took place. Council acknowledged that events to mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day would provide Stevenage with an opportunity to reflect on the enormous sacrifice, courage and determination of people from all walks of life during World War II. Members were pleased to see support for the climate change initiatives and grants to Stevenage Citizens Advice. Members noted the benefits of Arts funding for Stevenage and successes of the house building programme. Members also highlighted payment delays and other problems with the Universal Credit system. Council expressed delight in the opening of the North Stand at Lamex Stadium (Stevenage FC Stadium).

In her reply, Councillor Taylor highlighted the Growth Deal funding for Stevenage which remained withheld at this time following action initiated by the local MP. This was money that could be used to improve the Town Centre. She stated that austerity was a deliberate political choice that had brought hardships for some residents and small businesses. The government's announcement in October 2019 of an increase in the cost of borrowing through the Public Works Loan Board Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) was unexpected and it was considered to be heavy-handed given that probably only a few local authorities had made significant investments. Outsourcing of services such as refuse collection was rarely the preferred option because in-house services can provide better value for money, more flexibility and better employment conditions for staff. Councillor Taylor confirmed that a Service Level Agreement (SLA) was in place between the Council and Stevenage Citizens Advice.

The Mayor advised Members to submit any queries on the budget to relevant officers. Council agreed to an additional recommendation that officers report back on the feasibility and implications of allowing members to roll forward, within limits, their Local Community Budgets at the financial year end.

After a full debate, a recorded vote* was taken and it was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the following be approved:
 - a. the revised working revenue estimates for the year 2019/20 amounting to £9,678,680 and the revenue estimates for 2020/21 amounting to £9,069,830;
 - b. the contribution from balances totalling £924,606 in 2019/20;
 - c. the contribution from balances totalling £349,030 in 2020/21.
2. That it be noted that at its meeting on 22 January 2020 the Executive calculated the amount of 27,780.7 Band D equivalent properties as its council tax base for the year 2020/21 in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 made under Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by Section 74 of the Localism Act 2011.
3. That the following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2020/21 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by Section 74 of the Localism Act 2011:
 - a. £82,599,746 Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2)(a) to (f) of the Act, less the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3)(a) to (d)
 - b. £76,611,145 Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3)(a) to (d) of the Act.
 - c. £5,988,601 Being the amount by which the aggregate at 3a above exceeds the aggregate at 3b above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year.
 - d. £215.57 Being the amount at 3c divided by the amount at 2 above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B (1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year
 - e. Valuation Bands
 - A £ 143.71
 - B £ 167.67
 - C £ 191.62

D	£ 215.57
E	£ 263.47
F	£ 311.38
G	£ 359.28
H	£ 431.14

Being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at 3d. above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

4. a. That it be noted that for the year 2020/21 Hertfordshire County Council have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of the dwellings shown below:

Valuation Bands

	Basic Amount Of Council Tax	Adult Social Care Charge	2020/21 Council Tax
A	£ 860.82	£ 81.98	£ 942.80
B	£ 1,004.26	£ 95.67	£ 1,099.93
C	£ 1,147.75	£ 109.32	£ 1,257.07
D	£ 1,291.21	£ 122.99	£ 1,414.20
E	£ 1,578.16	£ 150.31	£ 1,728.47
F	£ 1,865.07	£ 177.66	£ 2,042.73
G	£ 2,152.03	£ 204.97	£ 2,357.00
H	£ 2,582.42	£ 245.98	£ 2,828.40

- b. That it be noted that for the year 2020/21 Hertfordshire Police Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and amended by Section 27 of the Police and Magistrates' Court Act 1994, for each of the categories of the dwellings shown below:

Valuation Bands

A	£ 132.00
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B	£ 154.00
C	£ 176.00
D	£ 198.00
E	£ 242.00
F	£ 286.00
G	£ 330.00
H	£ 396.00

5. That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 3e. and 4a. and b. above, the Council in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts for council tax for the year 2020/21 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Valuation Bands

A	£1,218.51
B	£1,421.60
C	£1,624.69
D	£1,827.77
E	£2,233.94
F	£2,640.11
G	£3,046.28
H	£3,655.54

6. That in accordance with Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992 it be determined that the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2020/21 is not excessive in accordance with principles approved by the Secretary of State under Section 52ZC having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 3e above.
7. That the updated position on the General Fund and the Risk Assessment of General Fund balances, be approved.
8. That a minimum level of General Fund reserves of £2,920,935, in line with the 2020/21 risk assessment of balances be approved.

9. That the contingency sum of £400,000 within which the Executive can approve supplementary estimates, be approved for 2020/21, (unchanged from 2019/20).
10. That the 2020/21 proposed Financial Security Options of £846,964 and including fees and charges of £117,490 be included in the final budget.
11. That the 2020/21 proposed Growth bids and pressures of £653,220 be approved
12. That 2020/21 business rate gains totalling £1.14Million above the baseline need be allocated as set out in paragraph 4.6.7 of report 4A.
13. That the 2020/21 Council Tax Support scheme is approved as set out in section 4.8 of report 4A.
14. That New Homes Bonus of £30,380 be transferred to the reserve to fund future potential shortfalls in funding.
15. That the advice of the Assistant Director (Finance and Estates) on the robustness of the draft budget and the adequacy of reserves as set out in Appendix D of report 4A, be noted.
16. That the comments from Overview and Scrutiny be noted.
17. That the final 2020/21 General Fund Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix C of report 4B be approved.
18. That the final 2020/21 HRA Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix D of report 4B be approved.
19. That the updated forecast of resources as detailed in Appendix C (General Fund) and Appendix D (HRA) to report 4B be approved.
20. That the Council's investment strategy for non-treasury assets as shown at section 3.2 of report 4B be approved.
21. That the approach to resourcing the General Fund capital programme as outlined in report 4B be approved.
22. That the actions required to ensure the General Fund programme is funded as outlined in paragraphs 4.9.3-4.9.8 of report 4B be noted.
23. That the approach and progress on Local Asset Reviews be noted together with the target to realise receipts for 2020/21.
24. That the growth bids now included in the Capital Strategy (Appendix A to report 4B) be approved.
25. That the return of Right to Buy one for one receipts as outlined in section 4.14

of report 4B be noted.

26. That the 2020/21 de-minimis expenditure limit as set out in section 4.15 of report 4B be approved.
27. That the 2020/21 contingency allowances as set out in section 4.16 of report 4B be approved.
28. That the work undertaken by LFSG on behalf of the Executive in reviewing and challenging the General Fund Capital Strategy be noted.
29. That officers report back on the feasibility and implications of allowing members to roll forward, within limits, their Local Community Budgets at the financial year end

* Votes for the Motion – Councillors S Barr, S Booth, L Briscoe, R Broom, J Brown, T Callaghan, L Chester, M Downing, J Gardner, M Gardner, L Harrington, R Henry, J Hollywell, Mrs J Lloyd, J Lloyd, S-J McDonough, A McGuinness, M McKay, L Martin-Haugh, J Mead, S Mead, R Parker, C Parris, L Rossati, G Snell, S Speller, S Taylor OBE CC, J Thomas and T Wren

Votes against the motion – Councillors P Bibby CC, A Farquharson, J Hanafin, G Lawrence, A Mitchell CC and M Notley

Abstentions – nil

Did not vote/Apologies: Councillors D Bainbridge, A Brown, D Cullen and L Kelly

5 PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

None.

6 QUESTIONS FROM THE YOUTH COUNCIL

Council received four questions from the Youth Council. The responses to the four questions were circulated at the Meeting and are appended to the Minutes.

The Youth Council representative did not ask supplementary questions.

7 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

8 LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S UPDATE

The Leader of the Opposition asked about the Council's plans to contribute towards the Labour Party's 2019 general election pledge to plant two billion trees by 2040. In response, the Leader of the Council acknowledged that planting trees across the world was one of the most effective means of tackling the climate crisis. Councillor Taylor indicated that the Council would work with communities, business and other

partners on the climate change agenda.

In light of the current outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), the Leader of the Council invited Strategic Director (RP) to give Members an update on global and local perspectives of the outbreak. The World Health Organisation (WHO) had declared the outbreak a public health emergency of international concern and the UK had raised the risk to from low to moderate. Central government and local authorities were planning for all scenarios.

The Herts Strategic Co-ordinating Group was now holding weekly meetings to monitor the situation and agree actions to be taken. Resilience officers across Hertfordshire were monitoring the situation daily. An officer working group had been established to co-ordinate the Council's response to a potential coronavirus outbreak within the town. General advice had already been issued to Members and SBC staff. Regular updates based on the latest Public Health and government travel advice would be provided.

The Leader of the Council welcomed the announcement by the Health Secretary that staff self-isolating due to coronavirus should get sick pay. Members recommended that links to government advice on the coronavirus outbreak be added to the Council website.

9 **NOTICE OF MOTIONS**

None.

10 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO COMMITTEE CHAIRS/PORTFOLIO HOLDERS**

Council received four questions. The responses to the four questions were circulated at the Meeting and are appended to the Minutes.

A. Question from Councillor Alexander Farquharson

In response to a supplementary question from Cllr Farquharson, Cllr Sharon Taylor stated that the government's austerity measures and the introduction of Universal Credit had driven some vulnerable residents into poverty.

B. Question from Councillor Jody Hanafin

Cllr Lloyd Briscoe advised Cllr Hanafin that no timescales had been set for a new Post Office in Old Town High Street noting the autonomy of Post Office Limited in this matter.

C. Question from Councillor Graham Lawrence

Councillor Lawrence sought clarification on whether the Council had considered installing electric vehicles (EV) charging points in recently completed schemes. Cllr John Gardner confirmed that the Council had held discussions with developers regarding EV charging points and existing and future housing developments. The

Portfolio Holder also stressed that further government funding was vital for these projects if Climate Change targets were to be met.

D. Question from Councillor Margaret Notley

In response to a supplementary question, Cllr Briscoe indicated that there was no indication of a significant increase in rail passenger numbers in the short term. The Leader assured Members that extra disabled parking spaces would be available after the planned construction of a multi-storey car park at the railway station.

11 **UPDATE FROM SCRUTINY CHAIRS**

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee reported that due to other business the review of the Council's scrutiny arrangements was still in progress.

The Chair of the Community Select Committee informed Council that since the last meeting, the Committee had met as a Group to advise the Portfolio Holder on Damp and Condensation Policy and Aids & Adaptations Policy. The Chair invited Members to submit topics for consideration in the work programme for 2020/21.

The Chair of the Environment and Economy Select Committee also invited Members to submit topics for consideration in the work programme for 2020/21. He informed Council that the Committee was at the fact-finding stage of the Neighbourhood Centres review and had commenced with site visits to inform the approach to be taken to the review.

12 **ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY INCLUDING PRUDENTIAL CODE INDICATORS 2020/21**

Members received a report with an update on Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21, including Annual Investment Strategy and the prudential indicators. In response to a question, the Strategic Director (CF) stated that the Council's financial regulations did not have a provision for investment in gold. The Portfolio Holder for Resources informed Members that the next review of the regulations would consider other climate-friendly investments and other investment options.

It was moved by Councillor Mrs J Lloyd, seconded by Councillor M McKay and
RESOLVED:

1. That the Treasury Management Strategy be approved
2. That the prudential indicators for 2020/21 be approved
3. That the minimum revenue provision policy be approved
4. That an increase to the maximum level of long term (invested for longer than 12 months) investments from £10Million to £20Million when cash balances are higher than £30Million be approved

13 **MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2020/21 (INCLUDING IRP REPORT)**

The item was moved by Councillor S Taylor and seconded by Councillor Mrs J Lloyd. Councillor Taylor informed Council that the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) had consulted widely and carried out benchmarking against other local authorities. The Leader stressed the independence of the Panel. It was also pointed out that the Licensing Committee played a crucial statutory role of reviewing and making recommendations to Council on policies in relation to licensing matters and discharging the Council's functions as a Licensing Authority. The frequency of meetings of a Committee did not have any bearing on the Chair's allowance. The Leader of the Council extended her thanks to the Panel.

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the report of the Independent Panel be noted and that findings form the basis of the formal Members' Allowances Scheme and the allowances paid the Mayor and Deputy Mayor
2. That in accordance with the comments of the Panel regarding payment of carers' allowances, the scheme be extended to accept payments to relatives who do not live in the same household as the Councillor. In all circumstances receipts must be submitted
3. That in the light of the report of the Independent Panel the draft formal Scheme shown at Appendix B to this report be approved for 2020/2021
4. That following the recommendation from the Independent Panel allowances be increased in line with future staff pay wards covered by the terms and conditions of the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) once known and as recommended by the Panel. This indexation to apply until 2024 subject to any further Independent Panel reports

14 **PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2020/2021**

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED**:

1. That the Pay Policy Statement set out in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and the Local Government Transparency Code 2015, as attached at Appendix 1 to this report, be approved
2. That the pay policy is placed on the Council's web site and that a notice of the policy is published in the next edition of Chronicle

15 **LICENSING ACT 2003 STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES/POLICY**

The Licensing Act 2003 Statement of Principles/Policy was moved by Councillor J Hollywell and seconded by Councillor L Chester. In moving the item, Councillor Hollywell advised that as the Licensing Authority, the Council had a duty to prepare a Statement of Licensing Policy that it proposes to apply in exercising its functions under the Licensing Act 2003 and to publish such a policy every five years. In

response to a question, the Senior Environment Health and Licensing Manager confirmed that the Licencing Policy addressed concerns raised by the British Beer and Pub Association regarding licence reminders. The Manager also indicated that officers would advise an applicant to seek a permanent licence rather than making a larger number of Temporary Event Notice applications over a given period.

It was **RESOLVED** that Council adopts the proposed Stevenage Borough Council Licensing Act Statement of Policy 2020-2025 as attached at appendix A of the report.

16 **AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES**

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Draft Minutes of the Audit Committee of 3 February 2020 are noted.

CHAIR

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COUNCIL – 26 FEBRUARY 2020**QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO COMMITTEE CHAIRS/PORTFOLIO HOLDERS****(A) Question from Councillor Alexander Farquharson**

"What is the Council doing to ensure that vulnerable residents, who struggle to manage their finances, are not taken advantage of by credit card and loan companies?"

Answer:

We have systems in place to cater for the different types of vulnerabilities our customers are faced with. All Income Services and Customer Services frontline staff are trained to facilitate conversations that help identify customers' needs. We also refer identified vulnerable customers to specialist in-house teams and external agencies such as Money Advice Service and Citizens Advice (CA) for appropriate support. We have two Welfare Benefits and Debt Advisors and due to the increasing number of customers experiencing financial difficulties, we will be recruiting an additional part-time Welfare Benefits and Debt Advisor. The support team works with customers to minimise their overall debt by exploring options such as:

- Negotiating with creditors on customers' behalf to reduce debt repayments*
- Negotiating with organisations such as utility organisations on customers' behalf, and*
- Sourcing goods in kind (such as white goods) from charities*

From April 2020, we will be leading on creating a Stevenage support forum that focuses on financial support for customers.

The Council continues to commission Citizen Advice Stevenage to provide impartial and specialist debt and support to vulnerable residents across the town and actively supports campaigns led by partners around illegal money lending. The Council also works closely with organisations like "Stevenage Credit Union" that provide a not-for-profit savings and loan service for Stevenage residents.

(B) Question from Councillor Jody Hanafin

“Could the Council provide an update on the situation regarding the provision of a new Post Office in the Old Town's High Street and advise whether any progress has been made toward sourcing a temporary facility in the meantime?”

Answer:

The Post Office (PO) is discussing options for a new post office in the old town with a number of businesses at the moment.

The Council is supporting both the PO and the potential business partners throughout this process.

We have explored a temporary mobile PO provision; unfortunately this is not an option.

(C) Question from Councillor Graham Lawrence

“Given the Government’s decision to ban the sale of petrol & diesel cars by 2035, what is this Council doing to ensure that all new developments in Stevenage are future proofed by having a plentiful number of electric car charging points installed?”

Answer:

The Council is currently consulting upon a Parking and Sustainable Transport Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) which would require all significant new development to have embedded electric vehicle (EV) charge infrastructure.

(D) Question from Councillor Margaret Notley

“As there is already very limited disabled parking provision at the car parks adjacent to Stevenage railway station, will extra spaces be made available after the completion of the fifth platform as the need is likely to increase?”

Answer:

The 5th Platform is designed to improve the north bound services and re-connect the Hertfordshire loop line, as opposed to generating a significant increase in usage. The car park adjacent to the 5th platform is privately owned, but the Council is proposing to introduce six (6) extra disabled parking spaces by the down ramp from the station on old London Road.

Meeting: ANNUAL COUNCIL
Date: 20 MAY 2020

CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

Author - Jackie Cansick Ext No.2216
Lead Officer – Matt Partridge Ext No. 2456
Contact Officer - Jackie Cansick Ext No. 2216

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider various matters relating to the Member level decision making structure of the Council and the Council's Constitution for the forthcoming Municipal Year.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Terms of Reference, as detailed in the appendices to this report; and the size and political composition for the following bodies that form the non-Executive Member level decision making structure of the Council be approved subject to the rules of proportionality where appropriate for 98 Committee places where applicable (relevant Committees are identified thus*) -
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee* (Appendix A) – 14 Members (10 Labour Group, 2 Conservative Group, 2 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - Community Select Committee* (Appendix B) – 10 Members (7 Labour Group, 2 Conservative Group, 1 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - Environment and Economy Select Committee* (Appendix C) – 11 Members (7 Labour Group, 3 Conservative Group, 1 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - Planning & Development Committee* (Appendix D) – 13 Members (8 Labour Group, 3 Conservative Group, 2 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - Licensing Committee (Appendix E) – 14 Members (9 Labour Group, 3 Conservative Group, 2 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - General Purposes Committee* (Appendix F) – 14 Members (9 Labour Group, 3 Conservative Group, 2 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - Appointments Committee* (Appendix G) - 8 Members (6 Labour Group, 1 Conservative Group, 1 Liberal Democrat Group)
 - Standards Committee* (Appendix H) – 8 Members (6 Labour Group, 1 Conservative Group, 1 Liberal Democrat Group)

- Audit Committee* (Appendix I) – 8 Members (6 Labour Group, 1 Conservative Group, 1 Liberal Democrat Group) + 1 Co-opted non-elected member
- Statement of Accounts Committee* (Appendix J) – 8 Members (6 Labour Group, 1 Conservative Group, 1 Liberal Democrat Group)
- Joint Consultative Committee* (Appendix K) – 4 Members (3 Labour Group, 1 Conservative Group)

* Indicates where those bodies covered by the rules of proportionality for the purposes of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups), Regulations 1990 – total Committee places being 94

- 2.2 That the composition of the Executive and the Portfolios, details of which to be circulated at the meeting, be noted.
- 2.3 That the various Executive bodies appointed by the Leader, the details of which to be circulated at the meeting, be noted. The relevant Terms of Reference for each body are shown at Appendix L.
- 2.4 That Council approves the dates for Council meetings for the Municipal Year, as shown at paragraph 4.6 and notes that a calendar of Committee meetings to the end of September will be circulated shortly to all Members.
- 2.5 That Council appoints 5 Members to the Housing Management Advisory Board (4 Majority Group, 1 Opposition Member).
- 2.6 That it be noted that the Leader has given delegated authority to all Members regarding the spend of their £2,500 Local Community Budget and for the Youth Mayor's £3,300 Youth Community Budget.
- 2.7 That the temporary amendments to the Constitution to reflect the provisions of the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panels Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ('the Regulations'), as shown at Appendix M, be approved for the period during which those Regulations remain in force.
- 2.8 That the protocol for virtual meetings, attached at Appendix N, be noted.
- 2.9 That the recommended amendments to Standing Orders, as outlined in paragraphs 4.14 be approved.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The appointment and the terms of reference of Scrutiny, Regulatory and Advisory Committees that have no Executive functions are matters to be determined by Council.
- 3.2 Additionally it is for the Council to agree the dates of Council meetings and changes to the Constitution.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTIONS AND OTHER OPTIONS

Council's Committees and Panels -Terms of Reference and Composition

- 4.1 The proposed Terms of Reference for each of the bodies to be appointed by Council are set out in Appendices A-J. With the exception of the Licensing Committee the political composition of those Committees is directed by the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.

The Executive

- 4.2 Details of the membership of the Executive appointed by the Leader and the Executive Portfolios will be circulated at the meeting.

Appointment of Executive Bodies

- 4.3 The Leader of the Council has agreed to the establishment of the following Committees of the Executive –

Appeals, Grievances and Litigation Committee
Housing Development and Regeneration Committee
Stevenage, North Herts., East Herts. and Hertsmere Joint CCTV Committee
Stevenage and East Herts. Joint Executive Revenues and Benefits Shared Service Committee.

- 4.4 The terms of reference for these Committees may be found at Appendix K
- 4.5 As Committees of the Executive the membership of these bodies is limited to only Members of the Executive. Details of the memberships of these Committees will be set out in the schedule to be circulated at the Council meeting.

Dates of Council meetings

- 4.6 To comply with Standing Orders the Council should approve its programme of meetings annually. The approval of dates for Council meetings for the year does not preclude extraordinary or special meetings being called by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Mayor; nor for the date, time or place to be altered in accordance with the Regulations or where a material change of circumstances makes it necessary. The dates proposed for Council are as follows:
- 3 June 2020 (to be confirmed)
 - 15 July 2020
 - 14 October
 - 16 December
 - 28 January 2021 (Special Meeting – HRA and Rent Setting)
 - 24 February 2021
 - 19 May 2021 (Annual Council)
- 4.7 A provisional calendar of formal meetings was drafted before the Coronavirus Emergency was declared. It is likely that this will need to be amended with the

number of meetings limited. Work on a revised calendar is underway and this will be circulated to Members as soon as possible.

- 4.8 The calendar of formal meetings will also appear on the Council's website and will be regularly updated. Furthermore, following Council appointing to each body and dates being scheduled Members will be sent 'outlook' calendar invitations to the meetings that are relevant to them.

Housing Management Advisory Board

- 4.10 The Housing Management Advisory Board includes provision for 5 Councillors to serve (to include 1 Opposition Member), along with tenant, leaseholder, and officer representatives. The Councillor representatives are to be appointed each year at the Annual Council. Details of those Members who have been nominated to serve on the Housing Advisory Management Board will be circulated at the Council meeting.

Local Community Budgets

- 4.11 The Leader has agreed that all Members are to be given delegated authority regarding the spend of their £2,500 Local Community Budget and for the Youth Mayor's £3,300 Youth Community Budget.

Temporary Changes to the Constitution

- 4.12 The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panels Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ('the Regulations') came into force on 4 April 2020. These regulations include provision for remote meetings and the 'publishing' of notices of meetings etc. to be solely on the authority's website.
- 4.13 The provisions of these Regulations relate to meetings held before 7 May 2021 and therefore temporary changes to the Council's Constitution have been drafted to account for these amended arrangements whilst the regulations remain in force. The recommended amendments are set out at Appendix L.
- 4.14 A protocol has also been drawn up for all participants in remote meetings. This is attached as Appendix M. This protocol will be reviewed and amended as necessary.

Standing Orders

- 4.14 Currently at the February Council meeting Standing Orders allows amendments to the recommended General Fund Budget for the future year to be moved without notice. This then requires the Section 151 - Chief Finance Officer to re-calculate the budget and consider the robustness of the proposals at the meeting itself without access to necessary implications and spreadsheets.
- 4.15 In order to ensure that Council is aware of all on-going implications and can make an informed decision on any budget amendments it is recommended that any such amendments be submitted by no later than 12 Noon on the Friday of the week before the date of the Council Tax and Budget Setting Council meeting. These

amendments can then be circulated to Members and Officers alike with any implications then reported to the meeting. If approved this revision will be made to the relevant Standing Order (and cross referenced where appropriate) that relates to the Budget Council meeting.

- 4.16 Standing Order 19c requires a Member to stand when addressing the Mayor. For recent Council meetings this provision has been waived, allowing Councillors to remain seated when speaking. The temporary amendments referred to in paragraphs 4.12 – 4.13 above include this provision to be amended temporarily as Councillors will not be in one venue and may be sitting at their PC or lap top. However, given the positive feedback at the Council meetings in January and February 2020 it is recommended that this requirement be deleted permanently.
- 4.17 At Annual Council in May 2018 it was agreed that updates from Scrutiny Committee Chairs be included as a standing item for Ordinary Council meetings. The order of the agenda items for Ordinary Council meetings is prescribed in Standing Order 6b and a number of Members have requested that consideration be given to bringing this item forward on the agenda and for it to immediately follow the Leader's Updates and before any submitted Motions and Questions from Members. If this proposal is agreed the relevant Standing Orders will be amended accordingly.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- The Council's Constitution <http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/about-the-council/councillors-and-democracy/17074/>
- The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panels Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/392/contents/made>

APPENDICES

- Terms of Reference
 - Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Appendix A)
 - Community Select Committee (Appendix B)
 - Environment and Economy Select Committee (Appendix C)
 - Planning and Development Committee (Appendix D)
 - Licensing Committee (Appendix E)
 - General Purposes Committee (Appendix F)
 - Appointments Committee (Appendix G)
 - Standards Committee (Appendix H)
 - Audit Committee (Appendix I)
 - Statement of Accounts Committee (Appendix J)
- Terms of Reference – Executive Bodies (Appendix K)
- Temporary changes to the Constitution (Appendix L)
- Protocols for formal remote Council and Committee meetings (General) (Appendix M)

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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Membership - 14 (Not to be Members of the Executive but to include the Chairs of the 2 Select Committees)
2. Quorum - 4
3. Terms of Reference
 - 3.1. To consider the activities of the Executive and to have responsibility to reconsider any executive decision that has been subject to call-in, in accordance with the provisions of the Scrutiny provisions as set out in the Council's Constitution.
 - 3.2 Responsibility for the scrutiny of all initial proposals for the development of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework provisions in the Council's Constitution.
 - 3.3 To determine a Scrutiny work programme to examine the spending, policies and administration of the Council's services within the direct purview of the Assistant Director (Corporate Services & Transformation), Assistant Director (Finance & Estates) and Assistant Director (Corporate Projects, Customer Services & Technology) and those of a Corporate and/or Council wide nature and relationships with partners and external agencies involved with these areas, together with a timetable and method of study for each topic.
 - 3.4 To determine formal recommendations in relation to scrutiny studies undertaken for reporting to the Council, Executive, other Committees, Officers and / or partner agencies as appropriate.
 - 3.5 To review the Forward Plan of Key Decisions in relation to services within the direct purview of the Assistant Director (Corporate Services & Transformation), Assistant Director (Finance & Estates) and Assistant Director (Corporate Projects, Customer Services & Technology) and those of a Corporate and/or Council wide nature, considering if it wishes to make any input to policy issues contained in the Plan and if so, how. In undertaking this work the Committee may call upon the relevant Executive Member and/or the Assistant Director to provide a briefing or take part in discussion.
 - 3.6 That in respect of policy development of matters that fall within the remit of this Committee, to meet with the relevant Portfolio Holder to comment on individual draft policies that are scheduled to be considered to the Executive.

- 3.7 To work with other Select Committees, as appropriate when considering cross-cutting scrutiny studies and policy development when both Committees have so agreed.
- 3.8 To consider matters referred to the Committee under the procedure for the Councillor Call for Action in relation to matters within the direct purview of the Assistant Director (Corporate Services & Transformation), Assistant Director (Finance & Estates) and Assistant Director (Corporate Projects, Customer Services & Technology) and those of a Corporate and/or Council wide nature.
- 3.9 In accordance with the Petitions Scheme, consider Petitions, Petition Reviews and interview Senior Council Officers (as requested by a Petition) in relation to matters within the direct purview of the Assistant Director (Corporate Services & Transformation), Assistant Director (Finance & Estates) and Assistant Director (Corporate Projects, Customer Services & Technology) and those of a Corporate and/or Council wide nature.
- 3.10 In conjunction with the Select Committees, responsibility for the on-going development of the Scrutiny function of the Council.
- 3.11 To report to the Executive, other committees or Council, as appropriate.

COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE

1. Membership - 10 (not Members of the Executive)
Observer – Stevenage Youth Mayor
2. Quorum - 4
3. Terms of Reference
 - 3.1 To determine a Scrutiny work programme to examine the spending, policies and administration of the Council's services within the purview of the Assistant Director (Housing and Investment) and the Assistant Director (Communities and Neighbourhood) and relationships with partners and external agencies involved with these services, together with a timetable and method of study for each topic.
 - 3.2 To determine formal recommendations in relation to scrutiny studies undertaken for reporting to the Council, Executive, other Committees, Officers and / or partner agencies as appropriate.
 - 3.3 To review the Forward Plan of Key Decisions in relation to services within the purview of the Assistant Director (Housing and Investment) and the Assistant Director (Communities and Neighbourhood), considering if it wishes to make any input to policy issues contained in the Plan and if so, how. In undertaking this work the Committee may call upon the relevant Executive Member and/or the Assistant Director to provide a briefing or take part in discussion.
 - 3.4 To act as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee, meeting in that capacity a minimum of once each year (by including Crime and Disorder on the agenda at least once each year).
 - 3.5 That in respect of policy development of matters that fall within the remit of this Committee, to meet with the relevant Portfolio Holder to comment on individual draft policies that are scheduled to be considered to the Executive.
 - 3.6 To work with the other Select Committee or the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, as appropriate when considering cross-cutting scrutiny studies and policy development when both Committees have so agreed.
 - 3.7 To consider matters referred to the Committee under the procedure for the Councillor Call for Action in relation to matters within the purview of the Assistant Director (Housing and Investment) and the Assistant Director (Communities and Neighbourhood).

- 3.8 In accordance with the Petitions Scheme, consider Petitions, Petition Reviews and interview Senior Council Officers (as requested by a Petition) in relation to matters within the purview of the Assistant Director (Housing and Investment) and the Assistant Director (Communities and Neighbourhood).
- 3.9 In conjunction with the other Select Committee and Scrutiny Overview Committee, responsibility for the on-going development of the Policy Development and Scrutiny function of the Council.
- 3.10 To report to the Executive, other committees or Council, as appropriate.

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE

1. Membership - 11 (not Members of the Executive)
2. Quorum - 4
3. Terms of Reference
 - 3.1 To determine a Scrutiny work programme to examine the spending, policies and administration of the Council's services within the purview of the Assistant Director (Regeneration), Assistant Director (Stevenage Direct Services), Assistant Director (Housing Development) and Assistant Director (Planning & Regulatory) and relationships with partners and external agencies involved with these services, together with a timetable and method of study for each topic.
 - 3.2 To determine formal recommendations in relation to scrutiny studies undertaken for reporting to the Council, Executive, other Committees, Officers and / or partner agencies as appropriate.
 - 3.3 To review the Forward Plan of Key Decisions in relation to services within the purview of the Strategic Director (Environment), considering if it wishes to make any input to policy issues contained in the Plan and if so, how. In undertaking this work the Committee may call upon the relevant Executive Member and/or the Strategic Director to provide a briefing or take part in discussion.
 - 3.4 To consider any policy issues within the remit of the Select Committee referred by the Executive and raising any other issues it considers appropriate.
 - 3.5 To work with the Community Select Committee or the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, as appropriate when considering cross-cutting scrutiny studies and policy development when both Committees have so agreed.
 - 3.6 To consider matters referred to the Committee under the procedure for the Councillor Call for Action in relation to matters within the purview of the Strategic Director (Environment).
 - 3.7 In accordance with the Petitions Scheme, consider Petitions, Petition Reviews and interview Senior Council Officers (as requested by a Petition) in relation to matters within the purview of the Strategic Director (Environment).

- 3.8 In conjunction with the Community Select Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, responsibility for the on-going development of the Policy Development and Scrutiny function of the Council.
- 3.9 To report to the Executive, other committees or Council, as appropriate.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

1. Membership – 13

2. Quorum - 4

3. Terms of Reference

3.1 To advise the Executive on the following:

- (i) Identification of consumer needs for services related to planning and development services and facilities functions of the Committee, and recommendations on the development of services and facilities to meet them, including:

Land use plans and policy, including local plans
Employment and economic development
Development management services

and advising the Leader / Executive / Council accordingly;

- (ii) Management and maintenance of planning and development related facilities and services in item (i), including employment and training facilities and services;
- (iii) Monitoring and review of performance in relation to the provision and development of planning and development services and facilities, including employment and training facilities and services, whether provided by the Development and Regeneration Division, other Council Service Delivery Units, or outside contractors and advising the Leader/Executive/Council accordingly;
- (iv) The promotion of the economic development of Stevenage, and of specific industrial/commercial land and premises within Stevenage, as to use and development and, where appropriate, about monitoring negotiations for development and redevelopment;
- (v) Development and encouragement of local businesses, employment and training initiatives, with co-ordination and implementation by the Leader / Executive as appropriate.
- (vi) The allocation and monitoring of grant aid and loans to local employment and training initiatives.

3.2 Responsibility for Development Management, including Listed Building Control - determination of planning applications, and enforcement matters under planning regulations.

- 3.3 Responsibility for Building Control - determination of applications under the Building Regulations, and enforcement matters under planning and building legislation.
- 3.4 Responsibility for the determination of Countryside Management and Tree Preservation matters, including the making of Tree Preservation Orders and related matters, and including consultation with appropriate outside bodies.
- 3.5 Matters imposed or permitted by legislation in relation to the functions of the Committee.
- 3.6 Insofar as they are not already referred to in these terms of reference, those relevant powers set out in Schedule 1 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations as amended (see Table 2 of Part 3 of this Constitution); as clarified by regulations, subject to them being dealt with, as appropriate, by officers under delegated powers. This is to include the making of charges for any approval, licence or registration etc., in relation to the powers referred to.
- 3.7 Insofar as they are not already referred to in these terms of reference, those local choice functions set out at Table 3 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution.
- 3.8 Any other appropriate matter referred.

LICENSING COMMITTEE

1. Membership – 14
2. Quorum - 4
3. Terms of Reference
 - 3.1 To consider and determine applications under the Licensing Act 2003 where representations have been made, in respect of the following cases.
 - (i) Personal Licences;
 - (ii) Premises Licences/ Club Premises Certificates;
 - (iii) Provisional Statements;
 - (iv) Variation of Premises Licences/ Club Premises Certificates;
 - (v) minor variations of Premises Licences/Club Premises Certificates;
 - (vi) Variation of Designated Premises Supervisors;
 - (vii) Transfer Premises Licences;
 - (viii) Interim authorities;
 - (ix) Review premises licences/club premises certificates;
 - (x) Issue of Counter Notice following Police or Environmental Health objection to a temporary event notices.
 - 3.2 To consider and determine applications and variations under the Gambling Act 2005 (where representations have been made and not withdrawn) in respect of the following cases:
 - (i) Premises Licences;
 - (ii) Variation to a Licence;
 - (iii) Transfer of a Licence;
 - (iv) Provisional Statements;
 - (v) Review of a Premises Licence;

- (vi) Club Gaming / Club Machine Permit;
- (vii) Cancellation of a Club Gaming / Club Machine Permit.

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

1. Membership - 14
2. Quorum – 4
3. Terms of Reference
- 3.1 To consider matters in accordance with the Council's policies in respect of the following:
 - the grant, approval, review, refusal, revocation, renewal, transfer or variation of any licence, registration, certificate, consent, permit, approval or permission, except where such function falls within the terms of reference of another committee or where the matter has been delegated to officers of the Council.
 - consideration and determination of such applications for licences, registration, certificates and consents that the Head of Leisure, Community and Children's Services feels necessary, owing to the nature of the application concerned.
- 3.2 The designation of public places where the consumption of alcohol is to be prohibited.
- 3.3 To consider and determine certain matters where a right of appeal exists against the decision of a Members body or an officer, including:
 - Further reviews under the relevant Regulations by applicants for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefits.
 - Appeals in relation to housing needs assessment.

These terms of reference shall exclude the hearing and determination of:-

 - appeals by officers against dismissal or disciplinary action;
 - grievances from Officers under the final state of the grievance procedure;

which shall be dealt with either in accordance with the terms of reference for the Appeals/Grievance Panel or in accordance with the delegations to Officers.
- 3.4 Insofar as they are not already referred to in these terms of reference, those relevant powers set out in Schedule 1 of the Local Authorities (Functions & Responsibilities) (England) Regulations as amended (See Table 2 of Part 3 of the Constitution) (subject to them being dealt with as appropriate by Officers under delegated powers).
- 3.5 Insofar as they are not already referred to in these terms of reference, those 'local choice' functions set out at Table 3 of Part 3 of the Constitution.

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APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

1. Membership - 8
2. Quorum - 3
3. Terms of Reference

The appointment and dismissal of the Chief Executive and Strategic Directors, subject to the requirements of the Local Government Act 2000, Local Authorities (Standing Orders)(England) Regulations 2001, and the Officer Employment Rules contained in the Constitution.

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STANDARDS COMMITTEE

1. Membership - 8 Members to include only one Member of the Executive

2. Quorum- 3

3. Terms of Reference

- 3.1 The promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the Council.
- 3.2 To consider and dispose of allegations that a member is in breach of the Council's Code of Conduct in accordance with the Arrangements adopted by the Council under Section 28 Localism Act 2011.
- 3.3 To depart from the Arrangements in the circumstances described in paragraph 12 of the Arrangements.
- 3.4 To consider and, if necessary, recommend changes to the Code of Conduct, the arrangements under which allegations can be investigated and decisions on allegations can be made or any other aspects of the Standards Regime to the Council.
- 3.5 To grant dispensations under Section 33 Localism Act 2011.

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AUDIT COMMITTEE

1. Membership – 8 (+ 1 Co-opted Independent non-elected member) to include -

- Chair - A Member who is neither a Member of the Executive nor who serves as a Scrutiny Member
- 1 Member of the Executive only

2. Quorum - 3

3. Terms of Reference

3.1 To advise or comment as appropriate on –

a) Internal Audit matters, including:-

- The Annual Internal Audit Plan
- The adequacy of management responses to Internal Audit reports and recommendations
- The Audit Partnership Manager's Annual Report and Opinion
- To consider summaries of specific internal audit reports, as requested

b) External Audit matters, including-

- External Auditors plans for auditing and inspecting the authority
- The Annual Audit & Inspection Letter from the External Auditor
- The report to those charged with governance
- Proposals from the National Audit Office over the appointment of the External Auditor
- The scope & depth of External Audit work

c) Arrangements made for the co-operation between Internal Audit, external audit and other bodies.

d) Anti Fraud & Corruption issues including the Council's policies on Anti-Fraud and Corruption, "whistle-blowing".

e) The Council's Annual Governance Statement.

f) The Council's Constitution in respect of Contract Standing Orders, Financial Regulations.

g) The Council's Risk Management arrangements.

h) The Council's arrangements for delivering value for money.

i) The Statement of Accounts and related Capital Determinations.

j) The Council's Treasury Management Strategy.

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STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

1. Membership - 8
2. Quorum - 3
3. Terms of Reference

To approve the Statement of Accounts and related Capital Determinations in accordance with the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011.

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JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (JCC) (EMPLOYER SIDE)

Membership - 4

Quorum – 2

Terms of Reference - To meet jointly with the Staff Side, Joint Consultative Committee to consult with employees, via their representatives, on developments affecting them; and on matters not resolved by the Strategic Management Board.

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EXECUTIVE BODIES – TERMS OF REFERENCE

Appeals, Grievances and Litigation Committee

Membership: Chairman - Portfolio Holder for Resources and three members of the Executive

Quorum - three

Terms of Reference –

Except where matters fall to be considered by any other body -

1. To hear and determine appeals against dismissal or disciplinary action in the case of Officers employed on Chief Officer Terms and Conditions.
2. To hear and determine grievances under the final stage of the grievance procedure in the case of Officers employed on Chief Officer Terms and Conditions; or, in the case of other officers, where no Strategic Management Board is able to hear the grievance.
3. To receive reports and opinions on litigious and potentially litigious matters whether or not the matter under consideration has been referred to the courts or any tribunal.
4. To authorise the Borough Solicitor to commence legal proceedings or defend or settle, if so required in any case on terms, any litigation matter or potentially litigious matter.

Housing Development and Regeneration Committee

Membership: Chair - Leader of the Council
Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Older People
Portfolio Holder for Resources
Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration
Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods & Co-operative Council

Quorum – Three

The purpose of the committee is to oversee and support the delivery of the Housing Development and Regeneration programmes.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

1. To consider and approve documents relating to Development Strategy, Design Standards and a Pipeline of schemes that will form the strategic core of the Council's Housebuilding Programmes.

2. To consider and approve the financial resources of the programme in light of the individual schemes being delivered and their outputs in relation to:

- a. Scheme Design & Unit mix
- b. Scheme Quality
- c. Scheme Mile stones
- d. Consultation programme &
- e. Scheme Costs & financial appraisals

3. To authorise an envelope of funding for officers to bid for and complete on new sites and development opportunities that will enhance the Council's pipeline for new housing or form part of the land assembly required to deliver approved schemes.

4. To consider outline designs, individual scheme concepts and scheme appraisals on which to approve the submission of detailed planning applications, and/or if more appropriate outline planning applications, by the Council's appointed contractors, consultants or officers .

5. To invite Ward Members to attend meetings of the Committee, or other consultation events noted in the consultation programme when potential development sites in their ward are under consideration, and to provide an opportunity for Ward Members to provide comments on proposed developments.

6. To authorise officers to commence procurement of delivery partners/contractors for sites that have achieved planning permissions and are considered to be contributing towards a viable development programme.

7. To delegate authority for the appointment of contractors to deliver approved schemes to the Strategic Director for small to medium sized projects up to a construction value of £4m. The subcommittee will approve all other contract awards over £4m.

8. To approve, and include within financial appraisals, the use of the following sources of funding for the development of individual sites within the Council's Housebuilding Programme:

- (a) The agreed Housing Capital Programme Budget for the Housebuilding Programme;
- (b) Capital receipts made available through the Council's Agreement with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government allowing the use of Receipts from additional Right to Buy (RTB) sales as a result of the Government's increase in the maximum RTB discount to be spent on House Building;
- (c) Financial contributions received from developers or other sources for the provision of Affordable housing within the borough, in lieu of on-site affordable housing provision, in compliance with Section 106 Planning Agreements; and other eligible grant from new sources

- (d) Grant funding received from Homes England (HE)
 - (e) Development support income generated through private sale homes, land disposals and shared ownership homes on schemes and land identified in the programme.
9. To monitor and report to the Executive on an annual basis the progress with the Council's Housebuilding Programme; and expenditure on the Housing Capital Programme Budget for the Council's Housebuilding Programme, ensuring the use (within the required Deadlines) of the capital receipts made available through the Council's Agreement with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government allowing the use of receipts from additional Right to Buy (RTB) sales as a result of the Government's increase in the maximum RTB Discount to be spent on house building.
10. To approve applications to HE (or any successor body) to obtain Investment Partner Status (or similar), in order to enable the Council to seek funding from HE, and to approve funding bids to HE for development within the Council House Building Programme.
11. To consider and approve the future use of any potential development site previously identified by either the Committee or Executive as having possible development potential for Council House Building where it either does not gain planning consent, is deemed inappropriate to develop by the Committee for whatever reason or where the development appraisal identifies that the site is economically undevelopable.
12. To decide, where necessary, the names of developments undertaken through the Council House Building Programme, following consultation with Ward Members.
13. To decide the name of the Council's wholly owned Housing Development Company [WOC].
14. To receive an annual summary and accounts of the WOC's performance against key performance measures
15. To consider the annual revised versions of the first Business Plan produced by the WOC, and any subsequent Business Plans for additional housing schemes, and to make recommendations to Executive in relation to them.
16. To consider any requests from the WOC to acquire any property or otherwise trade outside the Council's administrative area and to make recommendations to Executive in relation to them.

REGENERATION

17. To consider and approve projects relating to Stevenage Central Framework, and any further opportunities or schemes that will support the strategic vision for the regeneration of Stevenage Town Centre.
18. To engage and shape the communication and marketing strategy for the regeneration of the town. To consider consultation and engagement arrangements for different regeneration schemes.
19. To authorise officers to commence procurement of delivery partners/ contractors for schemes that are considered to be contributing to the vision for the town centre in accordance with the Council's Constitution.
20. To monitor and report to the Executive on an annual basis the progress within the Council's overall regeneration programme; including project progress, future planning and commissioning of projects, funding options and future bidding rounds.
21. To review progress of schemes being progressed via Development Partnerships or joint ventures with commercial partners. To consider individual scheme concepts or schemes to be brought forward through these commercial arrangements.
22. To receive an annual report regarding the Queensway regeneration scheme from the Queensway LLP ("the LLP"), consider and approve the LLP's Business Plan and hold the Council's officer representatives on the LLP to account for delivery of the Business Plan. To authorise an operational expenditure cap of up to £100k per annum for LLP spend which is supplementary to the agreed Business Plan. To receive a regular progress report from the Council's officer representatives on the LLP and delegate the signing off of LLP accounts, appointment of auditors and change of representatives to the Chief Executive having consulted with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration.
23. To highlight and support bidding opportunities which will aid delivery of the Stevenage Central Framework vision for the town centre.
24. To consider, guide and authorise additional strategies and concepts which will support the regeneration of Stevenage Town Centre.

Stevenage, North Herts., East Herts. and Hertsmere Joint CCTV Committee

SBC Membership: Lead Member - Portfolio Holder for Community, Community Safety and Equalities (serving as Chair when appropriate) and two Members of the Executive

Quorum - four Members (one from each constituent Authority)

Terms of Reference -

1. To agree the strategy and policy relating to the jointly operated CCTV Control and Monitoring service.
2. To receive the CCTV Annual Report, Independent Inspector's Report and other relevant reports.
3. To deal with all matters defined under the code of practice as the responsibility of the Executive Board.
4. To consider expansion and contraction proposals for the control room monitoring service.
5. To consider and agree minor changes to the Code of Practice.
6. To consider and recommend significant changes in the Code of Practice.
7. To ensure that the Independent Inspection regime is set up and maintained.
8. To consider complaints regarding breaches of the Code of Practice and recommendations for disciplinary action and actions, or changes to prevent reoccurrence.
9. To deal with any matters as identified under the Joint Agreement as requiring the actions of the Executive Board; in particular:
 - To require reports from the Authorising Officer on management and operational matters
 - To consider matters referred to the Authorising Officer under the Joint Agreement disputes procedure
 - To consider proposals to incur additional control and monitoring room cost as a result of expansion within the allocated camera expansion capacity of one party.
10. To make recommendations on any of the above to the Officer Management Board.

Stevenage and East Herts. Joint Executive Revenues and Benefits Shared Service Committee

SBC Membership: Lead Member – Portfolio Holder for Resources (serving as Chairman when appropriate) and the Portfolio Holders for Housing, Health and Older people and one other.

Quorum - three Members (at least one from each constituent Authority)

Terms of Reference -

1. To approve the annual Service Plan for the Share Revenues and Benefits Service.
2. To receive explanations of variances in service performance against the agreed Service Plan.
3. To approve the budget of the Shared Service and where so delegated determine requested virements within that budget.
4. To give initial consideration to future development of the Shared Service and any changes in legislation that may affect service delivery and make recommendations thereon to the Executive or Officers.
5. Where it is considered appropriate, report to the Executives of the Constituent Councils.

**REVISED SBC STANDING ORDER (PART 4 OF SBC CONSTITUTION)
[PURSUANT TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POLICE AND CRIME PANELS (CORONAVIRUS) (FLEXIBILITY OF
LOCAL AUTHORITY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETINGS) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2020 NO. 392]**

Amendments and additions (in bold italics) to specific Standing Orders are set out below. All other elements of Standing Orders remain unchanged.

EXISTING STANDING ORDER	TEMPORARY REVISED STANDING ORDER
PART 1 – COUNCIL MEETINGS	
2. Meetings	2. Meetings
The Annual Meeting of the Council and all ordinary meetings of the Council shall be held at the Council Offices.	The Annual Meeting of the Council and all ordinary meetings of the Council shall be held <i>by remote means, using an agreed electronic platform, such as Zoom.</i>
The Chief Executive will give notice to Members and the public of the time and place of any meeting in accordance with the Access to Information Rules. At least five clear days before a meeting, the Chief Executive will send a summons signed by him or her by post to every Member of the Council or leave it at their usual place of residence.	The Chief Executive will give notice to Members and the public of the time and place of any meeting in accordance with the Access to Information Rules. At least five clear days before a meeting, the Chief Executive will <i>publish a summons on the Council's website.</i>
The summons will give the date, time and place of each meeting and specify the business to be transacted, and will be accompanied by such reports as are available.	The summons will give the date, time and <i>remote method for holding and accessing</i> each meeting and specify the business to be transacted <i>and all reports will be sent electronically to Members and will be available on the Council's website (hard copies will also be sent to Members).</i>
	<i>2A. Remote Access to Meetings</i>
	<i>(a) For all purposes of the Constitution the term “meeting” is not limited in meaning to a meeting of persons all of whom, or any of whom, are present in the same place, for</i>

which purposes any reference to:

(i) “place” is to be interpreted as where a meeting is held, or to be held, and includes reference to more than one place including electronic, digital or virtual locations such as internet locations, web addresses or conference call telephone numbers: and

(ii) “open to the public” includes access to the meeting being through remote means which may include video conferencing, live webcast, and live streaming and where a meeting is accessible to the public through such remote means the meeting is open to the public whether or not members of the public are able to attend the meeting in person; and

(b) If the Mayor is made aware that a meeting that is required to be open to the public is not accessible to the public through remote means, due to any technological or other failure of provision, then the Mayor shall adjourn the meeting immediately. If the provision of access through remote means cannot be restored within a reasonable period, then the remaining business will be considered at a time and date fixed by the Mayor. If he or she does not fix a date, the remaining business will be considered at the next ordinary meeting.

5. Quorum

Text to remain unchanged, but with the following addition:

5A. Members in Remote Attendance

(a) A Member in remote attendance is present and attends the meeting, including for the purposes of the meeting’s quorum, if at any time all three of the following conditions

are satisfied, those conditions being that the Member in remote attendance is able at that time:

(i) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, the other Members in attendance.

(ii) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, any members of the public entitled to attend the meeting in order to exercise a right to speak at the meeting; and

(iii) to be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by any other members of the public attending the meeting.

(b) A Member in remote attendance will be deemed to have left the meeting where, at any point in time during the meeting, any of the conditions for remote attendance contained in (a) above are not met. In such circumstance the Mayor may, as they deem appropriate;

(i) adjourn the meeting for a short period to permit the conditions for remote attendance of a Member contained in (a) above to be re-established; or

(ii) count the number of Members continuing to be in attendance.

And providing this includes at least the minimum number required for a quorum continue to transact the remaining business of the meeting in the absence of the Member who has left the meeting.

New Standing Order 8A – Remote Attendance by

8A Remote Attendance by Members of the Public

Members of the Public

(a) A member of the public entitled to attend the meeting in order to exercise a right to speak at the meeting is in remote attendance at any time if all three of the following conditions are satisfied, those conditions being that the member of the public in remote attendance is able at that time:

(i) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, Members in attendance;

(ii) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, any other members of the public entitled to attend the meeting in order to exercise a right to speak at the meeting; and

(iii) to be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by any other members of the public attending the meeting.

(b) A member of the public in remote attendance will be deemed to have left the meeting where, at any point in time during the meeting, any of the conditions for remote attendance contained in Standing Order 8A(a) above are not met. In such circumstance the Mayor may, as he or she deems appropriate:

(i) adjourn the meeting for a short period to permit the conditions for remote attendance contained in Standing Order 8A(a) above to be re-established;

(ii) suspend consideration of the item of business in relation to the member of public's attendance until such time as a following item of business on the agenda has been transacted and the conditions for the member of the public's remote attendance have been re-established or,

	<p><i>on confirmation that this cannot be done, before the end of the meeting, whichever is the earliest; or</i></p> <p><i>(iii) continue to transact the remaining business of the meeting in the absence of the member of the public in remote attendance and adjourn the matter on which the member of the public was entitled to speak to a later date.</i></p>
<p>9. Main Debate 10. Council Tax Setting Debate 11. Petitions and Deputations 12. Questions from the Youth Council 13. Questions from the Public</p>	<p>Text to remain unchanged, but with the following additional Standing Order in relation to the method of remote speaking by members of the public:</p> <p>9A Remote public speaking</p> <p><i>[This additional Standing Order applies to Standing Orders 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13.]</i></p> <p><i>Members of the public wishing to speak at the remote meeting will be required to give notice to the Proper Officer that they wish to do so by no later than 12 Noon on the Friday prior to the date of the Council meeting. They will be provided with the appropriate access codes to enable them to join the meeting.</i></p>
<p>19. Rules of Debate</p> <p>c. Procedure</p> <p>A Member must stand when addressing the Mayor. If more than one Member stands, the Mayor will ask one to speak and the other(s) must sit. Other Members must remain seated whilst a Member is speaking unless they want to make a point of order or a personal explanation. Members</p>	<p>19. Rules of Debate</p> <p>c. Procedure</p> <p><i>Temporarily suspended, other than</i> Members must refer to one another in meetings by their correct title of 'Councillor'.</p>

must refer to one another in meetings by their correct title of 'Councillor'.	
<p>20. Conduct</p> <p>a. When the Mayor stands during a debate any Member speaking at the time must stop talking and sit, and the Council must be silent.</p>	<p>20. Conduct</p> <p><i>Temporarily suspended.</i></p> <p><i>Additional Standing Order</i></p> <p><i>20A Members excluded from the meeting</i></p> <p><i>Where a Member is required to leave the meeting, the means of that Member's remote attendance and access will be suspended whilst any discussion or vote takes place in respect of the item or items of business in which the member or co-opted member may not participate.</i></p>
<p>22. Voting</p> <p>a. With the exception of voting on the Council Tax and budget setting voting shall be by a show of hands, unless at least ten Members present request a fully recorded vote. On receipt of such a request made before the item of business has been concluded, the individual votes of all Members seated in a seat reserved for Members shall be recorded in the following manner. The Chief Executive will call the name of each Member in turn and it will be recorded if he/she say 'Yes', 'No' or 'Abstain'. These details shall be recorded in the minutes.</p>	<p>22. Voting</p> <p>b. With the exception of voting on the Council Tax and budget setting voting shall be by remote means (see additional Standing Order 22A below), unless at least ten Members present request a fully recorded vote. On receipt of such a request made before the item of business has been concluded, the individual votes of all Members seated in a seat reserved for Members in attendance shall be recorded in the following manner. The Chief Executive will call the name of each Member in turn and it will be recorded if he/she says 'Yes', 'No' or 'Abstain'. These details shall be recorded in the minutes.</p>

<p>b. When voting on Council Tax and Budget setting Motions and Amendments all votes shall be recorded as described in a. above.</p> <p>c. Immediately after a vote is taken a Member may request that the Minutes shall record whether he/she voted for or against the motion or whether he/she abstained from voting.</p> <p>d. Decisions are to be made by simple majority voting.</p> <p>e. In the case of an equality of votes, the Mayor shall have a casting vote whether or not he or she has voted previously on the matter.</p> <p>f. Voting on appointments – where three or more persons are nominated for one position to be filled by the Council and of the votes given there is not an overall majority in favour of one person, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote shall be taken on those remaining and so on until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. When voting, the names of each individual will be put to the Council in alphabetical order of the Members' family names.</p>	<p>b. When voting on Council Tax and Budget setting Motions and Amendments all votes shall be recorded as described in a. above.</p> <p>c. Immediately after a vote is taken a Member may request that the Minutes shall record whether he/she voted for or against the motion or whether he/she abstained from voting.</p> <p>d. Decisions are to be made by simple majority voting.</p> <p>e. In the case of an equality of votes, the Mayor shall have a casting vote whether or not he or she has voted previously on the matter.</p> <p>f. iVoting on appointments – where three or more persons are nominated for one position to be filled by the Council and of the votes given there is not an overall majority in favour of one person, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote shall be taken on those remaining and so on until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. When voting, the names of each individual will be put to the Council in alphabetical order of the Members' family names.</p> <p>22A Remote Voting</p> <p><i>Unless a recorded vote is requested [which may be confirmed by the requisite number of Members confirming the demand verbally when requested by the Mayor], the Chief Executive will take the vote by roll-call and only the</i></p>
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outcome of the vote will be recorded.

31. Disturbance by Members of the Public

If a Member of the public interrupts the proceedings at any meeting, the Mayor will warn her/him. If he/she continues to interrupt, the Mayor will order her/his removal from the Council Chamber. If there is general disturbance in any part of the Council Chamber open to the public, the Mayor will order that part to be cleared or adjourn the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 32 below.

31. Disturbance by Members of the Public

If a Member of the public interrupts the proceedings at any meeting, the Mayor will warn her/him. If he/she continues to interrupt, the Mayor will order ***his/her remote access to the meeting to be severed.***

35. Record of Attendance

Members attending a meeting must sign their names on the attendance sheet provided.

Their attendance will be recorded from these lists.

35. Record of Attendance

The Chief Executive will conduct a roll-call of Members at the commencement of a meeting to ascertain who is present.

Their attendance will be recorded from this roll-call.

PART 3 – COMMITTEES - GENERAL

36a. Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Interests

Members are required to declare Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Interests, in accordance with the Code of Conduct as set out in Part 5 of this Constitution, at the beginning of each meeting or at the point at which they become aware that a subject matter in which they have such an interest is being considered.

36a. Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Interests

Members are required to declare Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Interests, in accordance with the Code of Conduct as set out in Part 5 of this Constitution, at the beginning of each meeting or at the point at which they become aware that a subject matter in which they have such an interest is being considered.

<p>Where a Member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest he/she is prohibited from voting or participating in discussions at the meeting.</p> <p>For the purposes of clarification, 'meeting' in this context means any meeting of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The Council or any of its Committees, Sub-Committees, panels or Joint Committees etc. (ii) The Executive or its Committees, Sub-Committees, panels or Joint Committees. 	<p>Where a Member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest he/she is prohibited from voting or participating in discussions at the meeting.</p> <p>For the purposes of clarification, 'meeting' in this context means any meeting of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The Council or any of its Committees, Sub-Committees, panels or Joint Committees etc. (ii) The Executive or its Committees, Sub-Committees, panels or Joint Committees.
<p>41. Other provisions</p> <p>The following Standing Orders from Part 1 (Council Meetings) and Part 2 (General) shall apply to these bodies, allowing that 'Mayor' shall be substituted by 'Chair' or person presiding, as appropriate.</p> <p>19 Rules of Debate except the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c (i) Speaker to Stand 	<p>41. Other provisions</p> <p>The following Standing Orders from Part 1 (Council Meetings) and Part 2 (General) shall apply to these bodies, allowing that 'Mayor' shall be substituted by 'Chair' or person presiding, as appropriate</p> <p><i>2A Remote Access to Meetings</i></p> <p><i>5A Members in Remote Attendance</i></p> <p><i>8A Remote Attendance by Members of the Public</i></p> <p>19 Rules of Debate except the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c (i) Speaker to Stand

c (iii) Length of Speech c (iv) Speaking only once 20 Conduct 23 Inspection of Minutes 24 Agenda and Reports 25 Attendance of Press and Public 26 Disclosure 30 Suspension of Standing Orders 31 Disturbance by Members of the Public 32 Adjournment of Meeting 33 Adjournment of Debate 34 Interpretation of Standing Orders 35 Record of Attendances 35 Interests to be declared at Meetings 37 Urgency Procedure Arrangements	c (iii) Length of Speech c (iv) Speaking only once 20 Conduct & 20A Members excluded from the meeting 23 Inspection of Minutes 24 Agenda and Reports 25 Attendance of Press and Public 26 Disclosure 30 Suspension of Standing Orders 31 Disturbance by Members of the Public 32 Adjournment of Meeting 33 Adjournment of Debate 34 Interpretation of Standing Orders 35 Record of Attendances 35 Interests to be declared at Meetings 37 Urgency Procedure Arrangements
45. Voting Voting at Committee meetings shall be by show of hands.	45. Voting Voting at Committee meetings shall be <i>by roll-call and the number of votes for or against the motion or amendment</i>

<p>*Immediately after a vote is taken a Member may request that the Minutes shall record whether he/she voted for or against the motion or whether he/she abstained from voting.</p> <p>*Decisions are to be made by simple majority voting. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chair shall have a casting vote whether or not he/she has voted previously on the matter.</p> <p>Voting on Appointments – where three or more persons are nominated for one position to be filled by the Council, and of the votes given there is not an overall majority in favour of one person, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote shall be taken on those remaining and so on until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. For each vote taken the names of the nominees should be called in alphabetical order.</p>	<p><i>or abstaining from voting will be recorded</i></p> <p>*Immediately after a vote is taken a Member may request that the Minutes shall record whether he/she voted for or against the motion or whether he/she abstained from voting.</p> <p>*Decisions are to be made by simple majority voting. In the case of an equality of votes, the Chair shall have a casting vote whether or not he/she has voted previously on the matter.</p> <p>Voting on Appointments – where three or more persons are nominated for one position to be filled by the Council, and of the votes given there is not an overall majority in favour of one person, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote shall be taken on those remaining and so on until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person. For each vote taken the names of the nominees should be called in alphabetical order.</p>
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**REVISED EXECUTIVE PROCEDURE RULES (PART 4D OF SBC CONSTITUTION)
[PURSUANT TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POLICE AND CRIME PANELS (CORONAVIRUS) (FLEXIBILITY OF
LOCAL AUTHORITY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETINGS) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2020 NO. 392]**

Amendments and additions (in bold italics) to specific Executive Procedure Rules are set out below. All other elements of the Executive Procedure Rules remain unchanged.

EXISTING EXECUTIVE PROCEDURE RULES	TEMPORARY EXECUTIVE PROCEDURE RULES
<p>4. Executive meetings</p> <p>a. The Executive will meet in accordance with the timetable agreed annually or otherwise as required by the Leader or the majority of the members of the Executive or other person entitled to call a meeting. The Executive shall meet at the Council's main offices or another location to be agreed by the Leader and be convened in accordance with the Access to Information Rules.</p> <p>b. Executive meetings will be held in public, subject to consideration of exempt or confidential information. These meetings will be governed by the Access to Information Rules.</p>	<p>4. Executive meetings</p> <p>a. The Executive will meet in accordance with the timetable agreed annually or otherwise as required by the Leader or the majority of the members of the Executive or other person entitled to call a meeting. The Executive shall meet <i>by remote means, using an agreed electronic platform, such as Zoom</i> and be convened in accordance with the Access to Information Rules.</p> <p>b. Executive meetings will be held in public <i>(by remote means as per Rule 4(a) above)</i>, subject to consideration of exempt or confidential information. These meetings will be governed by the Access to Information Rules.</p>

**REVISED EXECUTIVE PROCEDURE RULES (PART 4D OF SBC CONSTITUTION)
[PURSUANT TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POLICE AND CRIME PANELS (CORONAVIRUS) (FLEXIBILITY OF
LOCAL AUTHORITY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETINGS) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2020 NO. 392]**

Amendments and additions (in bold italics) to specific Executive Procedure Rules are set out below. All other elements of the Executive Procedure Rules remain unchanged.

EXISTING EXECUTIVE PROCEDURE RULES	TEMPORARY EXECUTIVE PROCEDURE RULES
<p>4. Executive meetings</p> <p>c. The Executive will meet in accordance with the timetable agreed annually or otherwise as required by the Leader or the majority of the members of the Executive or other person entitled to call a meeting. The Executive shall meet at the Council's main offices or another location to be agreed by the Leader and be convened in accordance with the Access to Information Rules.</p> <p>d. Executive meetings will be held in public, subject to consideration of exempt or confidential information. These meetings will be governed by the Access to Information Rules.</p>	<p>4. Executive meetings</p> <p>c. The Executive will meet in accordance with the timetable agreed annually or otherwise as required by the Leader or the majority of the members of the Executive or other person entitled to call a meeting. The Executive shall meet <i>by remote means, using an agreed electronic platform, such as Zoom</i> and be convened in accordance with the Access to Information Rules.</p> <p>d. Executive meetings will be held in public <i>(by remote means as per Rule 4(a) above)</i>, subject to consideration of exempt or confidential information. These meetings will be governed by the Access to Information Rules.</p>

**REVISED OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES (PART 4E OF SBC CONSTITUTION)
[PURSUANT TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POLICE AND CRIME PANELS (CORONAVIRUS) (FLEXIBILITY OF
LOCAL AUTHORITY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETINGS) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2020 NO. 392]**

Amendments and additions (in bold italics) to specific Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules are set out below. All other elements of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules remain unchanged.

EXISTING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES	TEMPORARY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES
<p>5. Quorum</p> <p>The quorum for Overview and Scrutiny Committee is four elected Members. The quorum for each of the Select Committees is three elected Members.</p>	<p>Text to remain unchanged, but with the following addition:</p> <p><i>5A. Members in Remote Attendance</i></p> <p><i>(a) A Member in remote attendance is present and attends the meeting, including for the purposes of the meeting's quorum, if at any time all three of the following conditions are satisfied, those conditions being that the Member in remote attendance is able at that time:</i></p> <p><i>(i) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, the other Members in attendance.</i></p> <p><i>(ii) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, any members of the public entitled to attend the meeting in order to exercise a right to speak at the meeting; and</i></p> <p><i>(iii) to be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by any other members of the public attending the meeting.</i></p> <p><i>(b) A Member in remote attendance will be deemed to have left the meeting where, at any point in time during the meeting, any of the conditions for remote attendance contained in (a) above are not met. In such circumstance the Mayor may, as they deem appropriate;</i></p>

	<p><i>(i) adjourn the meeting for a short period to permit the conditions for remote attendance of a Member contained in (a) above to be re-established; or</i></p> <p><i>(ii) count the number of Members remaining in attendance and provided this constitutes a quorum</i></p> <p><i>continue to transact the remaining business of the meeting in the absence of the Member who has left the meeting.</i></p>
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**REVISED MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT (PART 5A OF SBC CONSTITUTION)
[PURSUANT TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POLICE AND CRIME PANELS (CORONAVIRUS) (FLEXIBILITY OF
LOCAL AUTHORITY POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETINGS) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2020 NO. 392]**

Amendments and additions (in bold italics) to specific Member Code of Conduct paragraphs are set out below. All other elements of the Member Code of Conduct remain unchanged.

EXISTING MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT	TEMPORARY MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT
<p>General obligations</p> <p>4.</p>	<p>Text to remain unchanged, but with the following addition:</p> <p>4.</p> <p><i>(c) There are times when council meetings are not open to the public, when confidential, or “exempt” issues (as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972) are under consideration. Each Member in remote attendance must ensure and verbally declare that there are no other persons present with them who are not entitled to be (either hearing or seeing) during the consideration of such items, and that no person is recording the proceedings.</i></p> <p><i>(d) Any Member in remote attendance who failed to disclose that there were in fact persons present who were not so entitled will be in breach of the Members’ Code of Conduct responsibilities.</i></p>

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PROTOCOLS FOR FORMAL REMOTE COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS (GENERAL)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ('the Regulations') came into force on 4 April 2020 and apply to local authority and police and crime panel meetings that are required to be held, or held before 7 May 2021.
- 1.2 Whilst necessary formal amendments to the Councils Standing Orders and other sections of the Council's Constitution will be submitted for adoption at the Annual Council meeting on 20 May 2020 that meeting will be summoned and conducted in accordance with the new Regulations.
- 1.3 To complement the formal changes to the Constitution the following protocols have been drafted to ensure that debate and decision making at meetings is as accessible and transparent as possible to all parties taking part or wishing to view/hear proceedings.
- 1.4 Testing will take place on the remote accessing systems to be used before the first formal meeting to be held under these Regulations.
- 1.5 It must be accepted that these protocols may add additional time to meetings, changes in the way reports are presented and that participants will need to be patient and disciplined and respect the direction from the Mayor/Chair.

2. In advance of a meeting

- 2.1 Agendas for meetings will be circulated in accordance with the relevant timescales via the Council's committee management system (Moder.Gov), with Members of the Committee also receiving hard copies. The agenda will include details of how the public may 'access' the meeting over the internet.
- 2.2 Councillors will be given instructions dependent upon how they are intending to access meetings from the options listed below:
 - Laptop with video camera
 - Laptop without video camera
 - Desktop PC with camera
 - Desktop PC without camera
 - Tablet (i.e. IPAD)
 - I Phone / Smart phone
 - Phone (i.e. landline or mobile)

- 2.3 Members should read the agenda before the meeting and if they have any technical questions on a report or require clarification on any matters contact the relevant officer beforehand to discuss.
- 2.4 If a Member knows in advance that they want to ask a question or raise a particular point in the meeting they should notify the Mayor/Chair and relevant Constitutional Services Officer prior to the meeting.
- 2.5 Members are asked to access the meeting no later than 15 prior to its start, however access to the meeting will be open 30 minutes before the scheduled start time so that if anyone has a problem accessing the meeting they have time to contact our IT support team on **telephone number will be quoted**. If, once the meeting has started, you lose connection and have issues reconnecting an alternative emergency number will be provided.
- 2.6 Members will be sent the Zoom access codes before each meeting
- 2.7 Be aware that Members accessing a meeting with use of a camera or video link they and their surroundings can be seen at all times. Members should consider locating their access device in a quiet room where they will not be disturbed.
- 2.8 To avoid background disturbance each Members' electronic access mute facility should be used at all times other than when the individual Member is called to speak.
- 2.9 Make sure your devices are fully charged or plugged into a power supply for the duration of the meeting.
- 2.10 Have everything you need to hand such as the agenda, note paper, refreshments etc. as leaving the meeting may affect your participation when a vote is taken.
- 2.11 The Mayor/Chairs will be separately briefed before each meeting.
- 3. Conduct of the meeting
 - 3.1 The person presiding will open the meeting and make a roll call of all Councillors who are appointed to serve and officers who are advising/support the meeting. This will not only establish who is 'present' but also by which media link they are using e.g. Zoom, dial-in etc.
 - 3.2 The meeting will proceed in accordance with the Council/Committee Standing Orders (as amended by the Regulations).
 - 3.3 Rules regarding declaration of interests apply in the same way as previously.

- 3.4 With regard to the signing of the minutes the Mayor/Chair will ask Members if they are content with the minutes of the previous meeting and if they indicate they are this will be noted by the Constitutional Services Officer. Hard copy minutes will then be signed by the Mayor/Chair when restrictions are lifted.
- 3.5 The Mayor/Chair will take each item in turn. If a Member requires to speak they must indicate in the manner detailed for the individual means of access they are using. A Member must not speak until they have been called by the Chair.
- 3.6 As at any 'traditional' meeting Members must show respect to each other and do not attempt to talk over someone who is already speaking.
- 3.7 The rules of debate and time limits for speaking, as set out in standing orders, will apply.
- 3.8 When the Mayor/Chair considers that there has been sufficient debate they will call the debate to a close and remind the meeting of the Motion/recommendations that is/are to be voted upon. The Mayor/Chair will then call on each Member entitled to vote and ask whether their vote is in favour, against or they wish to abstain. This is not a 'recorded' vote and will not appear in the Minutes unless a formal recorded vote is requested.
- 3.9 The Mayor/Chair will state whether the Motion/Recommendations have been either carried or lost dependent upon the outcome of the vote. In the event of a tied vote the Mayor/Chair will have the casting vote.

4. Part II Business

- 4.1 As public access is via streaming following the relevant Exclusion Motion the streaming facility will be suspended. Members taking part in Part II debates must ensure that the meeting or what they are saying themselves cannot be overheard by others in their individual locations.

5. Public Participation

- 5.1 As previous stated public access is via a streaming facility and therefore there is no provision for speaking from the 'public gallery'. Where a facility for someone other than a Councillor or officer is required e.g. the Planning & Development Committee, details of access will be given directly.

6. Specific Meetings

- 6.1 These general protocols will apply to all meetings. More detailed guidance will be provided for meetings such as Annual Council, Planning & Development Committee, Licensing Committee and Scrutiny Select Committees.

Part I – Release to Press



Meeting EXECUTIVE
Portfolio Area All
Date 13 MAY 2020



CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) INCIDENT MANAGEMENT REPORT

THIS REPORT IS CONSIDERED AS URGENT DUE TO THE NEED TO UPDATE THE EXECUTIVE ON THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY, TO OUTLINE THE FINANCIAL PRESSURES BEING EXPERIENCED AND TO AGREE THE RECOVERY BASED APPROACH.

KEY DECISION

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Contributor All Response Cell Leads
Lead Officer Matt Partridge | 2456
Contact Officer Richard Protheroe | 2938

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To update the Executive on the COVID-19 crisis and the Council's response.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the current position and the Council's emergency response to date be noted.
- 2.2 That the Officer Key Decisions which have been taken in response to the COVID-19 emergency as set out in paragraph 4.11.2 in the report be noted and endorsed.
- 2.3 That the recovery phase approach as set out in section 4.13 of the report be approved.

- 2.4 That officers be requested to undertake a review of the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Medium Term Financial Strategies and report back to the June 2020 Executive meeting.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 What is Coronavirus?

- 3.1.1 Coronaviruses are a family of viruses common across the world in animals and humans. Certain types cause illnesses in people. For example, some cause the common cold; others cause diseases which are much more severe such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), both of which often lead to pneumonia.
- 3.1.2 COVID-19 is the illness seen in people with a new strain of coronavirus not previously seen in humans. People therefore have no immunity to the virus and there are no vaccines to create immunity or anti-viral to decrease the symptoms currently available.
- 3.1.3 On 31 December 2019, Chinese authorities notified the World Health Organisation of an outbreak of pneumonia in Wuhan City, which was later classified as a new disease: COVID-19.
- 3.1.4 On 30 January 2020, the World Health Organisation declared the outbreak of COVID-19 'A Public Health Emergency of International Concern'.
- 3.1.5 On 11 March the World Health Organisation declared that the coronavirus outbreak was a pandemic as there was now significant and ongoing person-to-person spread in multiple countries around the world at the same time. At that time there were 118,000 cases in 114 countries.

3.2 Government Response to the Crisis

- 3.2.1 On 3 March 2020, the Government published its Coronavirus Action Plan ('A guide to what you can expect across the UK') which set out what the UK as a whole had done and planned to do to tackle the current novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. The plan set out the proposed phased response: Contain, Delay, Research and Mitigate.
- 3.2.2 On 18 March, the Government announced that all schools in England would be closed with effect from 20 March until further notice for all pupils except children of key workers and the most vulnerable.
- 3.2.3 On 20 March, the Prime Minister announced that all pubs, bars, restaurants, cafes, cinemas, theatres, nightclubs, museums, galleries and gyms must close that night.
- 3.2.4 On 23 March, the Prime Minister announced a more comprehensive lockdown of the UK, banning people from leaving their homes or meeting in groups of more than two people except for a few specific reasons, namely shopping for basic necessities, for one form of exercise a day, for any medical need, and to travel to and from work if absolutely necessary and where it was not possible to work from home.

- 3.2.5 On 25 March, the Coronavirus Act 2020 received royal assent. The Act grants the Government emergency powers to handle the coronavirus pandemic. The Act gave the Government the discretionary power to limit or suspend public gatherings, to detain individuals suspected to be infected by COVID-19, and to intervene or relax regulations in a range of sectors to limit transmission of the disease, ease the burden on public health services and assist healthcare workers and the economically affected. Areas covered by the Act include the NHS, social care, schools, police, border force, local councils, funerals and courts.
- 3.2.6 There has been a great deal of guidance/information sent to Councils from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), Local Government Association (LGA), District Councils Network (DCN), and other Government departments and agencies and the Policy Team have been distributing this information to Response Cell Leads to assist them in their responses. A chronological list of this information is attached at Appendix One for information.

3.3 Local Government Sector Response

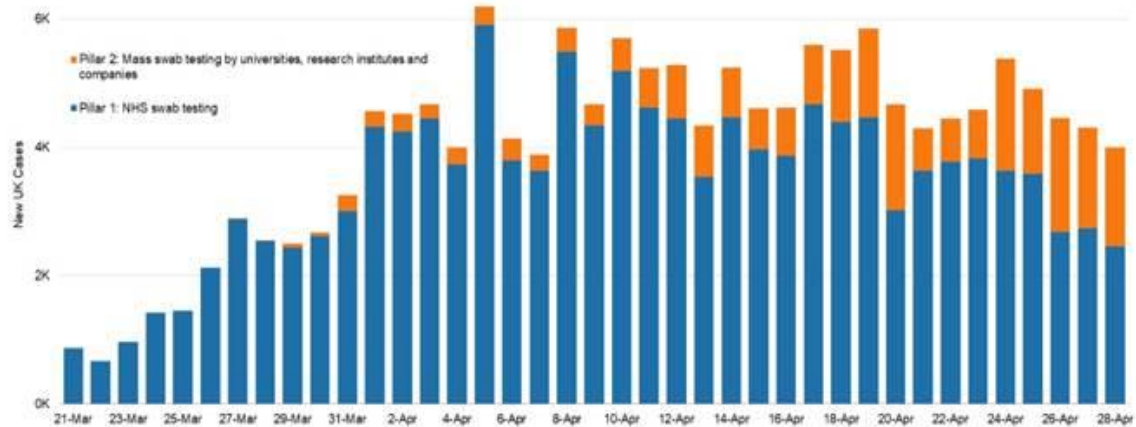
- 3.3.1 A number of representative bodies have provided advice to local authorities and representations to government, to support an effective response from the sector and to make the case for appropriate support from the Government. The Local Government Association has played a supportive role in discussion with government and created a range of guidance to support Councils, as has the East of England LGA. The LGA's Chief Executive, Mark Lloyd provided evidence to the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee on 27 April alongside the LGA Chairman and has discussed with them the impacts of COVID-19 on Councils and the work underway to support the vulnerable and support communities, including delivery of PPE, support for homeless people, grants and financial support, and the operation of vital front line services. The LGA have coordinated a financial assessment across local government, estimating over £12bn funding will be required to support Councils to play their crucial frontline roles and enable recovery in local communities.
- 3.3.2 The District Council's Network have been providing support to District and Borough Councils, advocating for support in relation to the financial pressures across the sector and the provision of vital support for frontline services and businesses amongst other matters.

3.4 National Cases of COVID-19

- 3.4.1 The ONS graph overleaf shows that at 28 April 2020, of those tested for COVID-19, 161,145 were confirmed positive. Overall new cases have plateaued at around 4000 per day.

New Cases (UK)

Cases are reported when lab tests are completed. This may be a few days after initial testing. Testing capacity is increasing, the number of observed cases has remained stable over the last 7 days, though there are likely many more cases than currently recorded here.

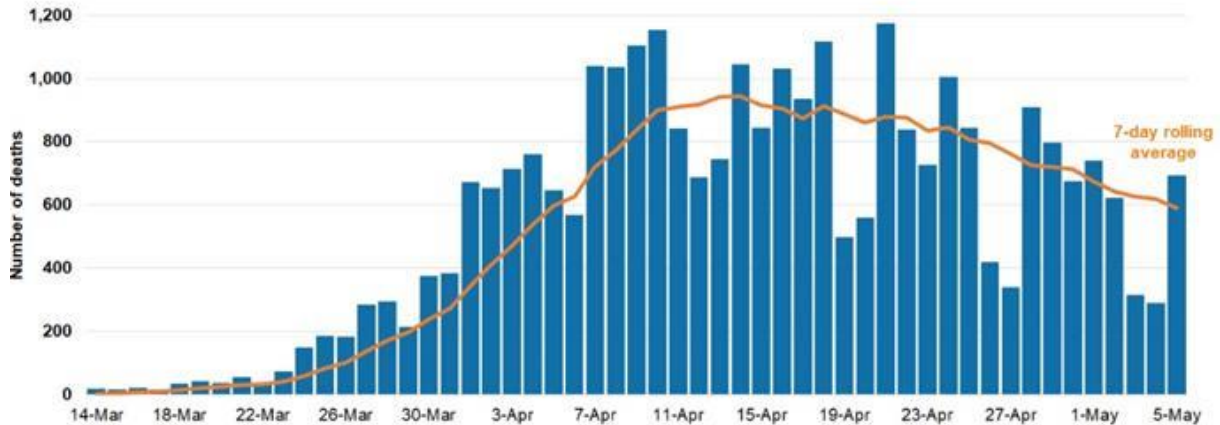


3.5 ONS National Number of Deaths

- 3.5.1 Of those hospitalised who tested positive for COVID-19 as at 5 May 2020, 29,427 people had sadly died. As there is a significant fluctuation around weekend reporting figures, the 7 day rolling average is shown by a line in the chart below.

Daily COVID-19 Recorded Deaths (UK)

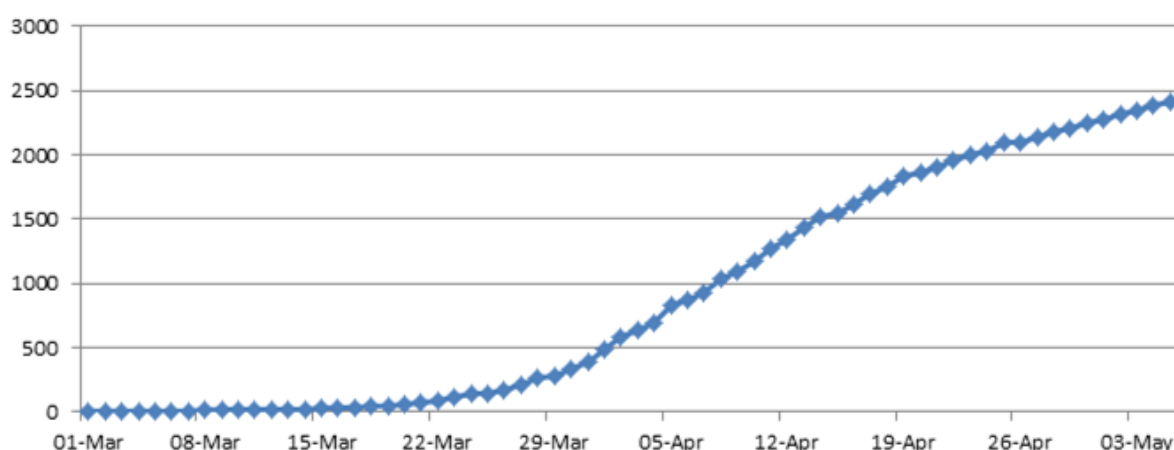
There were an additional 693 deaths of people who had tested positive for coronavirus.



3.6 Hertfordshire Cases of COVID-19

- 3.6.1 In Hertfordshire, by 5 May there had been 2,411 confirmed cases of COVID-19. As a proportion of cases in the country, Hertfordshire has just above 1.2% of the UK total confirmed cases but is home to 1.4% of the UK population. The chart overleaf shows the increase in cases in Hertfordshire from 1 March to 5 May 2020.

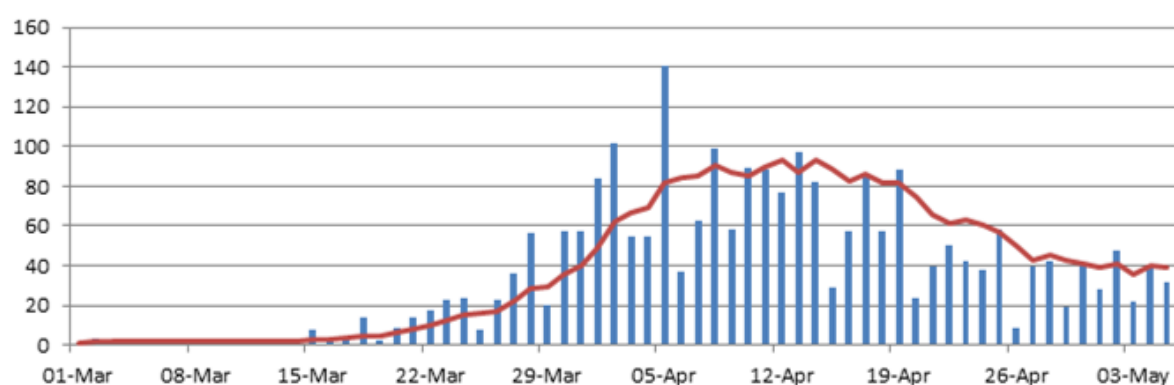
ONS Cases of COVID-19 in Hertfordshire (1 March to 5 May 2020)



- 3.6.2 The graph below shows the daily confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Hertfordshire (bars) with the rolling seven-day average (line) since the first confirmed case at the start of March through to 5 May. Focusing on the rolling average helps even out weekend dips in hospital recording.

It shows that the rolling average peaks around 90 cases a day for just over a week around the middle of April. It also shows how the social distancing measures have forced the Hertfordshire curve down (despite the increased testing capacity) and this has enabled the “*r*” (rate of viral transmission per person) to drop below 1.

ONS Daily cases of COVID-19 in Hertfordshire (1 March to 5 May 2020)



3.7 Deaths in Hertfordshire and Stevenage by setting

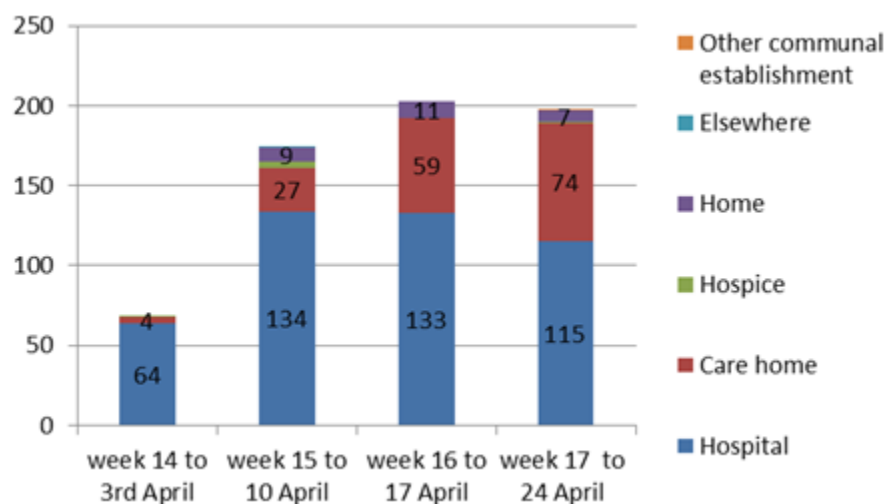
- 3.7.1 The table overleaf sets out recent information published by the ONS in relation to deaths by setting. ONS data which goes up until the week ending 24 April shows a total of 645 coronavirus-related deaths across Hertfordshire and 33 deaths in Stevenage across all settings.

ONS Deaths in all settings between 1 March and 24 April 2020 in Hertfordshire

Area name	Population 2018 estimate				Covid-19 Deaths by setting							
	Population	% pop.	# 65+	% 65+ Herts	% of deaths	all settings	Home	Hospital	Care home	Hospice	Other communal	Elsewhere
Broxbourne	96,876	8.2	17,305	8.6	8.2%	53	4	40	7	2	0	0
Dacorum	154,280	13.0	26,479	13.2	11.3%	73	3	54	15	0	1	0
East Herts	148,105	12.5	26,528	13.2	10.9%	70	4	44	21	1	0	0
Hertsmere	104,205	8.8	18,941	9.4	20.0%	129	6	87	35	0	0	1
North Herts	133,214	11.2	25,243	12.5	7.1%	46	1	28	16	1	0	0
St Albans	147,373	12.4	25,026	12.4	11.3%	73	0	58	15	0	0	0
Stevenage	87,754	7.4	13,341	6.6	5.1%	33	1	15	17	0	0	0
Three Rivers	93,045	7.9	16,891	8.4	6.4%	41	2	31	8	0	0	0
Watford	96,767	8.2	12,651	6.3	11.0%	71	2	50	19	0	0	0
Welwyn Hatfield	122,746	10.4	18,837	9.4	8.7%	56	4	39	11	2	0	0
Hertfordshire	1,184,365	100.0	201,242	100.0	100.0%	645	27	446	164	6	1	1

3.7.2 The graph below shows the same data for Hertfordshire by week. It shows that in the first week almost all COVID-19 suspected deaths occurred in hospital with just 4% of deaths taking place in care homes in the County. In the second week the number of suspected COVID-19 deaths in care homes in the County increased to 14.8%, with a further increase to 29.9% by the third week and to well over 37.4% by week four.

ONS COVID-19 deaths by setting by week

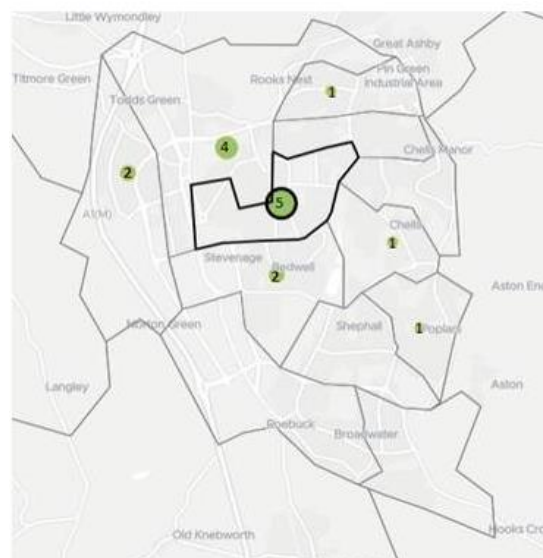


3.7.3 Hertfordshire as at 5 May had the sixth highest number of deaths in absolute terms in England behind Kent, Essex, Birmingham, Hampshire, Lancashire and Surrey.

3.7.4 The graph below shows the ONS data in relation to the number of deaths in Stevenage in all settings by Ward. Of the 103 deaths recorded by the ONS in Stevenage between 1 March and 17 April, sixteen were COVID-19 related. Of these sixteen COVID-19 related deaths, almost a third of the total (5 out of 16) were recorded in the Pin Green ward.

ONS Number of deaths in Stevenage by Ward

ONS code	Ward name (ONS)	All deaths	Covid-19 deaths	% Covid-19
Stevenage 001	St Nicolas	5	1	20.0%
Stevenage 002	Woodfield & Old Town	23	4	17.4%
Stevenage 003	Martins Wood	5	0	0.0%
Stevenage 004	Chells North	4	0	0.0%
Stevenage 005	Symonds Green	7	2	28.6%
Stevenage 006	Pin Green	16	5	31.3%
Stevenage 007	Chells South	4	1	25.0%
Stevenage 008	Bedwell	11	2	18.2%
Stevenage 009	Poplars	10	1	10.0%
Stevenage 010	Shephall	6	0	0.0%
Stevenage 011	Roebuck	9	0	0.0%
Stevenage 012	Broadwater & Bragbury End	3	0	0.0%
Stevenage	Stevenage	103	16	15.5%



3.8 East and North Herts Health Trust

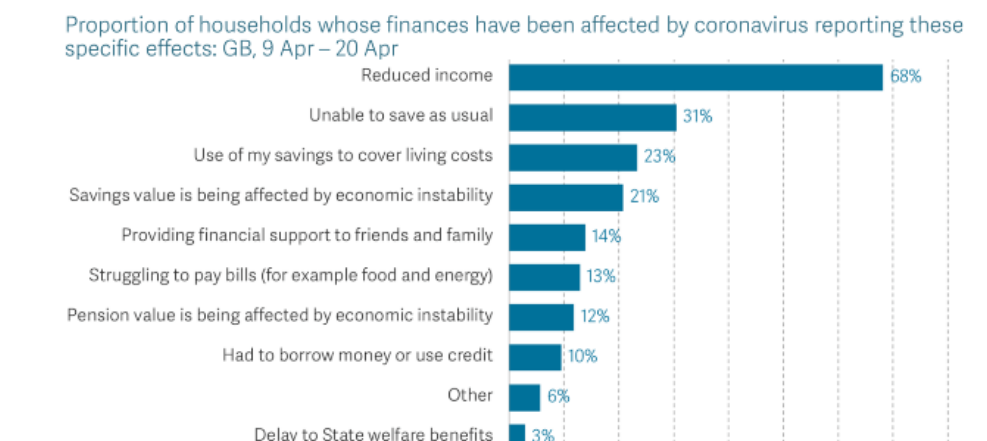
3.8.1 As at 29 April the Trust is experiencing a downward trend. Bed capacity is at 58 per cent for COVID-19 patients and 60 per cent for non COVID-19 patients. ICU capacity is at 41 percent. 55 per cent of mortuary capacity is available plus further off site provision.

3.9 Economic Effects of COVID-19

3.9.1 The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) has warned that the pandemic could see the UK economy shrink by a record 35% by June 2020. The OBR said this figure is based on an assumption that the current lockdown would last for three months. It is estimated two million people have applied for universal credit since the government advised people to stay at home due to COVID-19. Works and Pensions Secretary, Therese Coffey reported to MPs that this figure is six times the normal claimant rate and in one week there had been a tenfold increase in claims.

The impact that the economic crisis is having on household finances is shown in the graph below.

Figure 1: A majority of households are experiencing falls in income



- 3.9.2 UK businesses have applied for 6.3 million workers to be furloughed under the government's job retention scheme since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak. Government figures show applications worth £8 Billion had been made by businesses as of 3 May 2020.

3.10 Government help for Individuals and Households

- 3.10.1 Government recently set out a package of temporary measures to those who are financially affected by COVID-19.
- 3.10.2 As part of this support package, changes were made to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) arrangements so that individuals who are self-isolating due to suspected or confirmed COVID-19 can claim SSP. This includes individuals who are caring for people self-isolating in the same household. SSP to also be paid from day one rather than day four of absence.
- 3.10.3 The Minimum Income Floor has been temporarily relaxed for those who are self-employed and receiving Universal Credit who need to self-isolate.
- 3.10.4 For those who may need financial support from their Local Authority, they could be entitled to support from the £500 million Hardship Fund. Most of this funding will be used to provide more Council Tax relief, either through existing Local Council Tax support schemes or through similar measures.
- 3.10.5 For those experiencing financial difficulties meeting their mortgage repayments because of COVID-19, they may be entitled to a mortgage or rental holiday for 3 months. This includes landlords whose tenants are experiencing financial difficulties because of COVID-19 to ensure that tenants do not face the threat of eviction for at least 3 months.

3.11 Government help for Businesses

- 3.11.1 Government recently set out a package of temporary and targeted measures to support businesses through the disruption caused by COVID-19.
- 3.11.2 As part of this support, all businesses have had access to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, whereby HMRC will reimburse 80% of 'furloughed' workers (i.e. workers who have been asked to stop working but have not been made redundant) wage costs, up to £2,500 per month.
- 3.11.3 All businesses also had access to the Deferred VAT & Income Tax Payments with deferred VAT payments for 3 months applied from 20 March until 30 June 2020.
- 3.11.4 Businesses were also supported by the HMRC 'Time to Pay' offer for all firms and individuals who were in temporary financial distress, as a result of COVID-19 and have outstanding tax liabilities.
- 3.11.5 Larger businesses were supported by the COVID-19 Corporate Financing Facility (CCFF), whereby the Bank of England would buy short term debt to support a company, if it has been affected by a short-term funding squeeze to enable the finance of short-term liabilities.
- 3.11.6 All Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) have had access to the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, which was administered by the British Business Bank and the Reclaiming of Statutory Sick Pay to allow

SMEs to reclaim Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) for sickness absence due to COVID-19 for a period of up to 2 weeks' SSP per eligible employee who has been off work due to COVID-19.

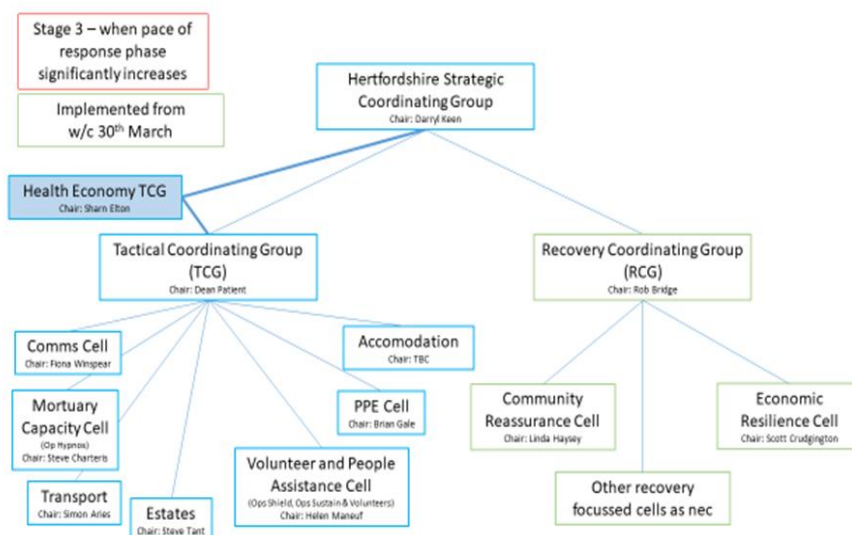
- 3.11.7 Support for self-employed businesses (including members of partnerships) was also introduced through the Self-employment Income Support Scheme to support those who lost income due to coronavirus (COVID-19). The scheme allows the self-employed to claim a taxable grant worth 80% of their trading profits up to a maximum of £2,500 per month for the next 3 months.
- 3.11.8 The Government has also offered cash grants of up to £25,000 for businesses with property, with a rateable value of between £15,000 and £51,000 for the retail, hospitality and leisure sector, as well as a Business Rates Holiday. The Small Business Grant Scheme would provide a one off grant of £10,000 to eligible businesses, to help meet their ongoing business costs.
- 3.11.9 Bounce Back Loans were also introduced to assist SME's to borrow between £2,000 and £50,000, with the government guaranteeing 100% of the loan with an interest free period for the first 12 months.

3.12 Hertfordshire Local Resilience Forum

3.12.1 The Local Resilience Forum (LRF) is a multi-agency partnership, made up of representatives from local public services, including the emergency services, local authorities, the NHS, the Environment Agency and the Highways Agency as well as other partners in the military and voluntary sector.

3.12.2 A Strategic Co-ordination Group (SCG) was formed in February and a Tactical Co-ordination Group (TCG) approximately one month later. These Groups have been providing a multi-agency response at both strategic and tactical level to the COVID-19 crisis, working together to manage and as much as possible minimise its effect on the population of Hertfordshire. Key partners on both the SCG and TCG are meeting three times a week, working together to tackle challenges in a way that is coordinated and mutually supportive.

3.12.3 The LRF Structure can be seen below:



3.12.4 The key priorities for these Groups have been the provision of sufficient hospital beds, social care beds and out of hospital support, mortuary spaces, death management process, PPE and recovery. Specific issues identified also include for example oxygen capacity at Watford General Hospital. Cells have been stood up to cover:

- Volunteers and Assistance to People (Operations Shield and Sustain)
- Communications
- Mortuary Capacity (Operation Hypnos)
- Protective Personal Equipment (PPE)
- Home Care Capacity
- Transport
- Accommodation,
- Environmental Health
- Estates
- Swabbing/Testing Cell

3.12.5 A Recovery Co-ordination Group has also been established along with Community Reassurance and Economic Resilience Cells.

3.12.6 In addition, a number of activities to ensure consistent data and support mental health and wellbeing have been established.

3.12.7 Hertfordshire Districts/Boroughs are represented on the Strategic Co-ordination Group by Nick Long, Deputy Chief Executive at Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council and Neil Kieran, Emergency Planning and Principal Community Protection Officer at St Albans District Council represents Districts/Borough's on the Tactical Co-ordinating Group. Stevenage Borough Council receives regular updates and minutes of the meetings and feeds any issues or queries into both of these Groups or the Cells when required.

3.13 Operation Shield

3.13.1 Operation Shield is a Government initiative where around 1.5 million people across the UK have been identified as being at most risk from COVID-19 mainly because of an underlying health condition. These people have been strongly advised to stay at home at all times and avoid any face-to-face contact for a period of at least 12 weeks.

3.13.2 Operation Shield was devised with the aim of supporting these people to self-isolate at home through the provision of essential food and medical supplies. People that are part of Operation Shield would have received a letter from the NHS providing more information including how to register.

3.13.3 As at 28 April, there were 24,510 Hertfordshire residents on the MHCLG's main shield list. At the time of writing this report, Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) were awaiting an updated list from Central Government which includes the records of additional Hertfordshire residents identified from local GP records. The shielded figure is expected to increase to approximately 33,500.

3.13.4 As at 30 April 2020, over 11,000 food parcels and over 500 prescriptions had been delivered in Hertfordshire.

3.14 Operation Sustain

3.14.1 The aim of Operation Sustain, which is being led by HCC within Hertfordshire, was to seek to provide a co-ordinated means of gathering the details of those requiring support and those wishing to provide support.

3.14.2 Over 10,000 volunteers have been recruited to the three key voluntary sector organisations working collaboratively on this task: #TeamHerts, Watford3RT and Communities 1st. The number of volunteers deployed to date is over 3800. Volunteers will be receiving a letter soon via #TeamHerts thanking them for their continued support and patience whilst they await notification of a suitable volunteering role.

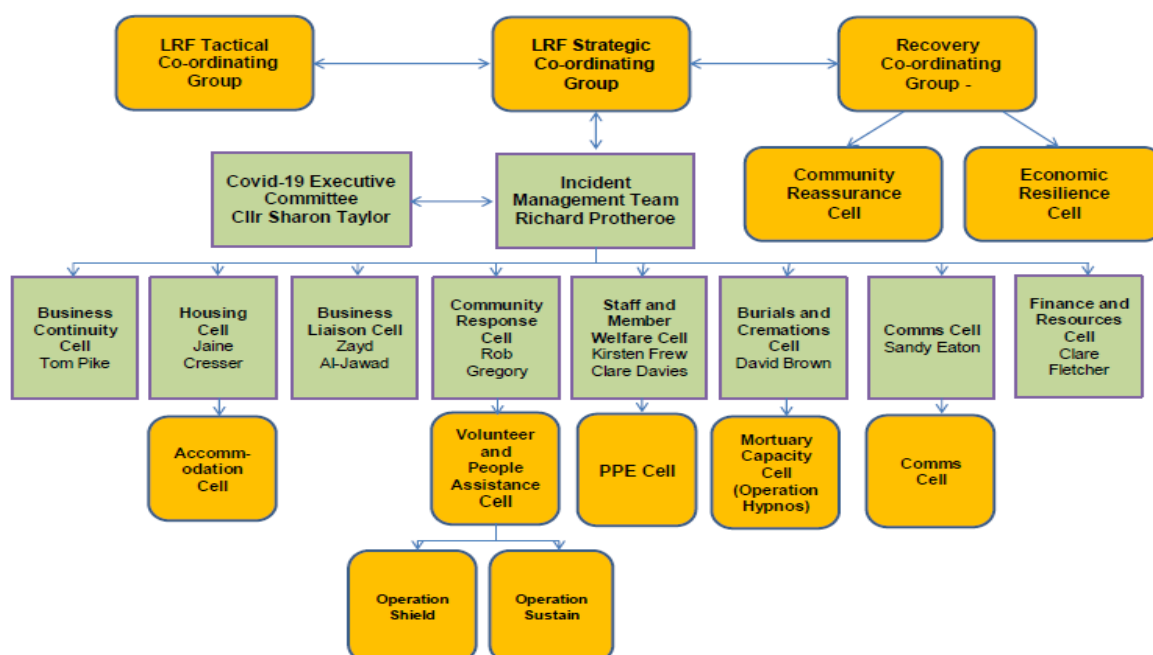
4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

4.1 Stevenage Borough Council's Emergency Response Arrangements

4.1.1 In response to the Coronavirus outbreak and the enactment of the COVID-19 Action Plan, the Council instigated an Incident Management Team (IMT), which is co-ordinating the local emergency response within Stevenage. This includes the establishment of eight Response Cells each led by an Assistant Director or senior manager.

4.1.2 The Council's emergency management structure which can be seen below has been designed to complement the LRF structure. The Council's response cells are in green with the Hertfordshire Local Resilience Forum cells in orange.

Stevenage Borough Council Response Cells (Green) (shown with LRF Response Cells to show links (Orange))



4.2 COVID-19 Emergency Committee

- 4.2.1 To complement the officer structures the Council also established a COVID-19 Emergency Member level group that consists of Executive Members plus Opposition Group Leaders. Through weekly meetings Members have been advised of national and local updates, progress against strategic actions, and updates from the Chief Executive/Strategic Directors and Response Cell leads.

4.3 Incident Management Team

- 4.3.1 The Council's Incident Management Team (IMT) is chaired by Strategic Director Richard Protheroe and comprises senior managers representing each of the eight Incident Response Cells as shown in the chart in paragraph 4.1.2. The Incident Manager is responsible for maintaining a strategic overview of the Council's response to the incident, receiving updates from the Response Cells and the allocation of actions to the cells. The IMT also gathers intelligence to help inform decisions that need to be taken. Updates from both the LRF Strategic and Tactical Co-ordination Groups are also considered at the IMT. Representatives from the Police and Citizens Advice Stevenage also attend IMT meetings which has proved to be extremely beneficial.
- 4.3.2 The IMT and each of the Cells have their own terms of reference, action, decision and risk logs to provide an audit trail of the Council's response, ensure that progress of actions is monitored, decisions recorded and risks are highlighted and mitigated. An outline of the work carried out by each of the eight Response Cells is provided in Section 4.4 below.

4.4 Business Continuity Cell and Staff and Member Welfare Cell

- 4.4.1 The Council has a well-established approach to business continuity and to the provision of support and guidance to employees. The Business Continuity and Staff and Member Welfare Cells have been meeting to review the Council's working arrangements and monitor staff absences to ensure that essential services continue to operate. The cells have reviewed the way in which services are delivered in accordance with social distancing guidance and to ensure the safety of staff, Members and customers and visitors to the town.
- 4.4.2 The Business Continuity Cell meets frequently, and at key points of the incident has met daily to ensure appropriate support, review and decision making is in place. It is Chaired by a Strategic Director and supported by Assistant Directors (or their delegates), covering all key areas of the organisation. The Cell is currently meeting three times a week. The focus of the Cell is on a review of the status of service delivery and actions needed to be taken to ensure essential service provision, ensuring plans are developed and executed to maintain service provision and change service provision where required, to ensure customers can access appropriate services, that the organisational infrastructure is in place to support service delivery, and that crucial new services such as Stevenage Helps are supported and enabled to deliver. The Cells have also supported a review of key service contracts,

continuing to review organisational capacity, ensuring home and remote working practices are in place, and also supported a review of FTFC priorities.

- 4.4.3 The Staff and Member Welfare Cell is chaired by the Senior HR Manager(s), with support from key parts of the organisation such as Health and Safety, Communications, Member Services and the wider HR Team. The Cell is supported via ongoing communications with different parts of the Council, management teams and employee and Member feedback. The group has provided advice and support to prepare working protocols in front line services, advice and supply of PPE, policies and procedures for home working, put in place additional support from mental health to bereavement support, measures to support shielded employees, as well as informal ways for colleagues to work together and remain in touch.
- 4.4.4 The Council has taken significant steps to enable essential services to continue to operate. This has included a rapid programme to enable over 500 colleagues (in both Stevenage and East Herts Councils) to work from home, establishment of different forms of video and audio solutions, put in place new ways of working across service management teams to provide resilience, redeployed a number of colleagues to crucial front line services including support to Stevenage Helps and migrated many customer services online and to be phone based, as well as safely suspending other services in line with lockdown requirements.
- 4.4.5 Currently the following essential frontline services are still operating along with back office and support services:
- Customer Service Centre phone lines and online presence
 - Refuse and recycling
 - Key areas of grounds maintenance such as parts of highways verges and green spaces
 - Supported Housing services (Independent Living Schemes)
 - Housing Supply and Housing Options including Homelessness
 - Provision of temporary accommodation
 - Management of Lettings and Tenancy
 - Benefit Service including provision over £20m reliefs and over £8m new grants
 - Council Tax Support
 - Business Rates Support
 - Rent Advice and Support
 - Community Safety, including crucial programmes such as SADA
 - CCTV and Out of Hours provision
 - All statutory Environmental Health Services
 - Licensing Services
 - Planning and Development
 - Regeneration and Housing Development
 - Emergency Repairs

4.4.6 Due to the need to comply with Government restrictions, the following services were put on hold or reduced until further notice:

- All SBC events
- Community Transport
- Community Centres and Community Arts Centre
- Play Centres
- Stevenage Museum
- Mutual Exchanges
- Regeneration Visitor Centre
- The Gordon Craig Theatre
- Stevenage Leisure Limited (Leisure Centre, Swimming Centre, Golf Facilities)
- Fairlands Valley Outdoor Activity Centre
- Changes to Direct Services such as temporary cessation of skips, bulky waste, non-essential works
- Changes to Car Park provision
- Closing Car Parks in Parks (excluding disabled spaces)
- Reduction in Indoor Market to only open Food Stalls

4.4.7 Highway verge maintenance and grass cutting near link roads and green areas within estates recommenced on 27 April to help maintain a practicable level of maintenance. General maintenance also started on closed play areas during the week commencing 27 April. At the time of writing this report it was also envisaged that bulky waste collection services would start again during the week commencing 11 May 2020.

4.4.8 Key FTFC delivery programmes are also continuing. The regeneration schemes at Queensway and Town Square continue to be progressed with contractors working in accordance with government guidance. The Housing Development programme continues on existing sites, with ground works commencing at North Road from early May. The Kenilworth contract has yet to commence on site. A number of critical ICT projects are also continuing to progress as planned.

4.4.9 Non-frontline staff are working from home where they can and the Cells have put in place arrangements to make this possible and ensure that staff working from home have the equipment and procedures to work effectively and that they are being kept informed and engaged including wellbeing and resilience online training sessions and virtual coffee meet ups.

4.4.10 The Cells are now commencing work to consider how services may be adapted for when the current national restrictions change.

4.5 Community Response Cell

4.5.1 This Response Cell is working closely with the Police, Stevenage Citizens Advice, British Red Cross, Foodbanks and other voluntary services in Stevenage.

4.5.2 The Council is working in partnership with a range of local charities to help people to donate goods or volunteer time. On 20 March the Council launched

an appeal called Stevenage Helps to capture volunteering and donation contributions from local residents who want to help others facing hardship due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

- 4.5.3 Stevenage Helps is an alliance between the Council and a large number of voluntary and community organisations, including Stevenage Citizens Advice, local foodbanks, HertsHelps along with a huge number of offers of support from local businesses, volunteers and support organisations.
- 4.5.4 Officers have also worked with Stevenage Community Trust to launch an online giving platform to support vulnerable people and groups and have been supporting Stevenage FC Helpline, North Herts CVS Helpline and Food Shed. This had raised over £27,000 by 28 April.
- 4.5.5 On 6 April the Council launched its Stevenage Helps Community Response Team and a helpline which is open 6 days a week to provide support to vulnerable residents to provide help with food supplies, accessing essential services and also assistance in other ways, such as posting mail and telephone support. Donations of food have been received from Costco, Wilkinson and Church Farm Ardeley. Stevenage Football Club's Coronavirus Community Careline has assisted with prescription medicine deliveries.
- 4.5.6 Up until 28 April the helpline had supported 367 requests for support and the response team had delivered 329 emergency food parcels and supported 55 medical prescription deliveries.
- 4.5.7 The Council has also supported Herts Help by contacting 538 people on the Shielded List who did not respond to the government's letter, to ascertain whether they required food parcels or any other assistance. Out of this exercise 55 residents were immediately referred for support.
- 4.5.8 Officers are working with community associations as a result of community centres closing on 23 March to assess how the Council can support them through this difficult period. The Assistant Director (Communities and Neighbourhoods) has also met with the Managing Director from Stevenage Leisure Limited to discuss the company's situation and how the Council can support them. The Council has also flagged the financial difficulties being experienced by leisure trusts due to COVID-19 to the MHCLG and the DCN.
- 4.5.9 To ensure the health and safety of Council customers and staff, the Community Transport service was suspended on 16 March 2020 due to the vulnerability of clients using this service. Following further guidance nationally the Council closed Stevenage Museum and suspended its Play Service on 17 March 2020.
- 4.5.10 The Council is working on a joint bid by local frontline charities for funding as a result of the Government's proposed funding package for charities being announced on 8 April 2020.
- 4.5.11 The Council has seen a 90% increase in SADA referrals and has been raising the profile of SADA and the No More Service via social media, the Council's website and on SG1radio. A further three properties for SADA

referrals have been acquired. There have also been increasing calls around neighbour disputes and anti-social behaviour and officers have been working with the police in relation to a number of ASB neighbour disputes. The demand for the No More Service has increased by over 250%, due to the urgent accommodation arrangements established for those homeless and rough sleeping. One case of COVID-19 related hate crime has been recorded. There has also been a significant increase in fly tipping of garden waste in part due to the closure of the household waste recycling centres.

4.5.12 The Council has maintained the Neighbourhood Warden presence, including over the Easter Bank Holiday weekend, working with the Police on group dispersals particularly in parks and the town centre.

4.5.13 It was agreed that Councillors could carry forward their remaining 2019/20 Local Community Budgets (LCB) for climate change activities or COVID-19 relief efforts. The LCB scheme for 2020/21 was relaunched on 27 April 2020.

4.5.14 An Emergency Domestic Abuse Partnership has also been established, with partners from across the County Council, the police, NHS, the voluntary and community sector, and District and Borough Councils to monitor and respond to domestic abuse during the coronavirus pandemic.

4.6 Housing Response Cell

4.6.1 The Independent Living service is continuing to operate under challenging circumstances and is taking all the precautions it can to ensure the safety of both staff and vulnerable residents. The Independent Living Team is contacting residents in its Schemes to ensure they have access to the support and assistance they need.

4.6.3 Officers are also contacting residents who are over 70 in council homes to ensure support is in place for them as well. Calls are also now being made to all tenants aged 69 and under to provide welfare checks and make appropriate referrals.

4.6.4 As at 29 April 2020 there were 6 residents with suspected COVID-19 and most were thankfully showing good signs of recovery. There was also one confirmed case which was receiving palliative care at home. Residents over the age of 65 with symptoms can now get a swab test through the national swabbing scheme.

4.6.5 In response to the Government's instruction to accommodate rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping, the Council arranged additional accommodation at the Holiday Inn Express, the Gate and Novotel in Stevenage as well as a Hotel in Stansted.

4.6.6 To support this provision the Council has arranged floating support from the Council's No More Service, Rough Sleeper Outreach workers, cold and hot food provision, security and access to the Haven's concierge services. The Police have also been carrying out regular patrols of the hotels. The Housing Options team are continuing to work with these people in line with the

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 in order to help applicants to source alternate move on accommodation after this period. Six designated COVID-19 properties have been reserved which can be used to accommodate anyone in hotel accommodation who tests positive and therefore needs to self-isolate.

4.6.7 The table below is a summary of the placements in B&B at 29th April 2020:

Location	At risk of Rough sleeping	Actual Rough Sleepers	Normal Cases
Holiday Inn Express	18	9	0
Novotel	2	0	21
Gate	1	0	10
DeSalis (Stansted)	8	5	1

4.6.8 In addition the Council has 103 households in temporary accommodation. 24 of those placed in B&B have been evicted for a variety of reasons, including Anti-Social Behaviour, non-engagement, breach of fire safety regulations and return to drug den.

4.6.9 MHCLG guidance relating to housing allocations has been provided which supports the approach the Council has taken.

4.6.10 Changes have been made to housing lettings and terminations procedures in response to the Government lockdown. Lettings into private accommodation are resuming on a limited scale and officers have used “virtual” viewings to safely carry out lettings in the private rented sector. Removals are being carried out in line with the latest Government guidance.

4.6.11 The Council is advising residents that it expects them to continue to make payments towards their rent and any arrears they may have, but we have pledged that the Council will not be evicting anyone who is struggling financially due to the impact of COVID-19. The Council has seen a significant increase in arrears so far. Arrears as at 26 April 2020 are over £970K, this compares with arrears at the end of the financial year 2019/2020 which were in the region of £500K. There has been a considerable increase in the take up of Universal Credit and officers have been working with Citizens Advice Stevenage to help respond to the increase in these enquiries.

4.6.12 Officers have been liaising with the Council’s major refurbishment contractors to agree how programmes will be taken forward in light of government restrictions. All Major Repair Contract (MRC) public events have been postponed and leaseholders are being contacted directly to address any concerns that can be dealt with over the phone. The Council plans to continue with consultation on a one to one basis with its leaseholders to ensure they are fully informed.

4.6.13 Social distancing arrangements have been introduced to ensure that officers can still carry out gas servicing and repairs and these arrangements are being reviewed daily. The Government still requires local authorities to be 100% compliant in relation to gas servicing and the Council is still maintaining 100% compliance.

4.6.14 Due to the vulnerability of clients requiring aids and adaptations, only essential works are being carried out at this time

4.7 Business Liaison Cell

4.7.1 This Cell has been working closely with Hertfordshire LEP, Chamber of Commerce, Wenta and the Hertfordshire Growth Board to provide assistance and advice to local businesses.

4.7.2 The Council has played an active role in promoting and signposting businesses to the Government's package of support measures such as the Job Retention Scheme, business grants and Government backed loans. The Council's website has lots of information and links for businesses and these have also been publicised on social media.

4.7.3 Weekly updates and bulletins on business support are being emailed to all businesses on the Council's business mailing list. Government guidance on social distancing for employers during COVID-19 has also been shared with the Council's business contacts. Officers have sent businesses/suppliers information regarding the Department of Health and Social Care's call for assistance from businesses to increase COVID-19 testing capacity.

4.7.4 To support NHS staff delivering essential services in Stevenage, the Council is currently providing free parking in the Council owned spaces around Lister Hospital. Free parking is now available for NHS and Blue Light services, care and social workers and other volunteers supporting the COVID-19 response in Swingate South car park. Car park pay machines are currently only accepting debit or credit card payments and the number of available car parks in the Town Centre and Old Town have been reduced.

4.7.5 The Council has provided Wenta at the Business Technology Centre with financial support payment options for tenants for April, May and June. A Commercial Policy for all Council managed commercial properties has been developed which includes a "ladder" of payment/re-payment options.

4.7.6 A County Wide Economic Resilience Cell has been established and officers are receiving updates and feeding into their discussions. Officers are also liaising with the Stevenage Old Town Business and Community Partnership and the Town Centre Partnership to direct businesses to grants, support and guidance.

4.8 Finance and Resources Cell

4.8.1 As at 1 May 2020, the Council has given 429 local companies business rate relief totalling over £20.5 Million and distributed £9.1 Million in cash grants to

81% of eligible local businesses. Further information is available in the COVID-19 Financial Dashboard at Appendix Two.

- 4.8.2 The Revenues and Benefits team have been dealing with a large number of enquiries relating to the changes to business rates and cash grants for those business with no insurance and Hardship Fund and Welfare Support for residents. The Hardship Scheme Software is estimated to go live on 1 May 2020 and the government allocated £779K for the scheme to SBC of which up to £150 must be allocated to working age claimants.
- 4.8.3 In terms of suppliers and businesses, the Council has made arrangements to ensure quicker payment of invoices than normal to assist businesses by ensuring prompt payment for supplies and services.
- 4.8.4 A Commercial Rent Policy has been developed to deal with commercial tenants who may be unable to pay their rent. While the rent is still due, tenants are encouraged to contact the Council if they are experiencing financial difficulties to set up arrangements within the parameters set out in the policy.
- 4.8.5 This Cell has been assessing the financial impact of COVID-19 on the Council's finances and further information is contained in the COVID-19 Financial Dashboard at Appendix Two.

4.9 Burials and Cemeteries Cell

- 4.9.1 Cemeteries in the town are operating in line with Government guidance. Burials are continuing with attendance limited to 10 immediate family members or close friends. The cemetery remains open for those wishing to pay respects to loved ones. This approach to cemetery arrangements has been adopted by all the Hertfordshire authorities, who are meeting on a regular basis. This approach has also been widely publicised.
- 4.9.2 Burial capacity in Stevenage to deal with a possible increase in demand has been reviewed. Six additional grounds maintenance operatives have been allocated to the cemetery service to increase capacity from 10 burials per week to 40 per week if needed. Mitigation has been put in place to ensure the service can continue to operate in the absence of key members of staff.
- 4.9.3 Officers have been working with local funeral directors to ensure that there is a common understanding and agreement with the new arrangements. This information has also been communicated to local faith groups. Guidance for the bereaved has been updated on the Council's website, which includes comprehensive FAQs relating to funeral arrangements during the current pandemic and the support that is available.
- 4.9.4 The Council is represented on the Local Resilience Forum's Mortuary Capacity Cell (Operation Hypnos) which initially was set up to ensure there is sufficient mortuary capacity within Hertfordshire and subsequently broadened its remit to ensure capacity, effective process and dignity in the management of the deceased from death to funeral. The provision of additional mortuary storage capacity has risen from 256 to 1207 spaces. This has been achieved

by significantly expanding the provisions of all three acute hospital sites (Watford, Hemel Hempstead and Lister) and supplementing this with three discreet community funeral director led mortuary storage provisions in Stevenage and Watford. As at 30 April, there is approximately 30% occupancy.

4.10 Communications Cell

4.10.1 A dedicated Coronavirus section has been set up on the Council's website, which includes Frequently Asked Questions, Government advice, information about changes we have made to Council services, support available for businesses and advice to landlords and tenants. It has been important to let the people of Stevenage know Essential Services are still operating alongside a range of welfare support during these uncertain times.

4.10.2 A special Coronavirus edition of Chronicle was distributed to all households in Stevenage (36,000 copies) and is available online. The publication was well received by residents, staff and councillors.

4.10.3 The Council has been using social media to promote Stevenage Helps and HertsHelp, 'Clap for Carers', government campaigns and guidelines on: COVID-19 advice and assistance, social distancing and handwashing/hygiene guidance, COVID-19 testing sites, SADA and No More community safety programmes, financial assistance available to businesses, job retention scheme, hardship fund and Universal Credit changes as well as many others.

4.10.4 The Council has been lighting the clock tower and more recently the Arts & Leisure Centre blue on Thursday evenings to celebrate the hard work of carers and keyworkers.

4.11 Key Decisions

4.11.1 A number of key decisions have been taken in order to comply with new legislation and as part of the Council's emergency response to the national COVID-19 emergency. Due to a need to take these decisions urgently, officers could not comply with the requirement to give 28 days' notice of the key decision to be taken; publish the decision within 2 days of it being taken and provide the 5 day call-in period before implementation. Nor was it possible to comply with the urgency provisions in the Council's Constitution.

4.11.2 Below are the Key Decisions which have been taken as part of the emergency response which the Executive is being asked to endorse. The Key Decision Forms which provides more detail are available on the Council's website via the following link: [Link to Key Decision Forms](#).

	Decision	Implementation date
1	Closure of community centres & Community Arts Centre	23 March 2020
2	Closure of play centres and holiday play schemes	17 March 2020

3	Damp and condensation service reduced to dealing with only essential/critical damp and condensation cases.	25 March 2020
4	Local Community Budgets extended from the original date of 22 March to 27 March due to the cancellation of local elections and the lifting of Purdah.	22 March 2020
5	Establish a SBC Community Response Team to support COVID-19 relief efforts to support residents in Stevenage who are not in the shielded category but are vulnerable and self-isolating at home.	6 April 2020
6	<p>Changes to car parking arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspension of parking charges for all from the Pay and Display Bays on Coreys Mill Lane by the Lister Hospital for an initial 3 months. Priority to be given to NHS Staff. • NHS staff can request a three month season ticket for April to June 2020 for the town centre car parks. • Provide a town centre car park free for blue light services, social and care workers and those volunteers supporting the COVID-19 response from 9 April to 1 September 2020. • Suspend public highway parking enforcement, save for Highway Safety up to 1 September 2020. 	23 and 26 March and 9 April 2020
7	Access process for gas servicing appointments reduced by removing all delays between appointments to allow appointment to be suspended by 10 days for isolation and 14 days at the tenant's request. Access process changed with the final decision to force entry being made by the Housing Panel whilst courts are closed.	25 March 2020
8	Reduction of aids and adaptations service to deal with new referrals only. These will not be progressed unless assessed as being absolutely necessary/critical	25 March 2020
9	Closure of Bring Sites	7 April 2020
10	Closure of play areas, outdoor gyms and car parks in parks (except for vehicles displaying disabled badges)	24 March and 8 April and 24 March 2020
11	Suspension of highway verge maintenance including flower bed maintenance with the exception of visibility spays	26 March 2020
12	Closure of pavilions	25 March 2020
13	Suspension of non-urgent repairs	24 March 2020
14	Suspension of Bulky Waste Collections & Skip Service	24 March 2020
15	Closure of old town toilets and town centre garden toilets. The disabled toilets in the town centre and taxi rank toilets remain open to provide facilities for bus and taxi drivers.	26 March 2020
16	Closure of communal facilities, such as club houses and toilets at allotments	30 March 2020
17	Caretaking services to be changed to meet with social distancing requirements and staff availability. Essential caretaking services to continue as normal including health and safety checks and high priority reactive tasks such as collecting fly tipping or removal of drug paraphernalia. General cleaning of communal areas will continue as	24 March 2020

	allowed by staff availability.	
18	Temporary closure of indoor market excluding food stalls following Government direction.	25 March 2020
19	<p>MRC Programme: To suspend all work where social distancing requirements cannot be maintained</p> <p>Decent Homes and Externals Programme: Delay this programme until such time as Officers are able to mobilise the contract and social distancing requirements are lifted</p> <p>Lift Renewal Programme: Suspend the programme</p> <p>Communal Heating Programme (Sheltered Schemes): Suspend all works where social distancing measures cannot be maintained</p>	25 March 2020
20	Granting of a rent free period and keeping units void for prospective tenants who have accepted offers and are unable to move until the lockdown measures are lifted or an earlier date if the applicant is able to move in during the lockdown period.	7 April 2020
21	Provision of temporary accommodation, food, security and support for rough sleepers in accordance with the Government direction to accommodate additional applicants who the Council would otherwise not have had a duty to accommodate outside of COVID-19 direction.	TBA
22	Temporary closure of walk-in services at CSC and Main Reception of Daneshill House to customers, except for those who are vulnerable and in urgent need.	24 March 2020
23	Revised arrangements in relation to cemetery staffing arrangements to increase burial capacity and changes to burial arrangements to ensure that a dignified and efficient bereavement service continues to be provided in line with government guidance.	26 March 2020
24	New Commercial Rent Policy produced which gives a ladder of options for tenants to pay their rent.	27 April 2020

4.12 Virtual Meeting Arrangements

4.12.1 The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ('the Regulations') came into force on 4 April 2020 and apply to local authority and police and crime panel meetings that are required to be held, or held before 7 May 2021. Officers from the IT team and Constitutional Services have reviewed the technical options to hold meetings remotely as required and have concluded that Zoom is the most suitable application. All Members have been contacted for details of the device they wish to use to access the Zoom app and support is being provided by IT, together with daily 'test' meetings that all Councillors may access. A protocol has been written for the management and conduct for virtual meetings.

4.13 Recovery Approach and Model

4.13.1 As part of the Council's Incident Management arrangements, Officers have started preparation of recovery plans for the Council and the Town.

4.13.2 As previously set out in this report, the countywide response to the COVID-19 pandemic is being led by the Local Resilience Forum (via the Strategic Coordination Group) as a major incident. The overall incident management arrangements for the county incorporate a focus on forming a recovery plan as part of the remit of the incident management structure. The arrangements that are put in place within Stevenage will align with this structure.

4.13.3 At this point in time it is not possible for officers to provide a definitive position for when the impacts of the pandemic will have been reduced or significantly mitigated. The UK Government have put in place an extensive range of social distancing and other interventions. A lockdown has been in place since 23 March, to be reviewed at three weekly intervals. At this stage no drug treatments or vaccines have been developed to a point of approval or roll out, although a broad range of trials and schemes are underway. The UK government's current position suggests that there could be phases to the release of lockdown, and that social distancing measures may remain in place for some time in order to protect the capacity of the NHS to support those who contract the virus and need hospital support. A range of further measures have been announced to increase testing and contact tracing as part of the plan for the next phase.

4.13.4 This remains a fluid position which means the Stevenage recovery plan will need to remain flexible to adapt to changing circumstances over the coming weeks and months. At this point the potential implications of second or further peaks of infection are not known, and to prevent the spread of COVID-19 a number of measures could remain in place or be re-implemented in the future. The recovery process will commence ahead of all social isolation measures being removed.

4.13.5 Current expectations are for recovery plans to work at three levels:

- An overarching County level strategy: This would incorporate work of the LRF Recovery Cell and Hertfordshire LEP, to provide support for areas such as place-making schemes, economic recovery and growth (e.g. a focus on specific sectors), and connectivity (digital and transport)
- Internally focused strategies and plans for each District or Borough Council
- Externally focused strategies and plans for each District or Borough area

4.13.6 To aid preparations for the recovery process, Officers have conducted a review of the Future Town Future Council Cooperative Corporate Plan programme for the year ahead, to help identify which planned projects can be delivered or where necessary adapted noting that FTFC will be a key element of the Council's recovery programmes. Officers have engaged with Executive Members and the Opposition Group Leaders via the informal briefings to help shape the direction of this programme for the year ahead, to identify priorities and test the progress and deliverability of key projects. This process has set

out a range of programmes that the Council will continue to prioritise, including the continuation of Town Centre Regeneration projects and the SG1 scheme and the Stevenage Development Board which is working up the bid for the Towns Fund and unallocated Growth Deal monies, the delivery of high quality affordable housing projects, the work underway to create a new and effective online customer service offer to adapt to the current environment, investment to enhance the current housing stock and improve the offer to residents and tenants, and the continued delivery of the Cooperative Neighbourhood Management. Officers will also continue to prepare strategies and action plans for key objectives such as Community Wealth Building, Climate Change and the next phase of the Future Town Future Transport programme. These projects, strategies will be brought together as part of the emerging recovery plan for Stevenage.

4.13.7 Officers have commenced work through the Business Continuity and Staff and Member Welfare Cells to prepare for the next phase of incident management, including review of the current working arrangements and preparation for any changes that may emerge at the end of lockdown, our building operational management and protocols, support to provide digital and other forms of customer support, and a further review of essential service provision.

4.13.8 For any recovery plan to be delivered, appropriate financial resources will need to be in place and for the financial position of the Council to be sustainable. Stevenage Borough Council has received over £900K of government funding as part of the financial support to local authorities, playing a vital front line role through this crisis. However as with many other Councils, the financial impacts are far greater than the funding that has been received to date. The LGA estimates the impact to be over £12bn for the sector noting that £3.2bn has been allocated to date. All Councils are facing significant financial pressures and are engaging with MHCLG to lobby and seek appropriate support to enable us to continue to provide vital front line services as well as support communities through the recovery process.

4.13.9 As highlighted above the recovery planning for Stevenage would have external and internal focuses. The former will be developed in conjunction with the Stevenage Together partnership noting the success of the previous Stevenage Economic Taskforce (created in response to the global financial crisis in 2008/2009 onwards) and its achievements in creating employment, skills and other opportunities. The outline structures of the SBC and Town wide recovery plans are set out below:

4.14 Town Recovery Plan:

Supporting Businesses and the local Economy / Entrepreneurship

- Economic Recovery Action Plan and Economic Development
- Regeneration programme to include allocated LEP funding and Town Deal bid, and potential for further bids to bodies such as Homes England, and the delivery of new Council and affordable housing schemes
- Employment, skills development & employability including projects such as Stevenage Works
- Planning & Development Support

- Leisure and the Night Time Economy

Supporting Local People and Maintaining Strong Communities

- Community Wealth Building
- Cooperative opportunities
- Social Cohesion
- Addressing Poverty
- Community and Voluntary Sector support
- Community Safety
- Shielding / Stevenage Helps Community Hub offer and ongoing relationship with organisations such as Stevenage Foodbank
- Environmental response
- Culture / Sport response
- Housing response

Supporting the Mental and Physical Health of the Town

- Links with and support for the Lister
- Joined up work with health partners - CCG, NHS, Public Health

Travel and Mobility

- Plans to enable safe movement within the central parts of the town
- Progressing schemes within the Future Town Future Transport strategy

Effective Communications and Reassurance

- Developing a clear communications strategy to share information, guidance and support with residents and businesses

4.15 Internal SBC Recovery Plan:

Staff / Member Welfare

- Overall Wellbeing
- Developing plans to engage and support teams through the next phase of disruption

Operational / Business Unit Considerations

- Status of 'Business As Usual' operational performance
- Assessment and plan to return non-essential services into operation
- Preparing for pent up or deferred demand planning & operations
- Creating a building and operational plan for the next phase
- Developing a digital and customer support plan
- Spotting operational opportunities

Development & Delivery of FTFC Corporate Priorities

- Review of priorities for 2020/2021 and implementation of projects

Transformation Impacts and Next Steps

- Re-assessment of prioritisation of projects to support MTFS requirements
- Drive development of online service offer
- Completion of Opportunity Assessment to identify efficiency opportunities
- Re-profiling of delivery and benefits plans
- Resource appropriately

Financial Outlook and Re-profiling

- Impacts of ongoing COVID-19 related recovery work
- Adequacy of additional Government funding
- MTFS Review and potential for possible revised budget for 20/21
- Preparation for Spending Review 20 lobbying

Lessons Learned

- Ways of working (positives and negatives) to inform changes to operating model and how we work
- Technology plan
- Communications & Engagement (all stakeholders groups)
- Staff / Member wellbeing
- Democratic & Decision making
- Partnerships

Communications

- Developing and putting in place clear communications with SBC teams, Members, customers, residents and businesses regarding the recovery plans

- 4.16** These structures will remain flexible to take account of new areas of focus that arise during the recovery planning period.
- 4.17** The phasing and timing of recovery activities will have to take account of how the virus is controlled over the coming weekend and months. If, for example, there is a double peak which results in stronger lockdown measures being reintroduced our activities are likely to be affected.
- 4.18** The Community Reassurance Cell is planning to undertake a Community Impact Assessment. This may be helpful with regards to informing actions at local level.
- 4.19** Further to this it will be important within our plans to recognise and be clear about what we and our partners can control, regulate or lobby on.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

- 5.1.2** A return has been submitted to the MHCLG which sets out potential Stevenage Borough Council losses of £193K for March 2020, £815K for April

2020 and £11.6M for a full year. The Government allocated an additional £1.6B in March and a further £1.6B in April to support local government finances. SBC's share of this allocation has been £917K. The Council has been engaging with MHCLG to highlight the significant financial implications of COVID-19 on the Council's finances and officers are reviewing the Medium Term Financial Plan. The information submitted to MHCLG on the 15 April estimated that the adverse impact on the Council's finances just for March and April 2020 was £1M, more than the grant received. The Council will continue to lobby the government through the various channels available.

- 5.1.3 The Council has also submitted information regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the capital programme and to ask for a number of initiatives such as retaining right to buy pooling receipts longer and lower borrowing rates via PWLB.
- 5.1.4 Some financial impacts of the pandemic are not yet clear in terms of Business Rates and Council Tax and these are being monitored on a weekly basis but data is only currently available for April that may not be indicative for the year and cash flow may worsen if the pandemic impact lasts for a longer period of time. Members should also be aware there is potentially a cash flow issue for the Council as the organisation only retains a maximum of 12% of Council tax and 8% of business rates.
- 5.1.5 Further information is available in the COVID-19 Financial Dashboard at Appendix Two.
- 5.1.6 It is recommended to the Executive that officers be requested to undertake a review of the GF and HRA Medium Term Financial Strategies in light of the financial pressures arising from the COVID-19 Emergency with a view to reporting back to the Executive at its meeting in June 2020.

5.2 Legal Implications

- 5.2.1 The Coronavirus Act 2020 was given Royal Assent on 25 March 2020 and will be in force for 2 years unless extended by Regulations. The Act and Regulations made under it contain a wide range of provisions relevant to the Council including the postponement of elections; enabling virtual meetings and prohibiting the recovery of possession of both commercial and residential premises.
- 5.2.2 In addition the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 require most business premises to close and enable the Council's officers to enforce these provisions by the service of prohibition and fixed penalty notices.

5.3 Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.3.1 In carrying out or changing its functions the Council must comply with the Equality Act 2010 and in particular section 149 which is the Public Sector Equality Duty. 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.

- 5.3.2 In taking the key decisions set out in paragraphs 4.11.1 and 4.11.2 officers have had regard to equality implications, and these considerations have been recorded within the individual decision notices. All decisions have taken into account government advice and legislation, which is aimed at protecting the wider population and in particular the most vulnerable people in society. However, it is acknowledged that in some cases, ceasing or reducing services has unfortunately had an adverse impact on particular protected groups and additional support has been put into place where possible to mitigate this.
- 5.3.3 The focus of the Council's response to Covid-19 has been on continuing to provide essential services to the public and on developing its Community and Housing Response, by supporting a range of vulnerable client groups and by responding effectively to changing and emerging needs (e.g. by increasing services provided through SADA and the No More Project and the homelessness and independent living teams).
- 5.3.4 In developing its recovery plans, the Council will continue to focus on supporting the vulnerable, ensuring services remain accessible and on assisting those on low incomes, taking into account emerging research which indicates disproportionate effects of the virus and of the lockdown on certain protected characteristic groups.

5.4 Risk Implications

- 5.4.1 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. A COVID-19 risk has been added to the Council's Strategic Risk Register and will be reported to the Audit Committee.
- 5.4.2 The Council will adjust its emergency planning approach in line with future Government COVID-19 measures.
- 5.4.3 A review of the Council's GF and HRA MTFs will help to identify the financial risks faced by the Council and will be reported to the Executive in June 2020.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- The Government's COVID-19 Action Plan – [COVID-19 Action Plan link](#)
- Coronavirus Act 2020 – [Coronavirus Act Link](#)
- Key Decision Forms – [Link to Key Decision Forms](#)

APPENDICES

- Appendix One: Chronological List of COVID-19 Guidance and Information
- Appendix Two: COVID-19 Financial Dashboard