

# Public Document Pack



## ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE

**Date: Wednesday, 13 January 2021**

**Time: 6.00pm,**

**Location: Virtual (via Zoom)**

**Contact: Lisa Jerome Tel (01438) 242203  
committees@stevenage.gov.uk**

**Members:** Councillors: M Downing (Chair), A Mitchell CC (Vice-Chair),  
D Bainbridge, S Barr, S Booth, A Brown, D Cullen, J Hanafin,  
M McKay, L Rossati and S Speller

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### AGENDA

#### **PART 1**

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

**2. MINUTES - 10 NOVEMBER 2021**

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Environment & Economy Select Committee held on 10 November 2020.

Pages 3 – 10

**3. PRESENTATION FROM THE NORTH HERTS COLLEGE PRINCIPAL ON THE IMPACT OF COVID -19 PANDEMIC ON POST 16 EDUCATION**

**4. INTERVIEWS FOR THE REVIEW OF THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON STEVENAGE**

The Committee are invited to carry out interviews for the review from selected interviewees.

**5. E&E MEMBER SUB-GROUP LOOKING AT THE ECONOMIC IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE**

To receive an update from a Member sub-group of the Environment & Economy Select Committee have been looking at the economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on young people.

**6. COMPOSITE DOCUMENT OF EVIDENCE COMPILED FOR THE REVIEW**

To consider the composite document of evidence compiled for the review.

Pages 11 - 36

**7. INTERIM REPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS OF NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES REVIEW**

To consider the interim report and recommendations of the review of the Neighbourhood Centres

Pages 37 – 58

**8. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

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

**9. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

To consider the following motions –

1. That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1 – 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

2. That Members consider the reasons for the following reports being in Part II and determine whether or not maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

**10. URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

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

## STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

### ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, 10 November 2020

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Virtual (via Zoom)

**Present:** Councillors: Michael Downing (Chair) (Chair), Adam Mitchell CC (Vice-Chair) (Vice Chair), Doug Bainbridge, Sandra Barr, Stephen Booth, Adrian Brown, Maureen McKay, Loraine Rossati and Simon Speller

Executive Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise & Transport, Cllr Lloyd Briscoe was in attendance at the meeting.

**Start / End Time:** Start Time: 6.00pm  
End Time: 8.00pm

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David Cullen and Jody Hanafin.

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 2 **MINUTES - 22 SEPTEMBER 2020**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment & Economy Select Committee meeting held on 22 September 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### 3 **SCOPING DOCUMENT - ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON STEVENAGE AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE**

The Committee agreed the draft scope of the review as presented to them with the following changes and additions:

The Chair indicated that he proposed an additional issue be added to the focus of the review, namely that the review should assess the impact of the work that the Council and its partners are doing in response to the pandemic to enhance the wellbeing of the local workforce, the business community and the people of Stevenage.

The Committee agreed to look at the question of what has been the economic impact of the pandemic on women.

The Committee agreed to include addressing the issue of matching the skills and aspirations of young people who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic to the businesses that might thrive and grow post the pandemic.

Cllr Simon Speller offered to head up a sub group with Cllrs Adam Mitchell and Maureen McKay to look at the initiatives to address young people, specifically those who may not get picked up by the more traditional outreaches of schools and the County Council and to look at engaging with outreach teams from local employers to promote STEM subjects and opportunities in secondary schools in Stevenage.

Cllr Loraine Rossati agreed to look into the effect of the pandemic on women assisted by an appropriate officer and Cllr Sandra Barr agreed to look into the work that North Herts College are doing with non-vocational studies and students that do not have clear employment pathways, and it was suggested that a relevant representative of North Herts College be invited as a witness.

The Chair indicated that he wanted 2 witness interview sessions, the first on 13 January with a focus internally with Executive Members and Council officers and then the second on a further date (yet to be determined) with external witnesses from local businesses and citizens affected by the pandemic.

The 13 January session should be with the Leader of the Council, the Executive Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Transport, Cllr Lloyd Briscoe, the Strategic Director Finance, Strategic Director Environment, Assistant Director Planning and Regulatory and the Business Relationship Manager. The Strategic Director, Tom Pike agreed to meet up with the Chair and the Scrutiny Officer to map out which officers are dealing with the specific responses to the Economic response to the pandemic and therefore who it would be best to speak to.

For external witnesses the Committee were recommended by the Vice-Chair to speak to a charity called Setpoint Hertfordshire who are based in Stevenage and they visit schools to promote STEM subjects, Helen Spencer was suggested as a contact to interview. Youth Connexions would also be invited for their work with hard to reach young people, Judith Sutton was suggested as a good contact. It was suggested that a representative of a trade union should be included in the list of witnesses.

Regarding equalities and diversity issues it was recognised that many of the characteristic groups have been affected economically and psychologically by the pandemic including the disabled, BAME, younger people, older people etc. and the review would need to address this.

Regarding constraints the issues of resources and staff time is one who may be diverted by urgent work to directly respond to the pandemic as well as time to complete the review, access to the appropriate and available data and access to third party partners such as sixth form and FE colleges to provide insight.

It was **RESOLVED:**

That the scoping document be agreed with the following additions and amendments:

- (1) That an additional issue be listed in the bullet points for the focus of the review to encapsulate the desire to see what impact the Council and its partners are making to enhance the wellbeing of the local workforce,

- businesses and its citizens throughout the pandemic;
- (2) That the review assess the economic impact of the pandemic on women, to which Cllr Loraine Rossati agreed to lead on with the assistance from officers;
  - (3) That the review assess specifically the impact on young people, with a focus on outreach work to schools on STEM subjects which would be led by a sub group headed up by Cllr Simon Speller and to include the Vice-Chair Cllr Adam Mitchell, Cllr Maureen McKay and with Cllr Sandra Barr who agreed to look into those young people who are left behind and would link up with North Herts College;
  - (4) That there would be two main witness interview sessions, the first on 13 January 2021 focusing on internal Member and officer interviews and a second session (date yet to be determined) to interview external witnesses from businesses and the local workforce;
  - (5) That the Strategic Director, Tom Pike, the Assistant Director, Steve Dupoy and the Scrutiny Officer agreed to meet with the Chair to map out the interview process, and further evidence required; and
  - (6) That the amended scoping document be represented to the Committee at its next meeting of the Committee.

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#### **HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (LEP) HERTS RECOVERY PLAN**

The Committee received a presentation from Adam Wood, Head of Infrastructure & Regeneration Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) regarding the Hertfordshire Recovery Plan, rebuilding the Hertfordshire and Stevenage Economy.

The presentation covered a range of issues including the extent of the economic impact so far on the County and Stevenage; unemployment figures; furlough take up; remote working; what actions the LEP has taken; the economic recovery plans principles and framework and finally the economic recovery activities.

The potential job losses in Hertfordshire are between 80,000 to 100,000 but could change as the situation is constantly changing; the unemployment figures for the County and Stevenage which were historically low pre the pandemic but had seen a rise of over 200% in the County from 1.9% to 5.2% with Stevenage being slightly lower than UK average but slightly higher than the County average with 2.6 to 6.4% from March to May 2020.

Stevenage had 9,800 furloughed workers which was 18.9% of the workforce.

The number of workers who are able to work from home was directly affected by the type of employment sector they came from with 70% of professionals being able to work from home down to sectors such as hospitality, retail, construction and utilities, who needed to carry on their role in a physical place. By district Stevenage had a similar percentage of workers who could work from home as North and East Herts and Broxbourne at 38%, while areas like Watford, Welwyn Hatfield and St Albans were above the Hertfordshire average of 42%.

The LEP were focusing on four strands of response to the economic impact of the pandemic, the primary one being supporting the Hertfordshire Economic Recovery

Plan as well as continuing the Hertfordshire Growth Board, supporting local initiatives already in train such as Stevenage Town Investment Plan (TIP)/Town Deal and the creation of Catalyst South as joint lobbying group with nine other southern LEPs outside of London representing some 13 million people to lobby government and get the scale of the Midlands, North West and North East to lobby for the region.

The LEP had responded by organising the County wide Economic Recovery Group, Getting Building Fund for shovel ready projects which Stevenage has several, and ministerial roundtable discussions.

The LEP has also unlocked a £3.28M Business Support Package and has an overarching Recovery Plan Framework, which is an action plan not a strategy. The Framework covers:

- Growing our assets to add high value jobs
- Accelerating inward investment
- Focus on skills and flexibility of workforce
- Exploring digital opportunities
- Promote clean growth
- Level up and connect places

The LEP has a Recovery Plan Activities; these include 3 recovery packages and 2 transformational programmes:

- Recovery Package 1 – Enterprise & Innovation
- Recovery Package 2 – Skills & Creativity – with an emphasis on young people through the Herts Opportunities Portal and linking with HMG's Kickstart programme
- Recovery Package 3 – International Trade & Investment – prioritising potential high growth sectors such as life sciences/cell & gene, film & TV, smart & sustainable construction
- 2 Transformational Programmes – longer-term aspirations/interventions
- Transformational Programme 1: Equipping Hertfordshire's places for mid-21<sup>st</sup> Century living – Stevenage is a great example with its regeneration of the Town Centre
- Transformational Programme 2: Connecting Hertfordshire for mid-21<sup>st</sup> Century living and working through building digital infrastructure and redefining orbital connectivity

The LEP would be supporting the event co-sponsored by the Council and the Hertfordshire Opportunities Portal on 1<sup>st</sup> December – Generation Stevenage which is targeting 1,000 young people to meet on line with local employers, with a view to finding out what job opportunities these employers are currently offering.

For the first time in a generation the focus would have to shift from just looking at the quality of jobs created in an area to now focus on the number of jobs available. However, the fundamentals for a Herts wide and Stevenage recover and growth remain good because of the areas geographical position to London and the presence of existing high quality industries.

There will be a need for short term action to cover the potential 80,000 to 100,000 job losses in Hertfordshire but there was still a need for long term structural change for better growth to focus on jobs in emerging low carbon green industries to address the climate emergency as well as fairer growth to provide jobs that local people can access addressing the skills gap with a large portion of the local workforce.

Following Adam's presentation Members asked Adam a series of questions these included the following issues:

- What ratio of public and private money has been invested into the regeneration projects supported by the LEP? The ratio is approximately 1 to 10 so every £1 of public money levers in £10 of private investment. If the LEP and Council are successful with the Town Investment Plan then the total public spend would be circa £100 Million pounds
- In addition to setting up Catalyst South as a larger regional body to lobby Government what is the LEP doing about attracting international inward investment, does it attend international trade fair events? The LEP through the Herts Growth Board also lobbies government on issues such as the holding direction on the SG1 Planning Application. Regarding inward investment the LEP has direct contact with the Department for International Trade and receive inquiries via the department and they also uses its existing business to cultivate new inward investment as generating inward investment "cold" is difficult but bringing in a "warmer" investor who knows the existing businesses and industries is more successful.
- Volunteer Business Support Scheme, who should interested businesses contact and how would they become a volunteer? Initially they should make contact with the Herts Growth Hub and they will direct them
- Members endorsed the LEPs focus on the structural changes that are required and strongly endorse the LEPs focus on young people who have been the most badly affected economically by the pandemic and wished to reiterate their support for bilateral partnership working across the County to tackle the economic challenges in the recovery from the pandemic
- The Executive Portfolio holder for Economy, Enterprise & Transport, Cllr Lloyd Briscoe commented that he supported the analysis of the LEP and quoted its CEO in sighting that Hertfordshire should be very well placed to bounce back quicker than other areas due to its fundamental economic factors such as skilled workforce and its geography. Also the repurposing of town centres to bring in residential living and associated business are the future for town centre developments as traditional retail focused high streets struggle, which Stevenage was a prime example of and was well ahead of other towns both new towns and older traditional towns in this regard.

It was **RESOLVED:**

That the presentation be noted and that a copy of the slides be circulated to the Committee following the meeting.

## STEVENAGE AND THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

The Committee received a presentation from the Council's Business Relationship Manager, Mena Caldbeck, on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on economic development in Stevenage and on the Council's response.

The presentation covered a wide range of data this included:

- A snapshot of national economic data regarding the effect of the pandemic
- Government Support Measures including small business grant; discretionary grant; retail, hospitality & leisure business rate relief; job retention scheme; self-employment income support scheme; bounce back loan scheme; business interruption loan scheme; time to pay scheme; VAT deferral; deferral of self-assessment payment; Kickstart Scheme (work placement for 16-24 year olds); flexibility to pay back loans; support to stop evictions
- Analysis of a local business survey that was undertaken in August 2020 with 145 businesses completing the survey, including micro, SME's & large businesses from all sectors
- The Survey provided information on the following areas: what were businesses current concerns; numbers furloughed; self-employed; agency workers; businesses returning to full staff numbers; how local businesses were accessing government support measures; what adaptations businesses had made to their business during the pandemic
- Part of the survey had been to ask businesses what they thought should be the key priorities for the Council with regard to supporting the business community, these included:
  - **Improving and maintaining the wider infrastructure** such as safeguarding employment land better broadband
  - **skills support** including apprenticeships and upskilling and retraining for those made redundant
  - funding for schools with IT to support home working
  - procurement access to the Council's tendering process
  - **wellbeing** – supporting residents to get fit
  - **Business Support** including
    - sector development to support growth
    - networking opportunities
    - funding to improve premises, purchase equipment, support cash flow
  - **Regeneration of the town centre**
    - Proactively targeting quality retailers to attract customers in to the town
  - **Old Town** – promotion and support of businesses
- **Challenges that face the Council in responding:**
  - To a large part the Council is able to influence, lobby government and work with partners
  - **Areas supported** – skills/jobs a priority of Stevenage Economic Taskforce
  - Procurement
  - Business support
  - Regeneration of the town centre
  - the Old Town



Members raised the following questions and comments:

- What particular skills, upskilling and retraining can the Borough Council do to help the local workforce? The Council has organised the Stevenage Generation event to target opportunities for young people to meet prospective employers, 5 large sized employers based locally, as well as funding sourced locally to help upskill their workforce which is promoted by the Council, the LEP and the Economic Taskforce
- What can the Council and its partners like the Council for Voluntary Service & the Citizens Advice Bureau do to help deliver practical solutions to change people's lives if that person has been made redundant or can't find employment? The Council does engage with a large range of partners who can provide direct support for those who need it. The Business Relationship Manager works with the Herts Growth Hub supporting businesses with advice and the LEP supporting people with skills and with Herts Opportunities Portal which helps people identify businesses and sectors who are recruiting. Also Stevenage Economic Task Force are looking to engage and work with a number of different agencies to help offer support to local people. Also the Council is working with the Department for International Trade to provide leads to Stevenage based companies to provide inward investment.
- How many of the Government support measures that were referred to in the presentation are administered by the Council? The Council administers the small business grant; the hospitality and leisure grant; and supported businesses with the discretionary grant funding; the retail, hospitality, leisure and business rates relief; the shared Revenues and Benefits team are administering the Local Restriction Grant to support those businesses who have to close as a result of the second lockdown and are preparing the application form; the additional restrictive grant for businesses who have been severely impacted by the pandemic and the lockdown; the shared revenues and benefits service has administered hardship schemes and rates schemes and had provided funding up to £30 million pounds in government grants since the start of the pandemic. The Strategic Director Finance offered to circulate to the Committee the latest Member dashboard that details all of the schemes that the Council is involved in administering.
- What mechanisms are there for smaller businesses to take on traineeships for young people and apprenticeships? Under the government's Kick Start Scheme employers can support young people through 6 month work placements but need to take on 30 new employees. Businesses offering traineeships can receive between £1.5K to £2K payments? Many small or medium sized businesses could not afford to support the Kick Start Scheme and therefore would go through the Intermediary scheme. Currently Wenta and Herts Chambers of Commerce and the Herts Growth Hub can support businesses access the scheme. Information has been placed on the website.
- It was **RESOLVED:**
  - (1) That the presentation be noted; and
  - (2) That the Strategic Director Finance would circulate to the Committee the latest Member dashboard that details all of the schemes that the Council is

involved in administering to help businesses and individuals during the pandemic.

**6 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS TO ASSIST THE REVIEW**

The background documents to support the review were noted.

**7 URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

The Chair accepted a Part 1 urgent business to update the Committee on the Committee's work programme.

Regarding the Neighbourhood Centres Review the Scrutiny Officer agreed to contact Committee Members to invite them to send any updates they have for the review resulting from their particular ward Neighbourhood engagement meetings.

**8 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Not required.

**9 URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

Not required.

**CHAIR**

**Environment & Economy Select Committee**  
**13 January 2021**

**Composite document of research evidence requested by Members to assist with the review**

<b>Area investigated</b>	<b>Page number and evidence contributed</b> (whether included in this report, in a supplementary agenda paper or 15 February meeting)
(1) Impact on self employed	This evidence and input from witnesses from Self Employed based at the Business Technology Centre will be provided at the meeting on 15 February 2021.
(2) Impact on SMEs	This evidence and input from witnesses from Small to Medium Sized Businesses (SME's) based at the Business Technology Centre will be provided at the meeting on 15 February 2021.
(3) Impact on larger companies	This evidence and input from witnesses from larger Companies based in Stevenage will be provided at the meeting on 15 February 2021.
(4) Impact on different sectors	<b>Appendix 1 PowerPoint Slides (1 to 4)</b> - Claimant count March to Nov 2020; Employment by Occupation July 2019- June 2020 and July 2018- June 2019; CJRS Furloughed employments; SEIS for 2 <sup>nd</sup> grant 31 Oct – provided by Mena Caldbeck, Business Relationship Manager.
(5) (i) Impact on Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The E&amp;E Member Sub-group looking at the impact on young people will provide a verbal update to 13 Jan meeting.</li> <li>• <b>Page No. 4.</b> Statement from Helen Spencer STEM Point East (Set Point Hertfordshire). Helen is attending the 13 Jan meeting as witness.</li> <li>• Kit Davies, Principal NH College – is providing a presentation on the impact on post 16 Education at 13 Jan 2021 meeting.</li> <li>• Judith Sutton, Youth Connexions – to attend 15 February meeting.</li> <li>• <b>Page No. 5 to 7</b> – A written statement to questions raised by Members is provided by the Larwood SEN School</li> </ul>

(5) (ii) Impact on Young People - Generation Stevenage / Skills:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adrian Hawkins Independent Chair of Stevenage Development Board to attend 15 February meeting</li> <li>• Norman Jennings Herts LEP to attend 15 February meeting</li> </ul>
(5) (iii) Impact on Young People - Job Centre Plus – YP targeted Kickstart Scheme (6 month job placements for 16 – 24 year olds)	(Response from Mena Caldbeck, Business Relationship Manager re data from Job Centre Plus to be included in a supplementary agenda for 13 01 21 meeting)
(6) Impact on Women	<b>Page No.8</b> – Data on Gender split for new Universal Credit Claimants provided by Gareth Wall, Corporate Policy & Research Officer.
(7) Impact on BAME	(Response from Gareth Wall, Corporate Policy & Research Officer to be included in a supplementary agenda for 13 01 21 meeting)
(8) Impact on lower Socio Economic background	(Response from Gareth Wall, Corporate Policy & Research Officer to be included in a supplementary agenda for 13 01 21 meeting)
(9) Impact on Private Investment (Planning & Development activity)	<b>Page No. 9 to 13</b> - response provided from James Chettelburgh, Principal Planning Officer
(10) Impact on Town Investment Plan	(Response from Chris Barnes Assistant Director Regeneration to be included in a supplementary agenda for 13 01 21 meeting )
(11) Impact on Recovery Plan	<p>Follow the link to the Recovery Plan provided to the Executive 8 July 2020</p> <p><a href="https://democracy.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/s25707/Item%20%20-%20Appendix%20%20-%20Draft%20Town%20Recovery%20Plan.pdf">https://democracy.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/s25707/Item%20%20-%20Appendix%20%20-%20Draft%20Town%20Recovery%20Plan.pdf</a></p> <p><a href="#">Agenda for Executive on Wednesday, 8 July 2020, 2.00pm</a></p>
(12) What is being offered as on the ground support	<b>Page No. 14</b> - Information of the offer from Hertfordshire Opportunities Portal - response provided from Mena Caldbeck.
(13) Job Centre Plus (JCP) – all groups	(Response from Mena Caldbeck, Business Relationship Manager to be included in a supplementary agenda for 13 01 21 meeting)
(14) Grants	<b>Appendix 2 – PDF doc (1 – 3)</b> - Covid 19 Resource Dashboard 04 01 21 - response provided from Clare Fletcher, Strategic Director.
(15) External research:	<b>Page No. 15 to 16</b> – Centre for Cities – UK Unemployment Rate Dec 2020

(16) CITB (Construction Industry Training Board) / Stevenage Works	(Response from Chris Barnes Assistant Director Regeneration to be included in a supplementary agenda for 13 01 21 meeting)
(17) Co-operative Economy Charter:	(Response from Paul Cheeseman, Community Development Officer to be included in a supplementary agenda for 13 01 21 meeting)
(18) Lloyd Briscoe Exec Portfolio Holder Econ, Enterprise & Transport & the Leader of the Council	<b>Page No. 17</b> – Questions set for Cllr Lloyd Briscoe and the Leader Cllr Sharon Taylor

### **(5) Impact on Young People**

Statement from Helen Spencer – STEM Point East (Setpoint Hertfordshire)

Thank you for getting in touch; I believe the work you're doing is so important at this time.

I'm not sure I'm the right person to ask about the impact on young people, simply because the services we offer tend to be through schools and colleges, and we don't normally have contact direct with pupils. However, I've attended a few meetings recently where teachers and head teachers are commenting that they have seen the economic disparity between disadvantaged and better-off families widen in the last few months. There is also a general view that whilst some families were willing and able to ensure their children still had some kind of education at home during the first lockdown, many pupils will have been further disadvantaged because this support was not present or encouraged and those pupils are now really struggling to keep up at school. Again, this obviously has a further impact on young people who may be doubly disadvantaged by parents' loss of earnings as well as a gap in educational attainment. The worry is that this will lead some pupils to become demotivated and left behind. The economic and social implications of this are worrying and I believe we need to make every effort to include these students in programmes that help raise their aspirations and enter the job market.

As you know, we recently jointly organised the Generation Stevenage event (which Stevenage Borough Council kindly helped support), and whilst we were pleased with the numbers of local students attending, the results of a survey showed that most students attending already had an interest in STEM education and careers, even if they feel they need more advice on jobs etc. I always feel we are missing the disengaged young people of Stevenage, who really need to hear about local opportunities, but who don't sign up for this kind of event, perhaps because digital poverty, or through disinterest and/or lack of parental awareness and guidance.

## **(5) Impact on Young People**

**Information for Cllr Sandra Barr  
From D Pearce Larwood School 14/12/2020**

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Feedback</b>
The sort of issues that you are picking up in relation to this age group and Covid	<p>Many of our students suffer from anxieties and struggle to form positive relationships with adults and peers. We have many families with multiple siblings in small houses. Extended periods in this environment has resulted in increased breakdowns in relationships and some psychological and physical abuse between siblings and/or parents and their children.</p> <p>Some parents are also relying on older siblings to look after younger ones when they are not really equipped to do this.</p> <p>Increased social media use due to being stuck at home has also shown an exponential rise in conflict between peers. Students struggle to consider consequences of comments made in the virtual world when they meet again in the real world. They seem to think they can be quite vicious to one another with impunity.</p> <p>Some of our students are still quite anxious about the virus and the impact it may have on their own and their family's health. As feelings are so varied between groups it is difficult to encourage and support students to talk about it.</p> <p>There are several families experiencing real financial hardships. We have our own foodbank and are regularly distributing food to families.</p>
What short/long term projects may help with such youngsters	<p>The D of E is an excellent vehicle to support students in working together and building relationships with people from many different walks of life.</p> <p>Creatives in Hitchin is a good Alternative Provision for work-based learning in Music and Food. They also offer Level one Foundation Courses and mentoring.</p> <p>Listen to Learn is a good Therapeutic provision where students work with horses and build relationships with others.</p>

	<p>Enemy Of Boredom is a good provision on Wednesdays for students interested in Computer Programming.</p> <p>The Skills Centre at NHC is good for students who are looking for work-based learning. We struggle to access this as they want us to provide a member of staff with the students as well as pay for the provision. This makes it extremely expensive for us.</p> <p>Marsh House Studios are an excellent provision for DJ work and Level 1 and 2 foundation courses in Maths and English.</p> <p>The Sports Leader Programmes are very good for students to build skills in Leadership and work with peers. They help students develop organisational skills and take responsibilities. Coaching and refereeing badges through Sports Governing Bodies are also excellent ways to encourage student involvement in activities across a whole range of sports. Many are aesthetic and not competitive which appeals to a varying demographics.</p> <p>We have a Graffiti Artist that works with some of our boys. This has a real positive impact on engagement and is something different and outside the mainstream.</p> <p>Forest Schools have been popular for a while and the David Muir award is an excellent accreditation that can be achieved through this.</p> <p>Many of our boys have bought into War Hammer and similar fantasy games. This is good for co-operation, teamwork, and relationship building.</p> <p>The Fire Service offer weeklong programmes and Cadets.</p> <p>First aid courses are good for short term accredited activities that help build responsibility and thinking about others.</p> <p>The Prince's Trust also run programmes throughout the holidays that are excellent for student engagement.</p> <p>There are several Cadet Forces in the local area.</p>
Sandra made the point about inequality for 16+ SEMH pupils in our area	<p>The main issue here is that students diagnosed with SEMH needs and are taught in a specialist SEMH provision, must then try to cope in a mainstream college. Even with a comprehensive transition programme and pastoral support at the college, this is still a massive undertaking with many students who struggle with change. Students with behavioural issues and a lack of parental support find it extremely difficult to cope with the more relaxed framework of a college environment. Many also have a historical lack of self-efficacy, resilience etc. necessary to cope</p>



	<p>with any negative feedback from lecturers.</p> <p>There is an obvious dichotomy in students needing the very personality traits required to leave the house to access support groups, join clubs, etc. that these activities are there to develop.</p>
Is this a forum to bang the drum about space and the need for further investment in building/new school?	<p>There has be a comprehensive building programme throughout this area and an exponential rise in people moving into the area as a consequence. As school numbers rise the number of students with Special Educational Needs rises. When I arrived at Brandles in Oct 2015 there were 42 students on roll. We now have 62 and there has been no investment in infra-structure. There is also a huge waiting list. We need more buildings to cater for the students we have, and then further investment to allow us to expand.</p>
Your experiences with Stevenage based pupils that have left the school into positive pathways-what worked and should be done more to help them.	<p>Our most successful students are those that have a clear work-based goal in mind and know what courses they need to undertake to make this happen. We have examples of students that are interested in construction, catering, vehicle repair and teaching that have accessed college courses and succeeded well in them. Some students have entered jobs with training such as landscape gardening and have been equally successful.</p> <p>The importance of a high-quality careers programme is so important to provide students with direction and the confidence to know they can succeed.</p>

(6) Impact on Women

Local area data

Under Universal Credit a broader span of claimants are required to look for work than under Jobseekers Allowance. As Universal Credit Full Service is rolled out in particular areas, the number of people recorded as being on the Claimant Count is therefore likely to rise.

CC01 - Claimant Count<sup>1</sup> by unitary and local authority  
(experimental statistics)

not seasonally adjusted

		CLAIMANT COUNT ON 8th OCTOBER 2020							Change on year							% Change on year	
		Levels			Percentage of Pop <sup>2</sup>				Levels			Percentage <sup>2</sup>				Levels	
		Men	%	Women	%	People	Men	Women	People	Men	Women	People	Men	Women	People	Men	Women
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
E92000001	ENGLAND	1,311,410	58.9%	916,740	41.1%	2,228,150	7.5	5.2	6.3	746,675	60.2%	493,935	39.8%	1,240,610	4.3	2.8	3.5
E10000015	Hertfordshire	21,255	57.4%	15,810	42.7%	37,060	5.8	4.2	5.0	14,000	58.9%	9,760	41.1%	23,760	3.8	2.6	3.2
E07000095	Broxbourne	2,200	55.9%	1,740	44.2%	3,935	7.6	5.6	6.6	1,510	59.1%	1,045	40.9%	2,555	5.2	3.4	4.3
E07000096	Dacorum	2,780	56.7%	2,115	43.2%	4,900	5.9	4.4	5.1	1,915	57.9%	1,390	42.1%	3,305	4.0	2.9	3.4
E07000242	East Hertfordshire	2,065	56.7%	1,580	43.3%	3,645	4.5	3.3	3.9	1,480	57.6%	1,090	42.4%	2,570	3.2	2.3	2.8
E07000098	Hertsmere	1,970	55.0%	1,615	45.0%	3,585	6.5	4.9	5.7	1,285	55.4%	1,035	44.6%	2,320	4.2	3.2	3.7
E07000099	North Hertfordshire	2,105	58.3%	1,505	41.7%	3,610	5.2	3.6	4.4	1,390	60.6%	900	39.2%	2,295	3.5	2.2	2.8
E07000240	St Albans	2,085	57.4%	1,550	42.6%	3,635	4.7	3.4	4.0	1,350	59.7%	905	40.0%	2,260	3.1	2.0	2.5
E07000243	Stevenage	2,010	61.3%	1,270	38.7%	3,280	7.2	4.5	5.9	1,240	63.4%	715	36.6%	1,955	4.4	2.6	3.5
E07000102	Three Rivers	1,490	56.4%	1,155	43.8%	2,640	5.3	4.0	4.6	1,015	58.3%	720	41.4%	1,740	3.6	2.5	3.0
E07000103	Watford	2,435	58.5%	1,725	41.5%	4,160	7.8	5.6	6.7	1,505	58.6%	1,060	41.2%	2,570	4.8	3.4	4.1
E07000241	Welwyn Hatfield	2,120	57.7%	1,555	42.3%	3,675	5.3	3.8	4.5	1,305	59.3%	895	40.7%	2,200	3.3	2.2	2.7
E92000001	ENGLAND	1,311,410	58.9%	916,740	41.1%	2,228,150	7.5	5.2	6.3	746,675	60.2%	493,935	39.8%	1,240,610	4.3	2.8	3.5

1. The experimental Claimant Count consists of claimants of Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) and some Universal Credit (UC) Claimants. The UC claimants that are included are 1) those that were recorded as not in employment (May 2013-April 2015), and 2) those claimants of Universal Credit who are required to search for work, i.e. within the Searching for Work conditionality regime as defined by the Department for Work & Pensions (from April 2015 onwards).

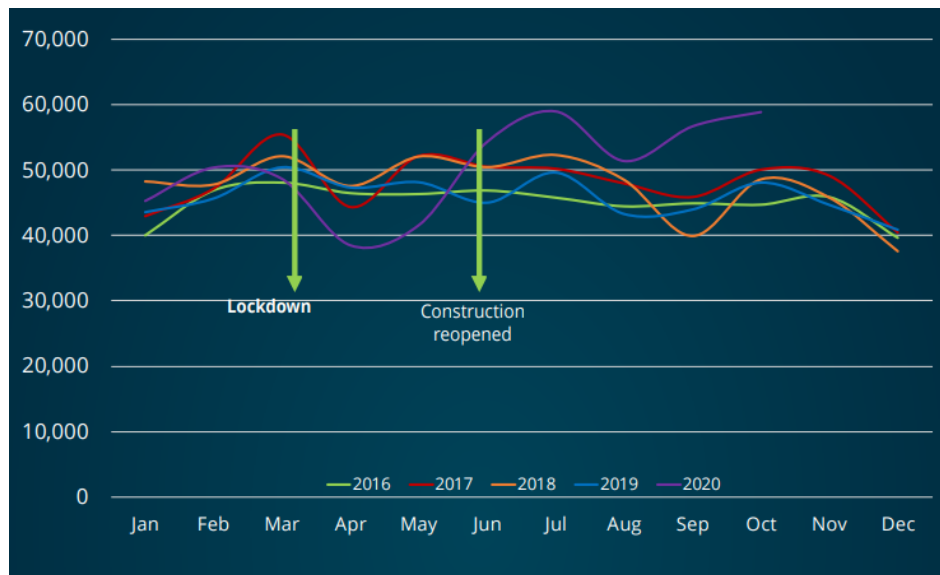
Levels are calculated using the number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance from table JSA01 plus the number of people claiming Universal Credit benefits who are required to seek work. Note due to rounding people may not add up to the sum of men and women; and higher level geographies may not equal the sum of their lower level geographies.

2. Percentages of population aged from 16 to 64 based on mid-year 2018 population estimates.

## **(9) Impact on Private Investment – Planning & Development activity**

### **1. Covid-19 Impact on Planning.**

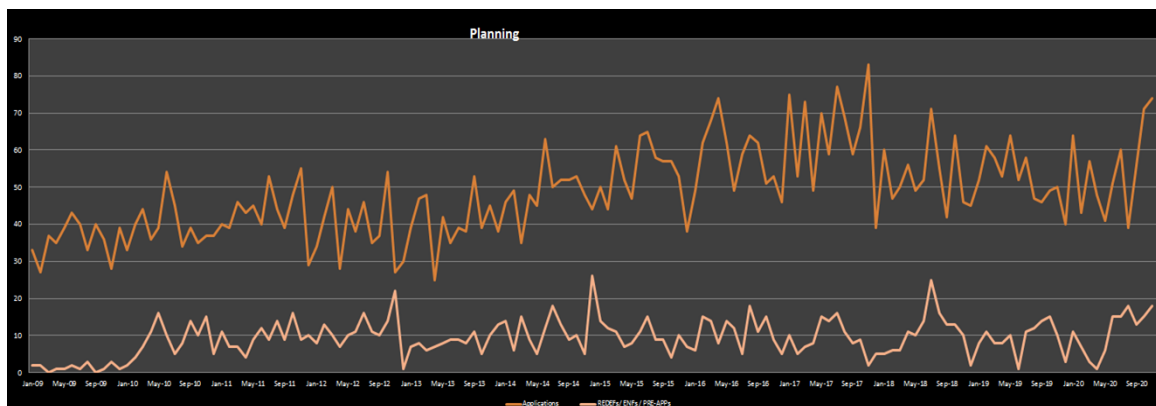
- 1.1 The global pandemic remains a major issue to all those who are involved in the planning and construction industries. The full impact this pandemic will have on planning will not be known for some time. A report by the Planning Portal in April 2020 undertook market analysis and when we entered Lockdown from 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, there was a 20% drop in planning applications across the Country. However, as restrictions were being lifted, construction sites started to re-open from May 2020 along with suppliers and merchants supporting the construction industry with increased levels of deliveries. Construction sites have become more flexible in their working hours to ensure there is a productive operation in place combined with putting in measures to be Covid secure.
- 1.2 Since construction sites have re-opened across the country and have remained open since (even during the most recent lockdown), confidence has increased in the construction and planning industry. The Planning Portal in their most recent report (November 2020) identified that the deficit in applications throughout lockdown has more than recovered during the summer months. As we are seeing in Stevenage, as is across the country, it is the level of householder applications which have made up the deficit where according to the Planning Portal, overall numbers in terms of Household applications are up 23% on October 2019. Figure 1 shows the trend in planning application numbers across the country from 2016 to 2020.



**Figure 1:-** Application numbers in England and Wales (Source:- Planning Portal 2020)

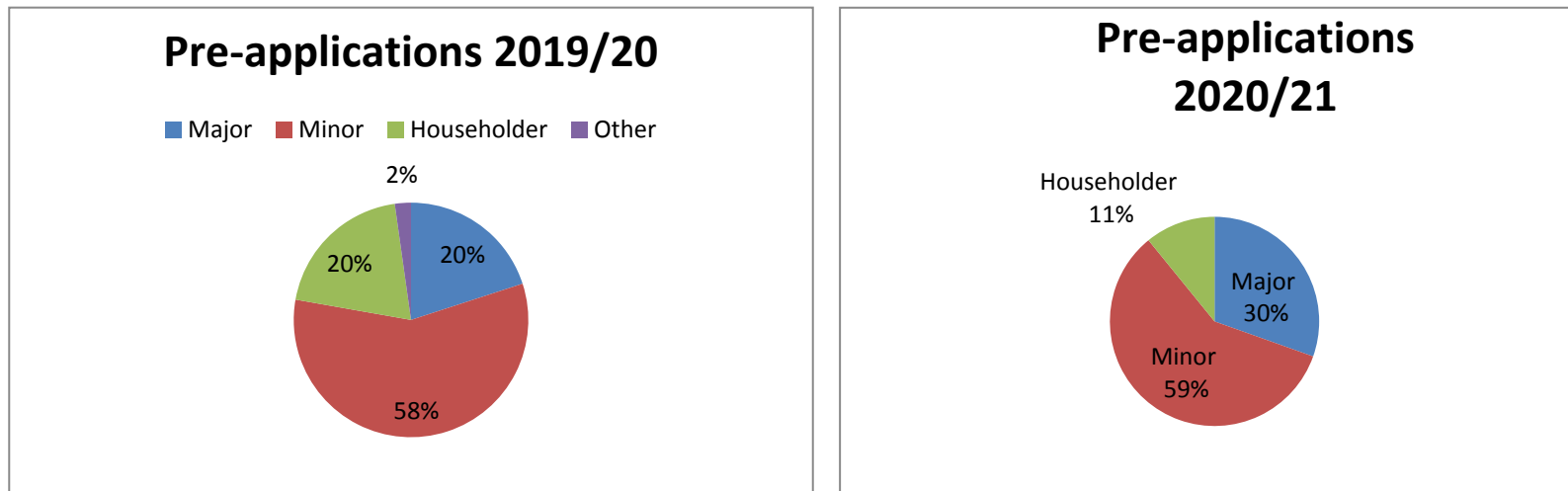
- 1.3 Turning to Stevenage, since January 2009, the Planning Department has seen a steady increase in the number of planning applications which has been received. As shown in Figure 2, the Council was had on average 35 planning applications a month in 2009. However, by September 2020, the Planning Department had 51 planning applications a month. The most recent data from Technical Support that in October of this year, the department had 71 planning applications and in November, it had 74 planning applications. This is an increase from 2019 where in October, the department had 49 applications and in November it had 50 applications.
- 1.4 Looking at the impact of the first lockdown, between March 2020 and June 2020 during lockdown, the Council had a total of 146 applications. However, in the same period in 2019, there were a total of 175 applications. As such, the department did see a reduction of 29 applications or 16%. However, when we entered the Second Lockdown in November, the Council had 74 applications; this is an increase of 24 applications from the same month in 2019. The Council was also receiving very similar numbers of applications over the summer months to those received in 2019. This reflects the trend identified by the Planning Portal where the deficit of applications has more than recovered. In fact, as set out above, the Department is receiving more applications than it did at the same time last year.

- 1.5 It does need to be caveated that the stats include all application types including applications not completed due to being withdrawn, not proceeded with and invalids in each months figures, but are included as they are still being worked on by the Technical Support Team. However, it is important to note even when an application is invalid, or it has been withdrawn, it has still been worked on by either the Technical Support Team and / or officers.



**Figure 2:-** Applications received between January 2009 to September 2020 (Source- Technical Support).

- 1.6 In terms of pre-application submissions to the planning department, the number which have been submitted have also increased since the last financial year (2019/2020). Between April 2019 to March 2020, the Council received a total of 45 pre-applications which included 9 Majors, 26 Minors, 9 householders and 1 other. These are set out in more detail in Figure 3. In terms of the pre-applications which have been received between April 2020 to 10th December 2020, the Council had received 46 pre-applications. These included 14 Majors, 27 Minors and 5 Householders. These have been broken down in more detail in Figure 4.



**Figure 3:-** Pre-applications received between April 2019 and March 2020.

**Figure 4:-** Pre-applications received between April 2020 and December 2020.

- 1.7 As shown from the data, whilst the Council did notice a reduction of planning applications during the first lockdown. It is evident that confidence has returned in the planning and construction industry where applications quickly recovered in the summer months. Furthermore, the department is also starting to see more planning applications and pre-applications being made to the Council. The department has also dealt with the large scale regeneration project known as SG1 as well as a number of large scale residential (including North Stevenage) and commercial applications which have been to the Planning and Development Committee since May 2020. This further reflects the continued confidence in the market despite the impact the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the Country.
- 1.8 Turning to the applications themselves, it is important to note that not all applications submissions are equal. This is because Major Planning applications, including applications such as the Town Centre Regeneration Project (Planning Reference:- 19/00743/FPM) and North Stevenage (Planning Reference:- 17/00862/FPM) can be very resource intensive at officer level. Furthermore, the 10% increase in the number of pre-application Majors will have a significant impact on workload for the team. This is because a number of these Major pre-applications are likely to follow through to the planning application stage in the coming year. Therefore, such applications will need to be planned for when being managed by the Planning Department (including the Technical Support Team when they validate the applications) as well as have implications on the Planning Committee in terms of its workload as well. However, these applications will also generate

additional fee income into the Council. But, these fees will not only need to cover officer time, they will also need to cover the costs of any consultants the department needs to appoint when determining such applications.

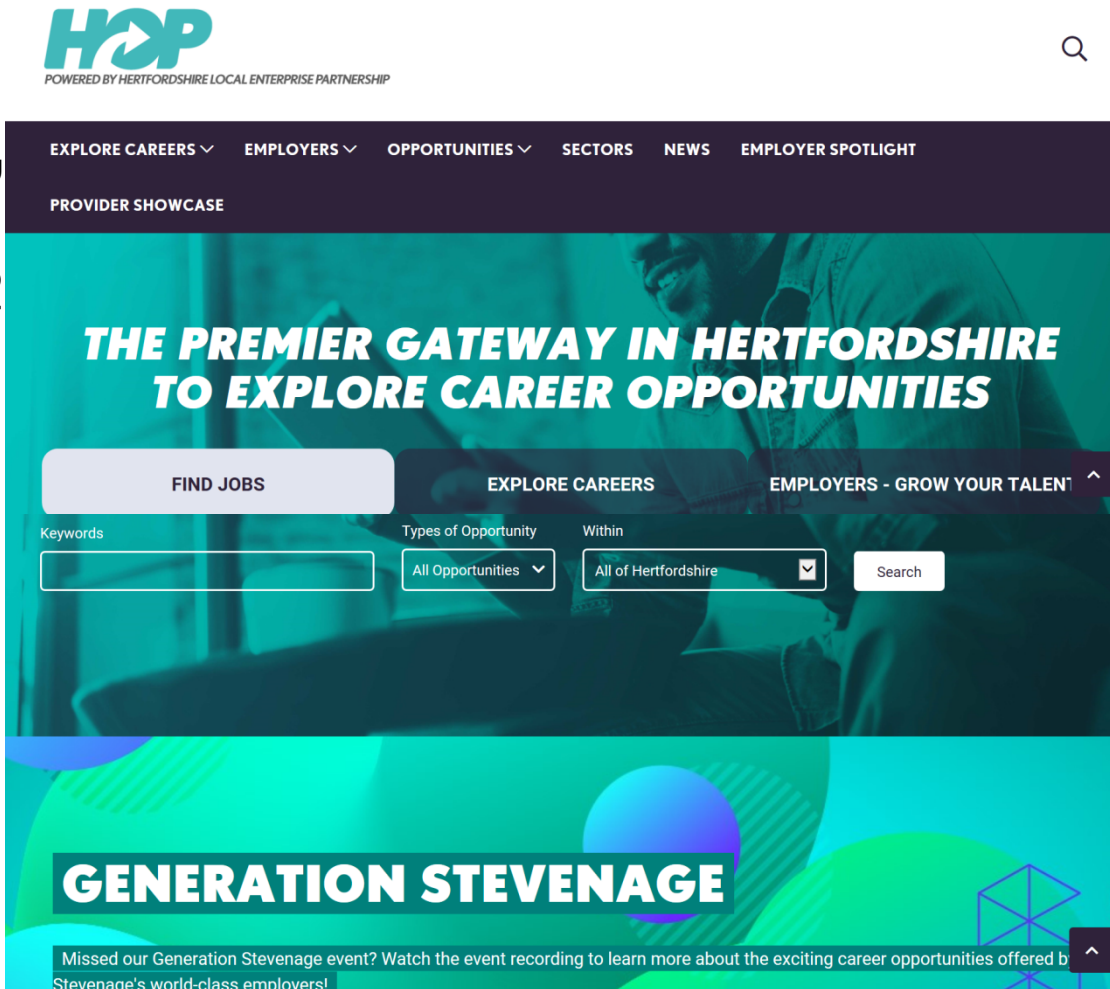
- 1.9 Further to the above, the Government has recently published its White Paper on Planning Reform. It has emphasised that applications will need to be determined within the statutory timeframes (8 weeks, 13 weeks and 16 weeks). If these are not met in these strict timeframes, they have recommended the planning fee is returned in full to the applicant. As such, if this does come into force, it will have implications on the Planning Department in terms of managing these applications in a timely manner as it will affect the Council's income. It must be noted that the current rule is to refund the planning fee if an application takes more than 26 weeks under the "Planning Guarantee" unless otherwise agreed in writing with the developer. Moreover, it also puts pressure on the Technical Support Team to turn around validations in an expedient timeframe so that officers do not lose too much time in processing and determining application. Therefore, it is equally important they are properly resourced to handle the increase and management of planning applications coming through.

**Report Author** – James Chettleburgh

## (12) What is being offered as on the ground support – Hertfordshire Opportunities Portal

The Hertfordshire Opportunities Portal provides a one stop Skills resource to support employers, residents and students access a wide array of resource and support including details of current job and volunteering opportunities, as well as details of sectors currently recruiting. HOP also provides support for employers to upskill staff and careers and skills-related guidance and educational resources for students to make informed career decisions in order to support Hertfordshire with a pipeline of talent. [HOP](#)

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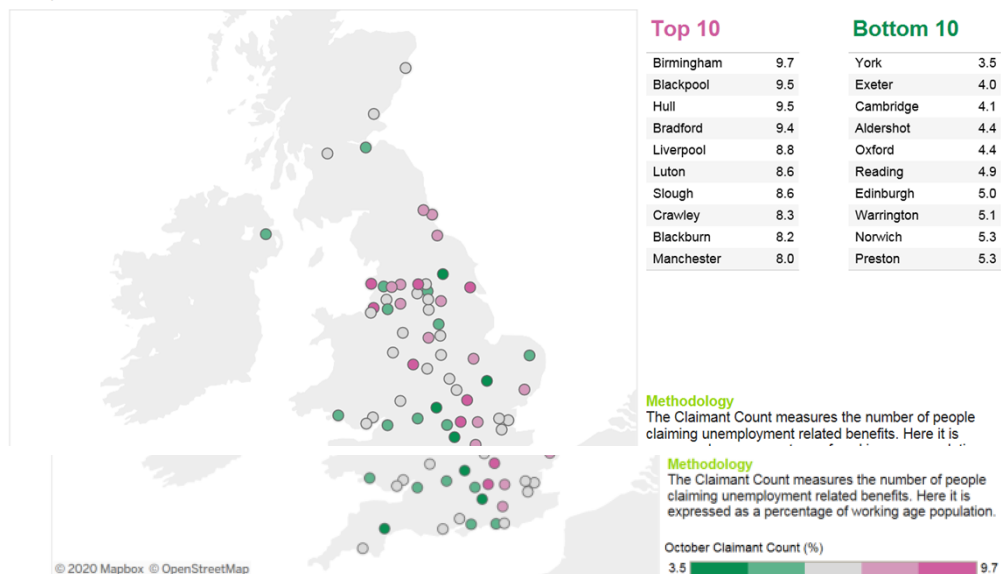
## (15) External Research – Centre for Cities – National & City Unemployment levels

### UK Unemployment Tracker

#### How is the Coronavirus pandemic affecting unemployment in cities and large towns?

As the COVID-19 pandemic sends shockwaves through the labour market, Centre for Cities tracks the latest unemployment claim statistics across the UK's cities and largest towns.

Data period: November 2019 - November 2020  
Data updated: 15 December 2020

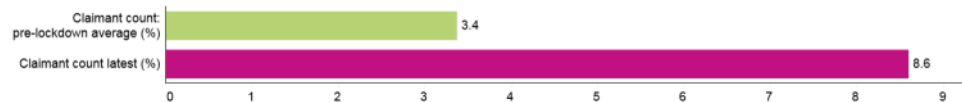


#### Explore by city or large town

Select a city or large town to find out more

Luton

#### Luton



#### Local labour market statistics

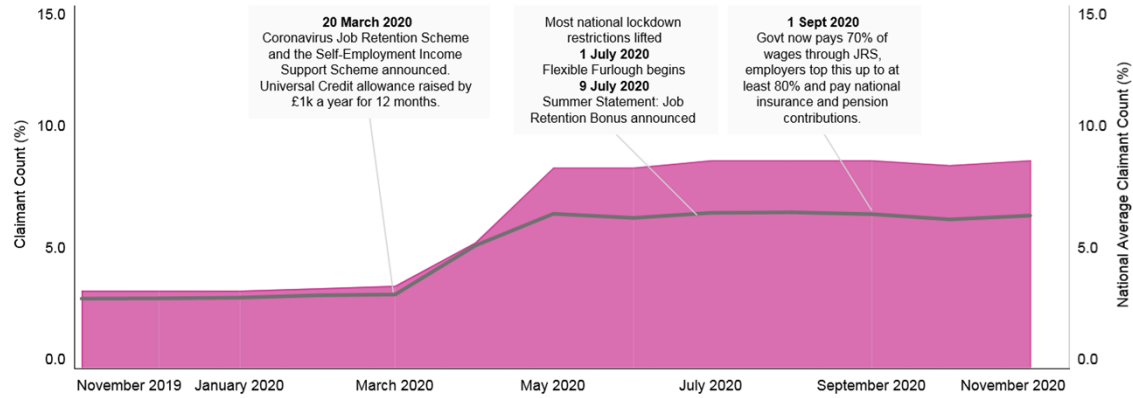
- Since March, Claimant Counts have increased by **5.3 percentage points**
- In the past month, Claimant Counts have increased by **0.3 percentage points**
- 35%** of people in this city or large town have high-skilled qualifications
- From June - August 2020, local CVs outnumbered job postings by **2.1**

- From March - July 2020 there were **32.6%** of eligible local jobs being supported by the Job Retention Scheme (JRS)

## How have unemployment claims changed over time?

### Claimant Counts have risen sharply since March 2020

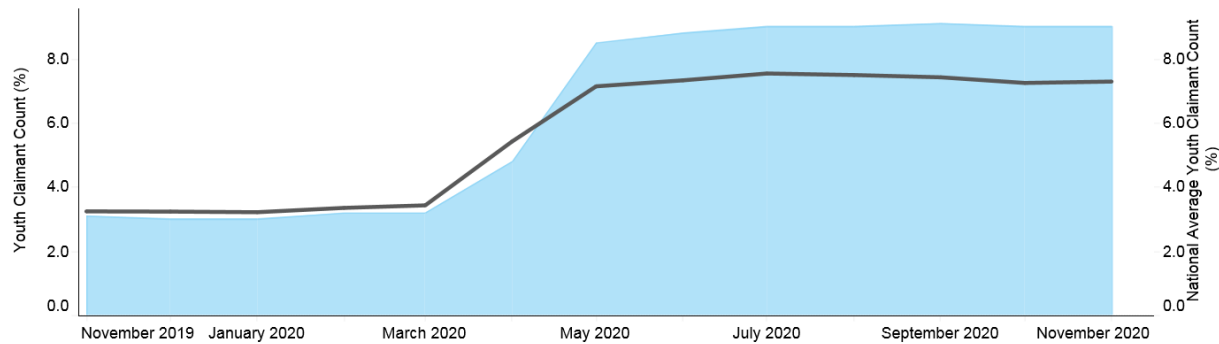
Claimant count rate, November 2019 - November 2020 (%)



### Youth Claimant Counts have risen rapidly

Youth claimant count rate, November 2019 - November 2020 (%)

Youth claimant count rate, November 2019 - November 2020 (%)



#### Sources

Claimant count: ONS, Claimant Count. ONS, Population Estimates. Note: Data differ to NOMIS claimant count rates as latest available population estimates are used to calculate the figures.

Furlough data: HMRC, Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Competition for jobs: Indeed, Job postings and CVs June-August 2020. Share of population with high-level qualifications: ONS, Annual Population Survey, resident analysis. Department for the Economy (DfE NI), District Council Area Statistics for Belfast.

Environment & Economy Select Committee  
13 January 2021

Questions for the Leader of the Council, Cllr Sharon Taylor and Executive Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Transport , Cllr Lloyd Briscoe:

- Members are aware of the work that various departments at the Council such as Revenue and Benefits and Planning & Regulation, Business Support are doing in terms of business support with access to government grants and advice and the work of Environmental Health to support retail, not to mention all of the flexibility and work that many Members and officers are doing to tackle the pandemic and support our community, with this in mind, how long can the Council keep on this emergency footing and at the same time largely carry on a “business as usual” service to residents when it may need to make difficult budget choices?
- Members have heard that there could be potentially high numbers of redundancies in Hertfordshire as a result of the pandemic, with this in mind, how confident are you that Stevenage will be able to recover and in the future thrive in a difficult economic climate?
- In terms of supporting our local business community what can the Council and its partners do to make Stevenage a business friendly destination? And is there anything that the Council and its partners can do to help create employment?
- Members undertaking this review are particularly concerned about the economic prospects for the town’s young people, as well as promoting STEM subjects in education and for the job opportunities linked to this, what needs to happen to help the low skilled (in terms of academic qualifications, but potentially high skilled in other ways), young people who could be described as the “left behind”?
- There is emerging evidence that the economic impact of the pandemic is adversely effecting many groups such as those from lower socio economic backgrounds, the young, women in part time zero hours work, the disabled and people from the BAME community who are needing to shield. What should the Council and its partners be doing to address this?
- What lessons have been learnt about the Council's ability to respond to events like this, particularly given that there is potential for pandemics to become a recurring feature of life in the future?

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# Claimant Count Mar 20 – Nov 2020

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	Stevenage	Stevenage	Hertfordshire	Hertfordshire	East	Great Britain
	(Level)	(%)	(Level)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Mar-20	1,435	2.6	14,370	1.9	2.4	3.1
Apr-20	2,590	4.6	25,795	3.5	4.1	5.1
May-20	<b>3,575</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>38,550</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>6.4</b>
Jun-20	3,290	5.9	36,350	4.9%	5.4	6.2
Jul-20	3,365	6	37,370	5.1	5.5	6.4
Aug-20	3,410	6.1	38,390	5.2	5.6	6.5
Sep-20	3,400	6.1	38,045	5.1	5.6	6.4
Oct-20	3,235	5.8	36,410	4.9	5.3	6.2
Nov-20	3,260	5.8	37,495	5.1	5.4	6.3

[Source:ONS](#)

# Employment by Occupation July 2019- June 2020 and July 2018-June 2019

Employment by occupation (Jul 2019-Jun 2020)							Jul 2018 - June 2019)					
	Hertfordshire	Hertfordshire	Stevenage	Stevenage	East	Great Britain	Stevenag e	Stevenag e	Variance			
	(Numbers)	(%)	(Numbers)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(Numbers)	(%)	Numbers		(%)	
Soc 2010 Major Group 1-3	350,800	56.6	25,800	53.4	47.9	48.6	21,200	44.8	4,600		8.6	
1 Managers, Directors And Senior Officials	99,000	15.9	#	#	13.2	11.6	5,500	11.7	#		#	
2 Professional Occupations	158,800	25.5	14,900	30.8	20.8	21.9	6,500	13.7	8,400		17.1	
3 Associate Professional & Technical	93,000	15	6,100	12.7	13.8	14.9	9,200	19.4	-3,100		-6.7	
Soc 2010 Major Group 4-5	116,500	18.8	10,400	21.5	20.7	19.5	7,300	15.4	3,100		6.1	
4 Administrative & Secretarial	62,700	10.1	6,700	13.8	10.4	9.7	#	#	#		#	
5 Skilled Trades Occupations	53,700	8.6	#	#	10.3	9.7	#	#	#		#	
Soc 2010 Major Group 6-7	71,500	11.5	#	#	15.5	16.1	9,500	20.2	#		#	
6 Caring, Leisure And Other Service Occupations	41,800	6.7	#	#	8.9	9.1	6,300	13.3	#		#	
7 Sales And Customer Service Occs	29,700	4.8	#	#	6.6	6.9	#	#				
Soc 2010 Major Group 8-9	81,400	13.1	8,000	16.6	15.8	15.8	9,300	19.6	-1,300		-3%	
8 Process Plant & Machine Operatives	32,900	5.3	#	#	5.9	5.8	#	#	#		#	
9 Elementary Occupations	48,500	7.8	#	#	9.9	9.9	6,900	14.6	#		#	

Source: ONS annual population survey

# CJRS Furloughed employments

County and district / unitary authority	31-Jul	31-Aug	30-Sep	31-Oct	Total eligible employments
Hertfordshire County	97000	73100	55500	45000	576300
Broxbourne	8700	6800	5100	4100	47200
Dacorum	13000	9700	7300	5700	73500
East Hertfordshire	12900	9900	7900	6600	72400
Hertsmere	9900	7600	5800	4800	49900
North Hertfordshire	9700	7200	5200	4200	64300
St Albans	10600	7900	6000	4900	69200
Stevenage	6400	4600	3300	2700	45400
Three Rivers	7700	5800	4400	3600	43800
Watford	9300	6600	5200	4100	52900
Welwyn Hatfield	8800	6800	5200	4200	57600

# SEIS for 2<sup>nd</sup> grant 31 Oct

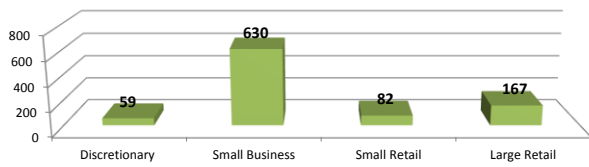
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County and district / unitary authority	Total potentially eligible population	Total no. of claims made to 31/10/20	Total value of claims made to 31/10/20 (£)	Average value of claims made to 31/10/20 (£)	Total Take-Up Rate
Hertfordshire County	69300	48500	136400000	2800	0.7
Broxbourne	6400	4700	13400000	2900	0.73
Dacorum	9500	6600	18800000	2800	0.7
East Hertfordshire	8200	5600	16000000	2900	0.68
Hertsmere	7700	5500	15800000	2900	0.72
North Hertfordshire	7000	4700	13000000	2800	0.67
St Albans	7200	4800	13500000	2800	0.66
Stevenage	<b>5000</b>	<b>3700</b>	<b>10,200000</b>	<b>2800</b>	<b>0.74</b>
Three Rivers	5700	3900	11300000	2900	0.68
Watford	6800	4900	13100000	2700	0.72
Welwyn Hatfield	5800	4100	11400000	2800	0.72



## COVID 19 RESOURCE DASHBOARD 4 January 2021

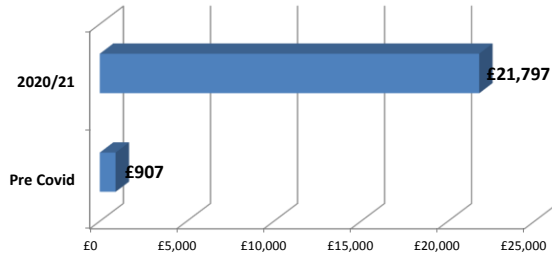
**Total number of grants awarded 938**



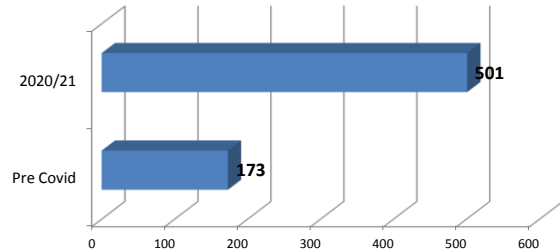
**Value of Grants Awarded £11,847,500**



**Value of Retail & Nursery Reliefs £'000**

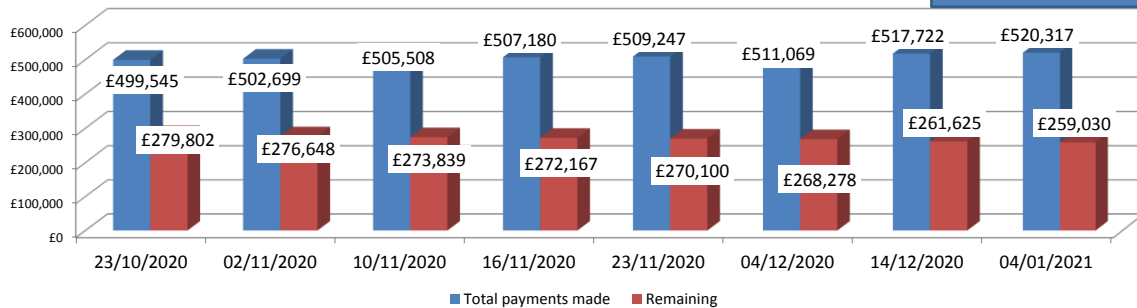


**No of Retail & Nursery Reliefs**



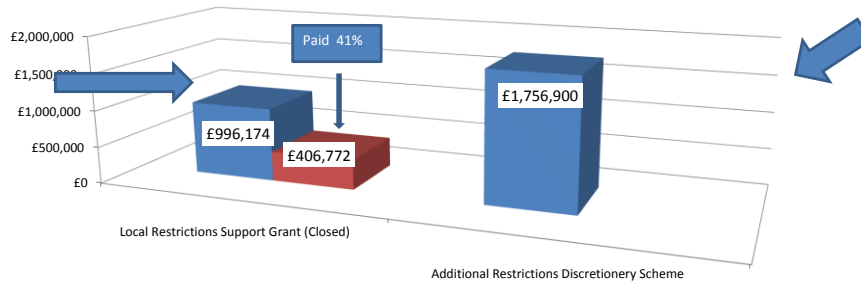
**Hardship Fund (Council Tax) awarded and Remaining**

This scheme gives up to £150 deduction from those on CTS.



Local Restrictions Support Grant Closed  
RV :  
less than £15K= £1,334 for 4 weeks  
+£15K RV & less than £51K  
£2,000 for 4 weeks  
+£51K £3,000 for 4 weeks  
(5 November to 2

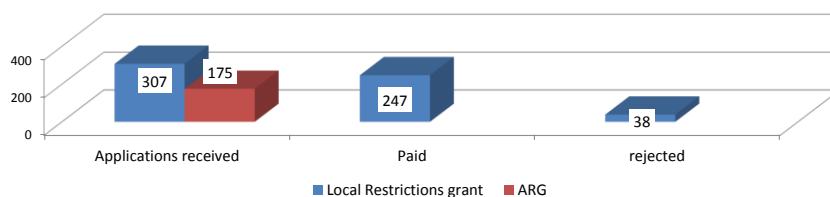
application live-  
payments to  
businesses due



Additional restrictions grant- more flexible - SBC scheme looking to support business not able to claim under other schemes being finalised (£ to last to March 2022)

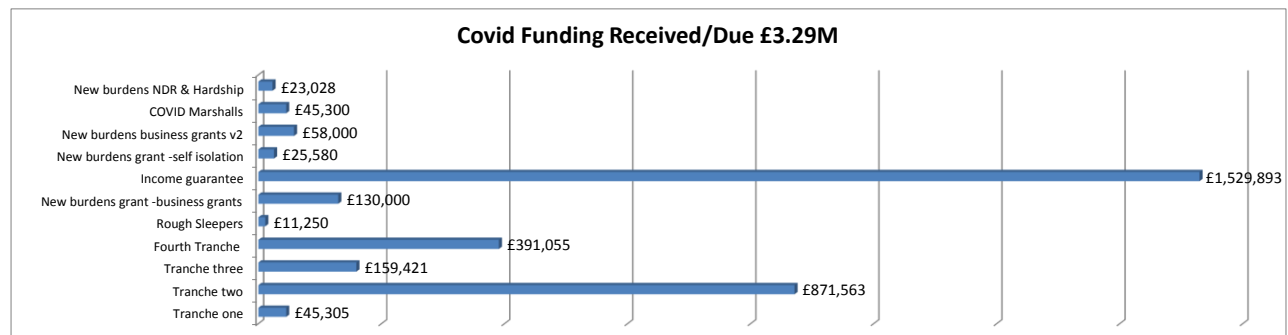
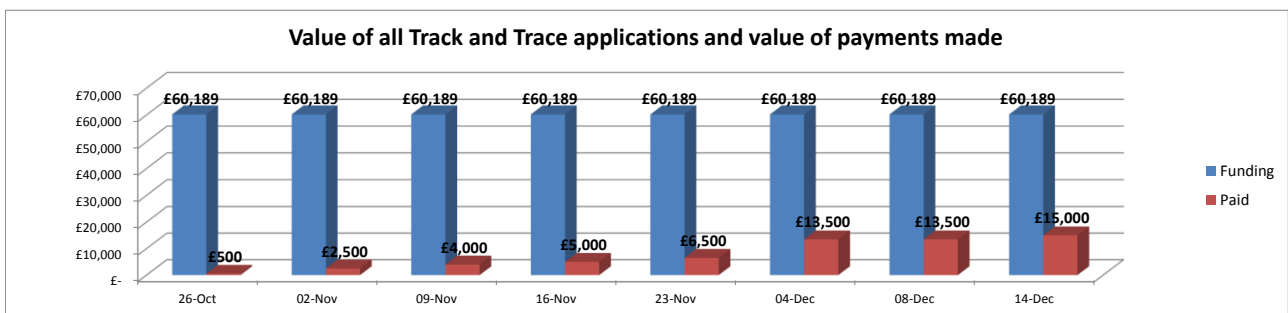
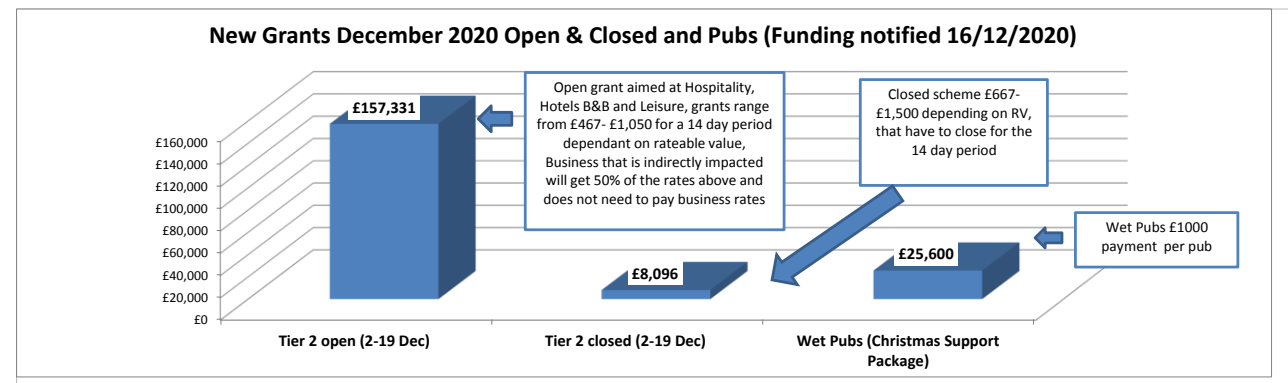
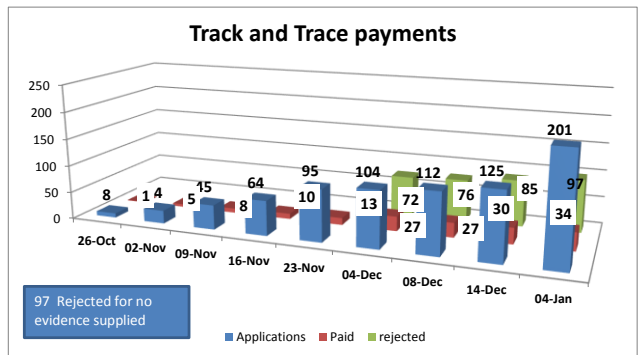
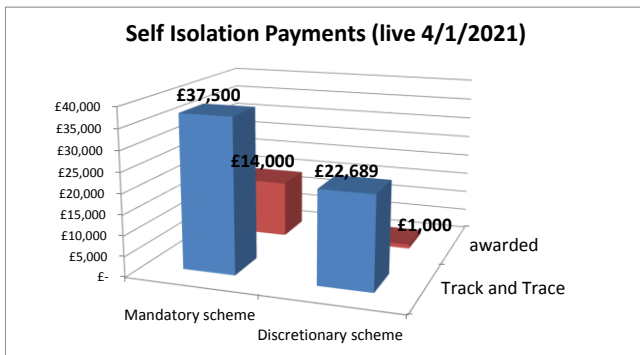
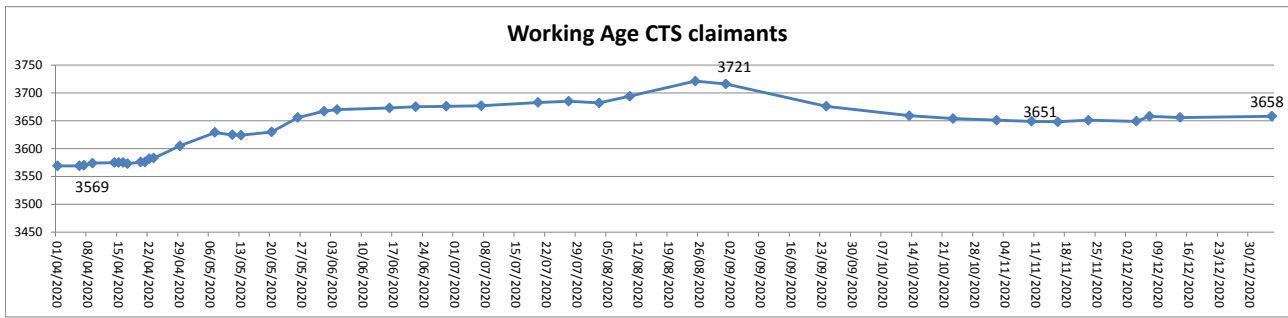
scheme live 3/12/2020 (1 month window to apply)

**Local Restrictions grant- number of businesses (closed) 21/12/2020 and ARG applications (ARG 1 month window to apply)**

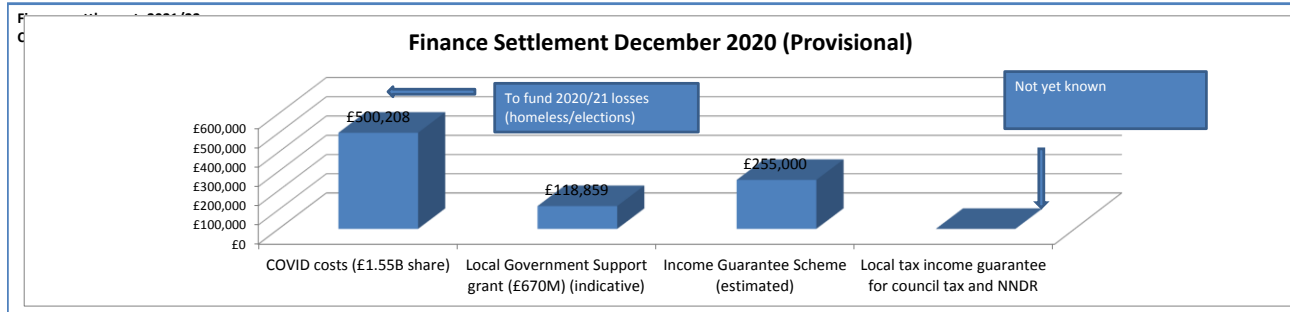
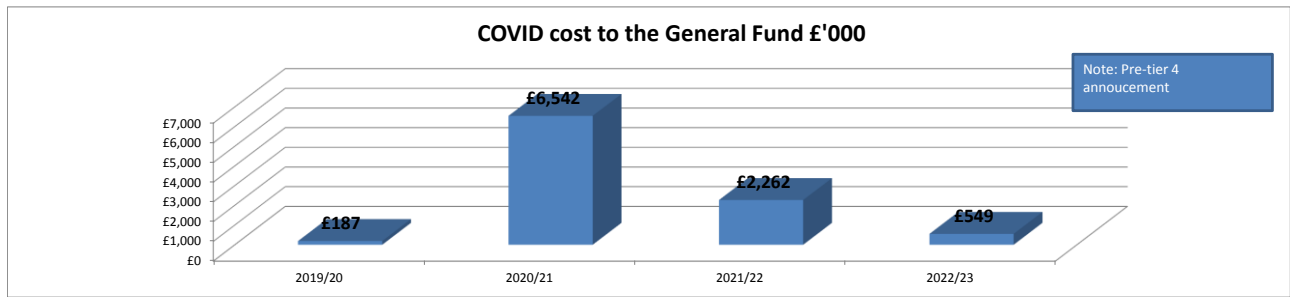


The ARG payments are due to be paid w/c 11/1/2021

## COVID 19 RESOURCE DASHBOARD 4 January 2021



## COVID 19 RESOURCE DASHBOARD 4 January 2021



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**Meeting:** ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE

Portfolio Area: Resources

**Date:** 13 JANUARY 2021

## **INTERIM REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES**

Author – Stephen Weaver Ext No.2332

Lead Officer – Tom Pike/Steve Dupoy Ext No.

Contact Officer – Stephen Weaver Ext No.2332

Contributors – Councillor Michael Downing, Chair of Environment & Economy Select Committee; Strategic Director, Tom Pike, Assistant Director, Steve Dupoy

### **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To consider the progress report and draft recommendations of the Environment & Economy Select Committee Scrutiny review of the Neighbourhood Areas.

### **2 BACKGROUND & SCRUTINY ISSUE IDENTIFIED**

- 2.1 The issue of scrutinising Stevenage's Neighbourhood Centres was agreed by the Select Committee as a scrutiny review item along with other scrutiny items when it met on 13 March 2019.

#### **2.2 Scope and Focus of the review**

- 2.2.1 The Committee met on 25 June 2019 and agreed a scope for the review of the Neighbourhood areas, which it agreed should consider the following areas:

- *Establish if the facilities meet the needs of local residents?*
- *Identify any deficiencies that can be addressed by the Asset Management Strategy and Locality reviews*
- *To provide a view from Scrutiny Members on the current provision of facilities at the Neighbourhood Centres – are they fit for purpose; in a good state of repair; is the offer of shops and facilities what local residents require; do the Community Associations/Centres offer relevant facilities and activities for local needs?*
- *To scrutinise the plans to modernise and improve the offer at the Neighbourhood Centres.*

#### **2.3 Process of the review**

2.3.1 The Committee has so far met formally on four occasions in 2019-20 to undertake the review. The Committee met as follows: On 25 June 2019 to agree the scope, on 10 March 2020 to consider the evidence from the series of site visits and virtual desk top evidence gathering then on 22 September 2020 to receive an update on all of the agreed actions from the meeting in March and again on 13 January 2021 to receive an update report and to agree the interim draft recommendations of the review as it is anticipated that the Committee will need to meet again to receive input from the Head of Estates, Mark Sullivan and the Assistant Director, Housing Development, Ash Ahmed on the regeneration plans for the local neighbourhood centres. Members of the Committee and the Scrutiny Officer as well as a group of officers from Estates, Engineers, Stevenage Direct Services, Neighbourhoods, and Community Development also met informally on three further occasions to carry out a site visit on 11, 14 and 24 of February 2020.

2.3.2 The Committee received written and oral evidence from the following people:

- *Co-operative Neighbourhood Manager, Jane Konopka*
- *Neighbourhood Warden, Sue Amey*
- *Neighbourhood Warden, Lisa Ellis-Timberly*
- *Neighbourhood Warden, Kirsten Rodia*
- *Community Development Officer, Oonagh Sherlock*
- *Project Manager Co-operative Neighbourhoods, Robert Read*
- *Senior Estates Surveyor, Paul Sirrell*
- *Engineering Services Manager, Rob Woodisse*
- *Engineering Services, Steve Bentley*
- *Investment Project Manager, Andy Sowden*
- *Stevenage Direct Services, Operations Manager, Lloyd Walker*
- *Stevenage Direct Services, Kris White*
- *Snr Community Safety & Partners Officer, Catherine Davies*

### **3 ITERIM REVIEW FINDINGS**

#### **3.1 Conclusions of the Environment & Economy Select Committee**

3.1.1 Based on the input provided to Members and from site visits to a selection of the Neighbourhood Centres the Committee have made the following conclusions.

##### **3.1.2 Location specific actions that were identified at site visits and town wide strategic recommendations**

3.1.3 The review concluded that there should be some site specific actions which would be picked up in the review that are location specific, that could be implemented relatively quickly as “quick wins” based around the case study site visits and follow up meetings and that there should be recommendations which are more strategic and town wide based on lessons learned from the review that could be transferred to the wider Co-operative Neighbourhoods Teams.

## 3.2 Case Studies

3.2.1 The review focused on 5 of Neighbourhood Centres around Stevenage, these included Oaks Cross, Oval, Symonds Green, Bedwell and St Nicholas. As well as these 5 areas there was a virtual survey of a further 4 areas including the Old Town, Chells, Pin Green (Hampson Park) and The Hyde.

3.2.2 The following issues were common to each area in the case studies:

- Pedestrian areas devoid of features or planters
- Paintwork peeling and the general area looking bleak
- Missing trees/shrubs in planting areas
- Fly-tipping in garage areas
- Some evidence of vandalism and graffiti
- Partner authorities not maintaining infrastructure – HCC adopted highway
- Broken missing knee rails and shrubs, which are on a long term SBC Stevenage Direct Services replacement programme

### 3.2.3 Site specific actions

3.2.4 As a result of the site visits and the subsequent Committee meetings where the findings were discussed, a number of actions were undertaken to rectify faults that were identified at each site which were detailed in the agenda papers considered at the meetings held on 10 March and 22 September 2020. These actions included some of the following issues with current status in brackets:

#### **Oaks Cross**

- Trees had been removed from the planters and not replaced (now actioned);
- Fly tipping at the rear of the commercial premises was an issue (reported, cleared away and being monitored);
- Unsightly barbed wire around a storage area (Being addressed as part of the CRM project updates);
- Possible evidence of drug use in the residential area (reported to Community Safety colleagues and being monitored) ;
- The area could be enhanced by changing colours of the concrete around the centre which was all one colour and very drab;
- Half-finished painting on the wall (now actioned and complete)

#### **St Nicholas**

;

- 2 concrete planters previously situated in the Town Centre had been purchased through a Member's LCB allocation which would be installed shortly(now complete);
- A new notice board would be put up in the centre (now actioned and complete);
- The redundant telephone box had now been removed (now complete);

- There was a dispute regarding the ownership and responsibility for the damaged wall and flagstones to the rear of the community centre which was currently being looked into (now repaired and complete);
- Officers agreed to check to see if the area was included on the replacement programme for rails and shrub beds (now complete – confirmed in plans for Shrub bed replacement programme);

### **The Oval**

- The damaged steps were dangerous and could easily result in accidents and potential claims. There was still a dispute regarding ownership and responsibility for the repairs between SBC and HCC. Strategic Director (TP) agreed to take the matter up with the appropriate officers. Councillor Callaghan also advised she would speak to the HCC Portfolio Holder responsible for highways (still not complete but continue to pursue with HCC);
- New signage and a new mural would shortly be in place (now actioned and complete);
- The flower beds would be full of wild flowers in the summer. Cllr Callaghan as Chair of the Community Garden advised that a national charity offering crocus bulbs had been approached and that these would be planted late in the year for flowers to come up early next year.(now actioned)

### **Bedwell**

- Paint was peeling on some of the railings and a deep clean was required (still not complete but continue to pursue with HCC);;
- Graffiti on walls including the mural which needed updating (under consideration to be addressed);

## **3.3 Fixing problems quickly**

- 3.3.1 The review is recommending that the Council should adopt a policy similar to the crime reduction policy of the “broken window” towards maintenance of the neighbourhood centres, advocating that small repairs and maintenance matters. Small scale timely interventions using what means are at the Council’s disposal including its current regime of routine maintenance, cleansing, repair and using existing budgets or where appropriate the use of ward Members Local Community Budgets via funding bids as well as local County Councillors LCBs.

## **3.4 Holding partner authorities to account**

- 3.4.1 The review is advocating that officers should approach partner authorities/bodies to hold them to account for failure to maintain infrastructure such as the case of the broken wall at St Nicholas between a private brewery and HCC as the land was adopted highway, which has now been resolved and at the Oval the broken steps and planter retaining wall at Jessops Close near the underpass leading to the shops, which is a matter



for HCC as adopted highway to resolve and is still outstanding, despite being approached on numerous occasions by both SBC officers and Members.

- 3.4.2 To be able to implement this type of approach there will need to be a link made between the Council's new Co-operative Neighbourhoods model and the partner body. This would be appropriate for substantial repairs that need partner attention and this would need to be incorporated into the Council's Community Plan. Senior officers would need to make sure that the most appropriate officer, via the C&N approach, is allocated to work with the partner body to help keep a focus on the repair until it is completed.

### 3.5 Whole Council and Co-operative approach to maintaining Neighbourhood Centres

- 3.5.1 Making sure that there is a whole Council approach to maintaining the neighbourhood centres – Is the Neighbourhood Co-operative approach likely to tackle this, it is perhaps too early in the process for the Co-operative Neighbourhoods to see if these mechanisms and approach are likely to address the sort of timely interventions that Members are advocating or whether the existing resources are adequate to tackle this, so may need to be revisited at a later date to test this? If it is deemed that this is not effective, is there another mechanism that needs to be in place to deliver this?

### 3.6 Working with "friends of groups"

- 3.6.1 Engaging with "friends of" groups and residents to tap into goodwill to help with projects and to provide volunteer time. An example of this was at Oaks Cross where there is a garden project to enhance the gardens that face the poorly maintained rear of the shops. Another example is the Waste Not Want Not gardening charity who use plants that are close to their shop "sale by date" and are working at St Nicholas with local Ward Councillors, who have supported this project with their Local Community Budgets and also working with volunteers re-establishing a Christmas Tree in the planter and helping plant new plants in the new noticeboard planters and establishing a new community orchard.

### 3.7 Co-operative Neighbourhood Management – a town wide model

- 3.7.1 In addition to the community based projects and the liaison between residents, officers and local ward Members through the Co-operative Neighbourhoods approach the Council is addressing the Neighbourhood Centres strategically through the Co-operative Neighbourhood Management (CNM) which has guided the Council's Estates programme of asset management. During the review Members were made aware of an asset management strategy that is working in neighbourhood centres to maintain the Council's buildings. The programme is a tangible demonstration of the Community, Members and officers working together to enhance and maintain public realm areas of the neighbourhood centres. However, during the review it was not always clear that Members were aware of the details of the scheme taking place at Oaks Cross, so there may be a case for further

communication with ward Members so that they are aware of such schemes and can tailor any projects or LCBs to complement these programmes.

### 3.8 CNM a work in progress

3.8.1 Although the scrutiny review of the Neighbourhood Centres is not a review of the Co-operative Neighbourhood Management programme, the CNM is clearly a significant issue as it is the approach adopted by the Council following the ward walks with Members and the Council's Strategic Leadership Team back in 2015. Clearly a lot of progress has been made via this approach but based on the scrutiny review site visits there remains a good deal of work still to be done to meet the aspirations of the CNM programme, and perhaps it is likely to need to continue as there will always be a need for the community, members and officers to work together to find out what the needs and priorities of each area are and to keep maintaining and improving each Neighbourhood centre.

3.8.2 In addition, part of the challenge for officers will be to make sure that there is both a clearer explanation of short-term enhancements, repairs and improvements that could be made in each Neighbourhood Centre; and then a wider exploration of longer-term enhancement ideas for each Neighbourhood Centre and there needs to be a parallel focus on both.

### 3.9 A further town wide strategic recommendation - regeneration financed by mixed residential development centre by centre where plans are deliverable

3.9.1 At the time of writing the report the Committee were due to meet up with the Head of Estates, Mark Sullivan and the Assistant Director Housing Development, Ash Ahmed to discuss the plans to tackle the next phase of the regeneration of some of the Neighbourhood Centres. Broadly the Committee is aware that the approach of regenerating the Neighbourhood Centres would only be achieved over a very long timescale given the pressures that the Council's capital budgets are under and schemes would only happen on a case by case basis.

3.9.2 It is understood that this is a long term aspiration of the Council and will take many years to deliver and is largely predicated on the opportunity to redevelop and regenerate Neighbourhood Centres by the use of planning gain finances when and where available, the use of right to buy capital receipts for replacement social housing and in some cases partnership with private developers to rebuild residential and commercial premises to provide more accommodation both private and social which in turn provides the finances to be able to regenerate the Neighbourhood Centres public areas.

3.9.3 When Members have met with the Head of Estates and the Assistant Director Finance they will then be able to include a relevant recommendation in regard of these plans.

### 3.10 Establishing if the desired focus of the review had been met

- 3.10.1 The review is confident that the mechanism in use with Co-operative Neighbourhood Management that the needs and wishes of local residents are being considered as evidenced in the way residents are consulted and brought into decision making over how improvements are made to an area and the way residents are involved in community projects.
- 3.10.2 The review was unable to identify if there were any major deficiencies that the Asset Management Strategy and Locality reviews had identified and that needed to be addressed.
- 3.10.3 The review established a view from Scrutiny Members on the current provision of facilities at the Neighbourhood Centres. Regarding the neighbourhood Centres that Members visited, Members were of the view that all of the areas had a good range of shops that offer convenience shopping that residents can walk to and also there is adequate free parking provided. In terms of the condition of the public realm these are in the main looking dated and shabby with peeling paint and missing furniture and plants, so work on this continues to be a priority but some of these features are not in the Council's control such as adopted highway land that is controlled by the County Council. The Community buildings vary in their age and the offer provided at each Centre. Some of the buildings have been refurbished in the last few years or are relatively new buildings, others are much older and as such require more maintenance or replacement.
- 3.10.4 In terms of the offer provided by Community Associations Centres offer relevant facilities and activities for local needs. Members were very impressed with the offer made at the centres they visited, specifically at Symonds Green and the Oval but have stated that this was not a major strand of the review as other Member and officer reviews have provided recommendations and in-depth reviews of the offer at the Community Associations.

### 3.11 Equalities & Diversity issues

- 3.11.1 The main equalities and diversity consideration of the review was around the accessibility of the offer at each neighbourhood centre. All provided adequate disabled parking in the adjacent car parks. The shops are all at street level so offer wheelchair access. However, the door width is not wide enough for all wheelchairs to access and would likely only be addressed across the piece with major redevelopment of the units.
- 3.11.2 Some of the Community buildings have been retrofitted with disabled access internally such as the Community Centre at the Oval to reach the meeting rooms in the first floor and the external fire exit by means of a heavy ramp that requires placing by able bodied persons. Although the external ramp meets Disability Discrimination Act requirements it is not seen as ideal and would need to be addressed in any major reconfiguration of this building.

## 4 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 That the Environment & Economy Select Committee considers the findings of the review, contained within this report and the recommendations below be presented to the Executive Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Co-operative Working Cllr Rob Broom and Environment and Regeneration Cllr John Gardner and the Assistant Director Stevenage Direct Services, Steve Dupoy and Strategic Director, Tom Pike and that a response be provided from these and any other named officers and partners within two months of the publishing of this report.
- 4.2 RECOMMENDATION 1 - Small scale timely interventions using what means are at the Council's disposal including its current regime of routine maintenance, cleansing, repair and using existing budgets or where appropriate the use of ward Members Local Community Budgets via funding bids as well as local County Councillors LCBs.
  - 4.2.1 Reason – This is utilising all of the routine maintenance and repair programmes by officers and Members ward interest in the area to keep on top of the Neighbourhood Centres.
- 4.3 RECOMMENDATION 2 - Approach partner authorities/partner bodies to hold them to account for failure to maintain infrastructure.
  - 4.3.1 Reason – Results may be inconsistent but it is worth drawing such matters to the attention of partner organisations and the upper tier authority to, at the least, draw attention to the deficiencies and it is hoped spur them into action or provide a time line for future action or provide a reason why they can't resolve the issue.
- 4.4 RECOMMENDATION 3 - That the Co-operative Neighbourhood Management approach to addressing local issues in the Neighbourhood Centres be monitored by the Executive Member with Portfolio responsibility for Neighbourhoods and Co-Operative Working to see if this is working (perhaps with a short report back in a year to monitor progress and see if the interventions are timely and the resources are adequate to remedy problems that are identified at the Neighbourhood Centres).
  - 4.4.1 Reason – This is to give time for the Co-operative Neighbourhood Management approach to become fully established before making a judgement as to whether it can address the issues at the Neighbourhood Centres.
- 4.5 RECOMMENDATION 4 - That each Neighbourhood Centre area establishes a friends group to help with projects and community gardens at each Centre.
  - 4.5.1 Reason – This is an ambitious target but “friends of” groups give an invaluable focus to an area and these groups add a further layer of ears and eyes on an area.

4.6 RECOMMENDATION 5 - That when Members have met with the Head of Estates and the Assistant Director Housing Development they will then be able to include a relevant recommendation in regard of these plans.

4.6.1 Reason – to be completed once this session with the Head of Estates and the AD Housing Development has been held.

## **5 IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications in this report.

### **5.2 Legal Implications**

There are no direct legal implications for this report.

### **5.3 Equalities Implications**

The Equalities implications have been addressed within the report at paragraph 3.11.1 & 3.11.2. There are no further direct equalities implications for this report.

## **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Minutes of the Committee meetings held on 13 March 2019, 25 June 2019, 10 March 2020 and 22 September 2020 are available for inspection, as well as notes from the three informal site visits on 11, 14 & 24 February 2020.

**APPENDICES**      Appendix A – Scrutiny Scoping Document  
Appendix B – Site Visits log  
Appendix C – Photos of the Site Visits

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## Appendix A

### Template Scoping Document

<b>Community Select Committee</b>	
<b><u>Scrutiny Review Title:</u></b>	<b>Review of the local Neighbourhood Centres</b>
<b><u>Background issues</u></b> to review – rationale for scrutinising this issue:	Members raised the issue of reviewing the facilities and condition of the Local Neighbourhood Centres when the committee agreed items for the work programme in March 2019.
Is this issue covered by the <b>Future Town Future Council Programme</b> ?	(i) <u>Co-operative Neighbourhood Management</u> - “Work with our communities to improve our neighbourhoods” – “Better understand our communities’ needs and priorities” to “Work with our residents to design and deliver services” and to Invest in and improve our neighbourhoods.
Is this issue one that raises interest with the public via <b>complaints</b> or Members’ surgeries or with Officers?:	The appearance and offer of the Neighbourhood Centres shops and facilities have generated some comment and complaints over the years.
<b><u>Focus of the review:</u></b> (State what the review focus will be)	<p><u>That the review would establish whether the current offer of shops, facilities and community centres meet the needs of local residents and where each centre sits in the Asset Management Strategy and the Locality Reviews</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Establish if the facilities meet the needs of local residents?</i></li> <li>• <i>Identify any deficiencies that can be addressed by the Asset Management Strategy and Locality reviews</i></li> </ul> <p>Aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To provide a view from Scrutiny Members on the current provision of facilities at the Neighbourhood Centres – are they fit for purpose; in a good state of repair; is the offer of</li> </ul>

	<p>shops and facilities what local residents require; do the Community Associations/Centres offer relevant facilities and activities for local needs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To scrutinise the plans to modernise and improve the offer at the Neighbourhood Centres.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Timing issues:</u></b> Are there any timing constraints to when the review can be carried out?</p>	<p>Officers will advise at the meeting if there are any timing issues to consider. The review will have to fit in with the timing of the other Select Committee review work programme items.</p>
<p>The Committee will meet on (provide <b><u>dates</u></b> if known):</p>	<p>Dates: Day/Month/Time/Venue          ?? September 2019 – Discuss draft scoping document with AD Stevenage Direct Services &amp; Communities &amp; Neighbourhoods who will lead the review on the officer side supported by the Scrutiny Officer.          Dates to be agreed in July/Aug for site visits          ?? 2019 – Presentation from Officers on the neighbourhood centres in Stevenage          ?? Sep 2019 / ?? October 2019 – Interview Witnesses and gather evidence          Date to be agreed to agree recommendations &amp; final report – likely to be in late November/December 2019.</p>
<p><b><u>SBC Leads</u></b> (list the Executive Portfolio Holders and SD's Heads of Service who should appear as witnesses):</p>	<p><i>Officers have suggested the following people:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Executive Portfolio Holder(s) for Neighbourhoods and Co-operative Working, Cllr Rob Broom and Environment and Regeneration, Cllr John Gardner</i></li> <li><i>Assistant Director Communities &amp; Neighbourhoods, Rob Gregory (Co-operative Neighbourhood Management, Jane Konopka)</i></li> <li><i>Assistant Director Stevenage Direct Services, Craig Miller (Operations Manager, Lloyd Walker)</i></li> <li><i>Assistant Director Planning &amp; Regulatory, Zayd Al-Jawad (Engineering Services Manager, Rob Woodisse)</i></li> <li><i>Assistant Director Finance and Estates (Corporate Property Manager, Stuart Longbottom)</i></li> </ul>
<p>Any <b><u>other witnesses</u></b> (external persons/critical friend)?:</p>	<p>To be identified by the Committee at the scoping meeting. <i>Possible options identified by officers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>?</li> </ul>



<p><b><u>Allocation of lead Members</u></b> on specific individual issues/questions:</p> <p>Any other Questions Members wish to cover:</p>	<p>To be identified by the Committee at the scoping meeting.</p> <p>Members will ask questions on the following areas (list the issues to address during the interviews):</p> <p><i>Depending on what major strands are identified in the scope these can be allocated to lead Members.</i></p>
<p><b><u>Site visits and evidence gathering in the Community</u></b></p>	<p>Site visits to the Neighbourhood Centres would be helpful to the review. This can be carried out during the summer 2019.</p> <p>Some suggested areas for a site visit are as follows: ?</p>
<p><b><u>Equalities and Diversity issues:</u></b> The review will consider what the relevant equalities and diversity issues are regarding the Scrutiny subject that is being scrutinised</p>	<p>To be identified by the lead Member – Cllr ?</p> <p><u>Equalities &amp; Diversity Issues</u> – Are there any E&amp;D issues to consider in this review? –</p>
<p><b><u>Constraints</u></b> (Issues that have been highlighted at the scoping stage but are too broad/detailed to be covered by the review):</p>	<p><i>To be identified by the Committee at the scoping meeting ? 2019</i> (These issues can be captured and dealt with via other means – Briefings/email/officer action etc)</p>
<p><b><u>Background Documents/data</u></b> that can be provided to the review</p>	<p><i>As identified by the Committee at the draft scoping meeting ? 2019:</i></p> <p>Evidence requested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Agreed Milestones and review sign off</u></b> -To be agreed by Members and officers</p>	<p><i>Formal response from Executive Portfolio Holder (Executives have a Statutory requirement to respond to Scrutiny review recommendations two months after receiving a final report and recommendations of a review: <b>Date Executive Portfolio responses are expected</b> (dependent on the final report &amp; executive portfolio response template publishing date): DD MM YY</i></p> <p><b><i>Date for monitoring implementation of recommendations – final sign off (typically one year from completion of the review): DD MM YY</i></b> (Close to this date the Select Committee will receive a report at</p>

	<i>a Committee meeting to agree the final sign off of the review recommendations)</i>
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Neighbourhood Basics												Accessibility	Visual Check	Flowers	Condition
Location	Community Centre	Place of Worship	Shops	Post Office	Pharmacy	GP	School	Café	Pubs	Take aways	Cash Machine				
Oaks Cross (Visited 14 February 2020).	None	Longmeadow Evangelical across the road	Convenience store. Florist and others.	Yes, in convenience store.	Yes.	Not close. For example Roebuck SG2 8HW and Spring Drive SG2 8AZ.	Longmeadow Primary School SG2 8LT over zebra crossing. Hideous fence.	No.	Pied Piper.	Several	Yes but charge.	Fairly frequent buses. Cycleway crosses Oaks Cross between Pied Piper and the school. Difficult steps up to flats above shops.	There is a vast expanse of pavement, parking areas and ramp all the same colour and design. Boring and a trip hazard. Very concrete. Rear of the Chinese carry out block is particularly unsightly. Cars sometimes park on the entry to the cycle route. Some trees missing.	There are no flowers in the shops and car park area. There is a garden scheme behind one block of shops.	Barbed wire. Is some concrete failing? Canopies seem OK. No lights in the bus stops.
Page 51 Oval (Visited 11 and 14 February 2020)	Large centre. Busy but part-time reception. A few years ago the centre got a new lease and funding for an extension and stairlift.	Anglican and Methodist in the same building. Multiple others nearby. Mosque on Vardon Road.	Co-op. News'gnt. Amazing DIY shop. Butcher.	Yes. In Martins news'gent.	Yes.	The nearest may be Chells & St. Nicholas.	Trotts Hill?	Yes. In shopping area. Part-time in community centre,	There is the Times Club but no nearby pub.	Several	? But need to check on charge or free.	Fairly frequent buses. Cycleway parallel with Verity Way. There is a ramp up to the flats above shops.	Some maintenance issues at the community centre. Letters missing in "The Oval" sign. Concrete steps to homes just north of the neighbourhood centre collapsing.	There are no flowers in the community centre and shops areas. There is a community garden but is not visible from the community centre and active shops.	Some issues around responsibility for and condition of the former youth wing.

Neighbourhood Basics												Accessibility	Visual Check	Flowers	Condition
Location	Community Centre	Place of Worship	Shops	Post Office	Pharmacy	GP	School	Café	Pubs	Take aways	Cash Machine				
<p>Symonds Green (Visited 11 a.m. 24 February)</p> <p>Post Office</p>	Medium sized recently extended centre following closure of the play and neighbourhood centres. Busy programme including the Learning Zone. Storage space is an issue.	Christ the King Church is in the same building. I'm not aware of other religions or denominations nearby.	Co-op. The neighbour hood shops are not owned by SBC. Hairdres'r is still open but round the back amongst scaffoldng. The hairdresse r may move round the front when the building work is complete.	Yes. In Co-op.	Yes.	Yes. SG1 2JW.	Woolenwic k SG1 2NU is the nearest school. Some distance and the other side of a dual carriagewa y.	Part-time in communit y centre.	Yes. Tom Tiddler s SG1 2JW.	Two. Chinese /fish and pizza/ke bab.	Yes and free. At Co-op.	Cycleway the other side of the Co-op. The bus service is not great during the day and stops completely early evening.	Building work on top of the tops does not help the current appearance and caused the recent temporary closure of the shops. No public toilets after 2p.m. or at weekends. Pub garden privately owned - hard, flat and colourless.	A small number immediately in front of the community centre.	Much of the exterior of the community centre is new.

<p>Bedwell (Visited about 4p.m. on Monday 24 Feb 2020).</p>	Bedwell benefitted from a new lease and SRB funding bringing a substantial extension in 2004. Large centre with many rooms including a hall with a stage. The Sherma Batson (Together) Centre and Family Centre are nearby.	URC in Cuttys Lane. CofE at the bottom of Cuttys Lane.	General purpose store (appeared delapedat ed). Other shops include a hairdres'r; off licence; bakery; bookie.	Yes. In a shop.	Yes.	Bedwell Medical Centre, Sinfield Close, Bedwell Crescnt, SG Herts. SG1 1LQ	Bedwell Primary, Bedwell Crescent, SG SG1 1NJ and Broom Barns, Homestead Moat, SG1 1UE.	Mornings in the comm. centre.	The Poache r.	Fish and chips; pizza/ kebab.	Two. One free; the other £0.99.	Bus stops nearby on Bedwell Crescent. Steps up to flats above shops. No nearby cycle way but links either end of Bedwell Crescent.	Some cigarette ends in the gullies at the edge of the car park. Who knows what's happening at the old telephone exchange?	No much evidence in the shopping area but have a look at Bedwell Park which is nearby.	Back of shops much better than Oaks Cross. There is a fence.
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Neighbourhood Basics												Accessibility	Visual Check	Flowers	Condition
Location	Community Centre	Place of Worship	Shops	Post Office	Pharmacy	GP	School	Café	Pubs	Take aways	Cash Machine				
St. Nicholas (Visited 24 February 2020).	Yes. Partly hidden behind the shops. Another community centre with a former youth wing. Also a separate building at the back. Office open in the mornings. Forbidding security fence from 1990s.	A long way from St. Nicholas Church.	Substantial convenience store. Small shopping area.	No.	Yes.	Yes. Two but oversubscribed.	St. Nicholas School is not close. It is on Six Hills Way. The Leys Primary and Giles Schools are closer.	No.	St. Nicholas.	No.	Yes but a very high charge of £1.99.	Fairly frequent buses. Bus stops near the pub. No nearby cycleway. Links at the western end of Catnerbury Way and off the Pilgrims Way.	Not in the neighbourhood shops but there's a lot of scaffolding nearby which seems to have been there for a long time.	No much evidence but there is a large Christmas tree in a planter and flowers may appear around it in the Spring.	Community centre looks a bit under seige.
Page 53 Old Town (No visit. Virtual 24 February 2020).	Springfield House is an old house covenanted for community use. Its age and garden make it very attractive but there are challenges. Access to the first floor would be difficult for those with mobility difficulties.	Several in the old town including Baptist, Catholic, CofE and Methodist.	Several but suffering from the closure of Waitrose and the Post Office in October 2019 and the last bank just before that.	No.	Yes.	Yes.	Letchmore Infants; Fairlands Junior and Thomas Alleyne secondary.	Yes including TJs., Revolution and Costa.	Several.	Several.	Yes. Free still available.	Fairly frequent buses on routes between the new town centre, Lister Hospital and Hitchin. Cycleway up to the front of the community centre. Noted this is the only neighbourhood where people have to pay in the car parks.	An attractive old High Street. This was the original heart of Stevenage but spoilt by empty shops and the gyratory. The shops are not owned by SBC. The southern part of the High Street is dominated by parked cars.	The old Bowling Green is very attractive. The planters further down the High Street are a bit sad. A start has been made but more missing trees need to be replaced.	Many of the buildings are quite old and in a conservation area. Interesting access to some flats.
Chells (No visit. Virtual 24 February).	Timebridge. Named after the links between young people and the rest of the people. At the edge of Nobel School.	St. Hugh and St. John (Anglican and Methodist) between the community centre and the shops.	Several including Tesco. TBC	TBS	TBC	Chells Surgery, 265 Chells Way, SG2 0HN. Stands apart from the rest of the neighbourhood centre.	Lodge Farm Primary; Camps Hill Primary; Nobel secondary and not far from Marriotts.	Yes.	The Swan public house has closed and the site occupied by Tesco.	Yes. Details TBC.	TBC.	Fairly frequent SB1 buses.	TBD.	TBD.	Recent refresh. TBC

Neighbourhood Basics												Accessibility	Visual Check	Flowers	Condition
Location	Community Centre	Place of Worship	Shops	Post Office	Pharmacy	GP	School	Café	Pubs	Take aways	Cash Machine				
Hampson Park (Pin Green. No visit. Virtual 27 February) .	The Hampson Park Community Centre is new (2016) and well used. It replaced the Pin Green (Fairlands) Community Centre which was on Archer Road. It is more than an easy walk from the nearest shops.	The mosque is the nearest place of worship. A church group meets in the centre.	A few on Archer Road.	TBD.	TBD.	TBD.	Mossbury Primary, Webb Rise.	In community centre.		Not close.		It's a walk to the bus stops. There are fairly frequent routes 2 and 3 buses along Vardon Road, Merdith Road and Archer Road. A cycleway runs close to the rear of the community centre. The centre is a single storey building.	The centre is in an attractive park location.	In the park.	The centre was opened in 2016. There may be some maintenance issues.
Page 54  The Hyde (Shephall. No visit. Virtual 27 February) .	The Shephall Centre was formerly known as the Broadhall Community Centre which was dominated by its social club. It's a substantial building but some distance from the local shops at The Hyde and Peartree.	The Catholic Church is close to the Hyde. There is a community church on Hydean Way.	The Hyde is a substantial local shopping area.	Yes. In Foursquare shop at The Hyde.	Yes. 8 The Hyde.	Shephall Health Centre.	Peartree Way and Peartree Spring. The Heathcote site of Barnwell secondary school is next door to the Shephall Centre.	Yes. Slightly behind and to one side of the shops.	Yes. Vincent .	TBD.	TBD.	Fairly frequent buses on routes 4 and 5 at the Hyde.	TBD.	TBD.	TBD.

ASB
Nothing observed during the visit but Pied Piper can be very loud during special events.
Page 55 Nothing observed during our visit but some anecdotes from the café.

ASB

Nothing observed during either visit. No obvious youth provision. There had been some in the neighbourhood centre.

Nothing observed during our visit.



ASB
Nothing observed at the time of the visit, about 3.30p.m, but some graffiti.
<div>Page 52</div> <div>There are complaints about young people in front of Tesco Express and issues with rough sleepers and asking for money. The lively night time economy can lead to noise complaints and other ASB issues.</div>
TBD.

ASB
TBD.
<div>Page 58</div> <div>Note the CCTV camera on Shephall Way.</div>