

Public Document Pack



EXECUTIVE

Date: Friday, 4 March 2022

Time: 2.00pm,

Location: Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete

Contact: Ian Gourlay (01438) 242703

committees@stevenage.gov.uk

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

AGENDA

PART 1

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Page Nos.

2. TOWNS FUND BUSINESS CASE - GARDEN SQUARE AND DIVERSIFICATION OF RETAIL SPACE

To consider and approve the Towns Fund Business Case for the Garden Square and Diversification of Retail Space project.

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3. TOWNS FUND BUSINESS CASE - SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY CENTRE (SITEC)

To consider and approve the Towns Fund Business Case for the Science, Innovation and Technology Centre (SITEC) project.

REPORT TO FOLLOW

4. TOWNS FUND BUSINESS CASE - CYCLING & PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY (INCLUDING ARTS & HERITAGE TRAIL)

To consider and approve the Towns Fund Business Case for the Cycling & Pedestrian Connectivity (including Arts & Heritage Trail) project.

REPORT TO FOLLOW

5. URGENT PART I BUSINESS

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

6. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

To consider the following motions –

1. That under Section 100A 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.

7. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

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

NOTE: Links to Part 1 Background Documents are shown on the last page of the individual report, where this is not the case they may be viewed by using the following link to agendas for Executive meetings and then opening the agenda for Friday, 4 March 2022 – <http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/have-your-say/council-meetings/161153/>

Part I



Agenda item: **##**

Meeting Executive
Portfolio Area Regeneration
Date 4th March 2022



TOWNS FUND BUSINESS CASES – GARDEN SQUARE AND THE DIVERSIFICATION OF RETAIL

KEY DECISION

Author – Annie Piper Ext. 2292
Lead Officer – Chris Barnes Ext.2292

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 Stevenage was successfully awarded £37.5m of funding through the Government's Towns Fund programme. Full business cases must be developed and approved by 24th March 2022 for each of the projects that comprise the Stevenage Towns Fund programme. The Council, as Accountable Body, must provide final sign-off for each of the business cases, in accordance with the Towns Fund Stage 2 Guidance. Full Council has delegated approval of each of the business cases to the Council's Executive committee.
- 1.2 This report relates to the Diversification of Retail project, which includes two elements that both support the town centre's ability to respond to changing retail habits and create a vibrant Town Centre that can provide opportunity for retail, leisure, restaurants cafes and experiential amenities to thrive. The first element is to enable and enhance the development of Garden Square, the new high quality public space in the heart of the town centre, which will

be the foundation for the establishment of modern food and beverages space. This includes delivering elements in the shorter term once the existing bus station is vacant, to stimulate cultural and economic activity prior to the full public realm scheme being delivered as part of SG1.

- 1.3 The second element is to invigorate currently vacant spaces and poorer retail assets to become catalysts for innovative regeneration, as shown on a bigger scale by schemes such as Co-Space. Collectively, these interventions will help create a diverse town centre economy and be the key driver in providing the conditions and environment to make Stevenage a vibrant 21st Century town, which is resilient to the changing retail market.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

That Executive:

- 2.1 Note the feedback from the Stevenage Development Board.
- 2.2 Approve the Garden Square and Diversification of Retail business case and delegate authority to Strategic Director (TP) to submit the project summary to the Department for Levelling Up, Communities and Housing Towns Fund team on behalf of the Council (acting as Accountable Body).
- 2.3 Endorse further community engagement relating to the existing bus station space and Garden Square, which are within the remit of this programme.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In September 2019 the Government invited 101 towns to develop proposals and bid for funding for a Town Deal, as part of the £3.6 billion Towns Fund. Stevenage was identified as one of the 101 eligible towns. Background relating to this process, the development of the Stevenage Town Investment Plan (STIP), and the approval process for the business cases is contained within Appendix A. The breakdown of funding is identified below:

Project	Total (£)
Stevenage Enterprise Centre	4,000,000
Gunnels Wood Road Infrastructure Improvements	1,000,000
Station Gateway Enabling Works	6,500,000
Marshgate Biotech	1,750,000
Stevenage Innovation & Technology Centre	5,000,000
National New Towns Heritage Centre	2,000,000
Stevenage Sports & Leisure Hub	10,000,000
Cycling Connectivity and Arts & Heritage Trail	3,500,000
Town Centre Diversification & Garden Square	3,750,000
Total	37,500,000

3.2 All business cases relating to the Stevenage Town Investment Plan are required to be approved by the Accountable body before 24th March 2022. To recap, business cases must include:

- The evidence for the intervention using rigorous analysis of quality data and the application of best practice.
- An assessment of value for money, including showing how different types of projects will be compared and assessed.
- A clear economic rationale, justifying the use of public funds in addition to how a proposed project is expected to contribute to strategic objectives.
- Clearly defined inputs, activities, outputs and anticipated outcomes.
- Appropriate consideration of deliverability and risk along with appropriate mitigating action.
- A robust value for money assessments, in order to follow best practice even though there is no minimum value for money threshold set for Towns Fund projects.
- Business cases should address, in a proportionate manner, the five cases set out in the HM Treasury Green Book.

Garden Square and Diversification of Retail (£3,750,000)

3.3 Stevenage Town Centre has a long history as a retail/social precinct, with the first pedestrianised town centre, and a number of innovative retailers, such as the supermarket in the Town Square. Leisure, culture and experience-based amenities have played a secondary role to the primary function of the town centre as a retail core. The subsequent change in retail patterns, with a significant shift towards online retail, and increased mobility for people to travel to supercentre locations, has made Stevenage particularly vulnerable to the diminishing attraction of traditional retail stores. This particular challenge is one that was evidenced through the Stevenage Central Framework and the Local plan, which has helped inform the approach to the regeneration programme and this project. This project aims to facilitate the diversification of the Town Centre, utilising principles set out in the Grimsey Review, and the Stevenage Central Framework, to use leisure, culture, experience, food and beverage, and an exciting events programme, to create a vibrant town centre. This will deliver immediate improvements to the current bus station apron when it is vacant later in the year. In the longer term development the scheme will deliver new amenity space, landscaping, seating, lighting and a playful water feature when the full public realm scheme is delivered, increasing dwell times in the area.

3.4 Full information on the Garden Square and Diversification of Retail project can be found in Appendices B & C. The project will enabling stage works which could include activities such as demolitions and acquisitions to create the conditions for the development of the scheme to proceed, whilst the enhancing element will be focussed exploring further opportunities in design

to enhance the square's features. The second element, supporting the diversification of the town centre, will seek to take underutilised spaces and assets and transform them into core drivers for transformation change. This is divided into two parts - activating vacant spaces and the creation of a new gateway to retail core.

- 3.5 The Stevenage Local Plan provides a strong evidence base to support the town centre as it adapts to the challenges outlined above and in the business case, finding new and exciting uses and activities, which in turn increase footfall to support and promote retail. This evidence was underpinned by a robust retail study, which demonstrated the exposure of Stevenage Town Centre to changing retail patterns/markets, due to the prominence of traditional clothing retailers, and the under-representation of food and beverage, leisure and cultural attractions. This business case will enable additional funding to be used to support the town centre as it adapts to these challenges.
- 3.6 Whilst performing in line with the national average, vacant spaces remain a challenge for the town as retail continues to compete with retail parks and online shopping. As part of the Stevenage Regeneration Framework and Stevenage Re-Imagined Cultural strategy, the Council aspires to utilise these spaces as opportunities for leisure and cultural activity, stimulating more food and drink outlets and experience-based retail, to encourage longer dwell-time and promote footfall. Part of this project will include the activation of the (soon to be) vacant bus apron by utilising unique designs to create an attraction in the heart of the town, proving a key focal point for visitors, which could include a multi-purpose performance space. This also presents a key opportunity for community and Member engagement to shape these proposals and engagement activities have been prepared.
- 3.7 Another option under consideration within diversification of retail will be the creation of a new gateway to the retail core, which will create a new entrance to Queensway (retail core), by transforming the service entrance of the Westgate shopping to a new thoroughfare. This will connect the Arrival Square of the SG1 scheme, to Queensway producing a more cohesive experience. Overall, this has the ability to significantly increase the quality of experience and range of amenities on offer, which will support existing businesses as part of the Covid-19 recovery plan, as well as provide opportunities for new ones. This is subject to appropriate legal advice in relation to the existing lease and subsidy control.
- 3.8 This challenge is significant and one that has been "played-out" across the country as nationally traditional retail is struggling and this has only been exacerbated by the Covid 19 pandemic. There have been a number of interventions from central government in the last two years to support retailers, however increasing inflation and the increase in the cost of living, as well as the continuing strength of online retailing, will only create additional pressure in the traditional retail sector. Some flexibility has been retained within the business case to support interventions that come forward, align with the Stevenage Town Investment Plan, and provide value for money. It

must be acknowledged that the future of all town centres, including Stevenage, will be influenced by the policy decisions made at national level over the next 12-24 months. Should support measures be removed without alternatives the success of any interventions will be undermined.

- 3.9 Since the Stevenage Town Investment Plan was submitted to Government, Stevenage has been shortlisted as one of 68 towns to receive support from the High Streets Task Force. The town has been shortlisted following analysis into the regional indicators of deprivation, inequality and exposure to retail change following the effect of COVID -19 on town centres and high streets. This reinforces the need for these types of interventions as part of both short and long term solutions to mitigate town centre decline.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

- 4.1 This report recommends approval of this Stevenage Towns Fund business case, which sets out a case for:

- Garden Square and the Diversification of Retail (£3,750,000)

- 4.2 Both the summary version and full version of the business case have been included as appendices to this paper. The business case provides detailed assessment of the strategic, economic, financial, commercial and management elements of the business case, with detailed consideration of the benefits, risks, outputs and outcomes of the project.

- 4.3 The business case under consideration has been reviewed by the officer group and Assurance Panel, which includes the Chair of the Stevenage Development Board.

- 4.4 To date, the Assurance Panel, which is made up of representatives from the Board and supported by Stevenage Borough Council Officers, have provided support for the business case. Key comments from the assurance panel are summarised below:

- Ensure all legal protections are in place before funds committed
- Highlight opportunities within existing bus apron to bring vibrancy to the town square, and integrate with events programme
- Positive examples in the town of this already to learn from
- Identify opportunities to engage the public regarding existing bus apron

- 4.5 The business case will be presented to the Stevenage Development Board on 24th February 2022, incorporating feedback from the Assurance Panel. As this occurs after the publication date of this report, verbal feedback will be provided at the Executive meeting.

- 4.6 This project is considered to be a significant benefit for the town, and will provide an opportunity to deliver many of the aims and ambitions of the

cultural strategy, Stevenage Re-imagined. This strategy and action plan places an emphasis on linking the opportunities of regeneration to develop the environment for creative industries, leisure and cultural assets, and active community groups to thrive, resulting in a place of creation and activity.

- 4.7 There is an exciting opportunity to capitalise on the growing national and international recognition of the importance of the New Towns movement, and the influence that New Towns and Garden Cities still have over 'good practice' in the field of Town Planning today, from community cohesion and creating a successful social fabric within sustainable neighbourhoods, to the role of design, architecture and art in creating vibrant and engaging places. Officers will work with key stakeholders to explore these opportunities and maximise the wider appeal of the facility. The Council is ambitious in this area, and many stakeholders have commented on this opportunity, but support of external bodies will be required to match the ambition.

5 IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 5.1 In relation to the Garden Square and the Diversification of Retail business case, the original submission to government sought £4m of grant funding. Following the award of funding in principle (offer letter) of £37.5m total funding was awarded to Stevenage. However within this project's allocation was reduced from £4m to £3.75m.
- 5.2 The project contains a number of elements, and some flexibility is retained to ensure that the outputs and outcomes can be delivered within the relevant spend window. No direct match funding is required from the Council, as private investment into the surrounding developments will be utilised. Any revenue implications for enhanced or improved assets will need to be captured before the relevant part of the Towns Fund monies is defrayed and approval for any resulting increase in revenue spend for the General Fund approved.
- 5.3 In considering the overall financial risks of match-funding cumulatively to those already approved. Across tranche 1, 2, and 3, the Council is exposed to circa. £1.25m of capital that could revert to revenue if a capital scheme is not delivered across the Gunnels Wood Road and Station Gateway projects, and circa. £3m of direct match-funding to deliver the Station Gateway project. In relation to the capita/revenue risk, Officers are developing a strategy to mitigate this risk as far as possible. Across Tranche 3, approximately £35m has been identified for investment in the leisure and heritage centre projects. This is being addressed through the capital strategy, with work underway to develop a detailed funding strategy.

Legal Implications

- 5.4 In relation to the Garden Square and Diversification of Retail business case, the approval process previously set out at Executive and Council ("Transforming our Town Centre progress update and Towns Fund decision making") has been followed, and the documents have been prepared in

accordance with the Towns Fund Stage 2 Guidance referenced in the decision-making report. There will be further decision-making gateways required, including separate consideration of the planning application, and consideration of the funding plan for the match funding, as this is a project that will be delivered by Stevenage Borough Council.

- 5.5 In relation to funding improvements to any asset which is not within the full ownership control of the Council, confirmation that the detailed proposals comply with subsidy controls must be in place prior to funding being spent.

Risk Implications

- 5.6 Full details of risks relating to each of the business cases can be found within the full business case.
- 5.7 The Towns Fund programme provides a significant opportunity to draw in substantial levels of funding to support the regeneration of the town. Across a range of projects, there are elements of risk, as some projects will require match funding (as set out in the business case), or require capital investment and to proceed into delivery to avoid project costs generating revenue impacts. A number of strategic risks have already been identified for this project. The key risks include:

Retail Diversification and Garden Square: Project Risk Register

Risk Register L: Likelihood; I: Impact; T: Total

Ref.	Risk	Triggers	Consequences	Controls	Risk Score			Contingency	Responsible Person	Date: Added/ Updated
					L	I	T			
001	Covid-19 Outbreak and possible introduction of lockdown measures	Negative changes to working practices through social distancing. Uneconomical for construction supply train to operate. Added delays due to drop in output levels through covid	Shortfalls in manufacturing capacity causing price inflation. Project delay by significant social distancing measures. Negative Change in payment practices.	The need to implement practices to ensure safety. Client, consultants, and contractors work together to agree common solutions. Innovative approaches to procurement are in place. Allow for time extension in contracts. Monitor financial resilience of supply chains.	3	4	12	Scenario planning to assess the impact of the closedown and reduced output levels and advise clients accordingly to ensure timely completion. Bring in additional temporary labour. Review planning conditions and seek changes where possible to enable sites to operate in shifts over longer working hours. Manage cashflow.		

002	Construction labour shortages create delays	Conclusion of contracts with building contractors for public realm and site redevelopment EU restrictions (Brexit) on contractors and independent consultants	Delays to completion of both due to recruitment difficulties for contractors and consultants, Cost overruns	Appropriate and timely contractual arrangements	4	5	20 R	In development agreement ensure there is commitment to bring in additional temporary labour to ensure projects are completed on time		
003	Labour shortages in freight transport and supply industries delay construction progress	Construction progress reports noting failure to progress on schedule. National shortfall in haulage capacity	Delays to completion of project due to shortages of materials and components . Cost overruns	Contractual arrangements	5	5	25 R	In development agreement incorporates commitment to build up advanced stocks of materials. Build in sufficient contingency time in delivery programme to address possible delays.		
004	Climate changes and weather conditions	Unusually harsh weather conditions. Impact of unusually harsh weather conditions on aspects of project	Bad weather retards progress of the construction programme or parts of the construction programme	Regular progress reviews. Timely communication	3	4	12 O	Build in sufficient slack in the programme to cover for unforeseen eventualities such as weather		

005	The construction cost exceeds the limit for the project or other issues arising during the design & development phase	Capital & revenue overspends. Inadequate project management. Failure to resolve conflicting priorities. Robust financial systems are not established.	Impact on capital programme. Revenue overspends. Requirements to make compensatory savings to balance budget. Increased legal fees. Reputational damage.	Client management relationship. Rigorous and well-informed project monitoring reports. Effective communication. Appointment of key personnel.	3	4	12 O	Appointment of a B&D contractor in a two-stage process with a caveat to end the contract after the first stage should the Council wish to make that decision (PCSA - Pre-Construction Service Agreement). A cost consultant will be involved from an early stage of the project to ensure contractor's proposals are realistic and within budget.		
006	Decline in levels of footfall	Government legislation to minimise the impact of covid-19. Failure of collaborative working of service providers – leisure, shopping, eating, drinking. Local businesses and public bodies slow in adapting to change.	The significance of the high street or main shopping areas will continue to dwindle. Vacant properties will impact the managing of the location as F&B and other operators may not buy into the vision and strategy. Closure of business will impact the local economy and put pressure of public service budgets.	Ensure trading hours meet customer needs. Provision of the right mix of retail and other services providing the right offer to consumers. Market and share the vision and strategy. Maintain a clean environment – roads and pavements.	2	5	10 O	A cohesive vision and strategy for the location, developed by the Council, businesses and public services, shared by as many people as possible is communicated. Use of social media to identify problem areas and a sense of collective responsibility to encourage improvements Encourage the adoption of the Business Improvement District Model.		

007	Failure to achieve planning approval for adaptations	Notification of Council decision	Major delay to completion. and project interdependencies.	Planning approval has been expedited and is well advanced. Through consultation, scope of objections well understood.	1	5	5 Y	Close cooperation with Planning.		
008	Constrained nature of the site limits both the range of uses organised on site.	Funding restricted / stopped. Poor management decisions. Failures in contractor / partnership working. Poor project management. Poor planning	Project delays/over-runs. Reputational damage. Cost overruns. Public dissatisfaction. Discouragement of future partnerships. Delay, impact on service delivery.	Regular meetings with designers / contractors. Effective procurement strategy. Post contract reviews. Regular and timely meetings with planning. Robust project management.	3	3	9 Y	Close cooperation with Planning.		
009	Dissatisfaction of local residents with proposed content and/or design of Garden Square proposals	Publication of outline and detailed designs	Likely delays to construction if design changes are needed	Comprehensive consultation programme to be maintained particularly at early stage to capture preferences from local residents.	2	5	10 Y	Market Research and focus groups to provide ample evidence of what the public expect from the upgraded public realm, animation of the discussed bus station apron and new gateway to the retail core. Extend process to enable preliminary designs to be market tested with the public.		

5.8 The key risks and mitigation at a programme level can be summarised as follows:

Key Risks	Mitigation
Business cases and summary sheets are not signed-off / submitted in time and funding is lost	Programme and resources have been established with a dedicated programme manager and oversight from Assistant Director (Regeneration) and Strategic Director (TP) to ensure products are commissioned and programme is on track
Business cases are rejected by Accountable Body/Development Board	Early engagement with both organisations to ensure they are involved and have oversight of business case development, to ensure they are supportive of the direction of travel
Sign-off process and/or decision routes are challenged	Developed sign-off process and governance as set out in this paper in accordance with guidance and best practice
The cumulative risk of Towns Fund projects has a material impact on the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy	Each project will highlight the potential areas of risk (in this case, related to the approach to avoid any risks of capital claw back), and previous Towns Fund project. At this point in time the previous Towns Fund project (Gyratory) also highlighted risks of capital clawback, which also has mitigations in place
Money spent at risk not recovered and resulting in a General Fund pressure if projects don't proceed	Careful diligence of spending in early stages of the projects; not progressing to business case stage unless we are confident the project is deliverable; review of risk in entirety across the programme
Funding not sufficiently secured by accountable body, including match-funding	Towns Fund spend profile to be reflected in the Council's capital strategy, with individual projects returning to Council for future sign-off when at a suitably advanced stage to give Members the full information necessary for final budgetary sign-off
Third-parties do not deliver to timeframe or budget, and/or don't follow relevant procurement guidelines	All projects being delivered by a third-party to have a funding agreement in place with the Accountable Body
Business cases called-in and potentially challenged by	Utilising business case template provided through the Town's Fund resource;

BEIS/DLUHC	representative from BEIS to attend Development Board meetings and have sight of business cases at an early stage.
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Policy Implications

- 5.9 The development will contribute to the delivery of regeneration within the town centre and will help to deliver key objectives of the Council's Sustainable Transport strategy, Future "Town, Future Transport" (adopted 2019) and will also help to deliver on the Council's commitment to reducing carbon emissions as stated in the Climate Change Strategy (adopted 2020) through low-carbon developments. This project will also fulfil some of the Cultural Strategy ambitions.

Planning Implications

- 5.10 Outline planning permission has a resolution to grant as part of SG1 for Garden Square. Planning permission will be required for other elements.

Environmental Implications

- 5.11 A core value of embedded within the framework for appraising these projects is focussed on ensuring due consideration to Environment, and where possible support the reduction of impact of Regeneration on the Environment.
- 5.12 There is a significant focus on utilising brownfield sites and spaces to their maximum potential through the Stevenage Town Investment Plan, and a clear drive to focus on sustainable travel options, through both public and active transport initiatives.
- 5.13 Better land use planning is a key concept for mitigating emissions and allowing people to make the behavioural changes required to reduce their carbon footprints in the long run. New buildings will improve the environment, not detract from it.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.14 The project presents an opportunity to make a positive contribution to the Town's climate emergency and net zero ambitions, but utilising space in a multi-purpose building which is designed to limit the use of new resources through both the construction and operation phases. Stevenage has a recognised legacy as a green and diverse environment, and the new asset has an opportunity to promote this through its displays.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.15 No specific equalities and diversity implications for this tranche of business cases.

APPENDICES

- A Background to the Town Investment Plan development and business case requirements
- B Garden Square and Diversification of Retail business case summary
- C Garden Square and Diversification of Retail full business case

1 APPENDIX A - BACKGROUND TO TOWNS FUND

- 1.1 In September 2019 the Government invited 101 towns to develop proposals and bid for funding for a Town Deal, as part of the £3.6 billion Towns Fund. Stevenage was identified as one of the 101 eligible towns.
- 1.2 As part of the Towns Fund, each eligible town was required to put in place cross-organisational leadership via a Towns Fund Board, to ensure broad representation from businesses, skills and education providers, investors, community representation and cross-public sector support.
- 1.3 In Stevenage, this saw the formation of a new, independent Stevenage Development Board. Following a recruitment process managed by Hertfordshire County Council and approved by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, an independent Chair was appointed (Adrian Hawkins OBE), and the new Development Board (the Board) was formed in March 2020, working to shape a Town Investment Plan to help develop proposals to provide local opportunity and reinvigorate the town.
- 1.4 After extensive work and wide engagement by the Board, including working groups on Skills and Enterprise, Connectivity, Heritage and Culture, and Regeneration, the Stevenage Town Investment Plan (STIP) was submitted in October 2020. This built on extensive engagement with local stakeholders, residents and businesses to help shape a plan to reinvigorate Stevenage to meet the aspirations of its people.
- 1.5 This plan set out proposals to create an exemplar 21st century New Town, maximising the opportunities within local economy (including capitalising on the Life Sciences opportunity) to meet the needs of local people, attracting visitors and investment and revitalising the town. The Towns Fund programme had set out an expectation that bids would be for up to £25m, largely capital funding, but with the potential for towns to bid for up to £50m if they could demonstrate exceptional circumstances and subject to a deeper review process to be conducted by Government officials. Stevenage Development Board set out a bid with 'exceptional circumstances, articulating a proposal for £50m funding to help address challenges and opportunities facing the town.
- 1.6 As part of the national Budget announcements in March 2021, funding was allocated to 45 Towns. Stevenage achieved the joint highest allocation in this funding round, with an award of £37.5m. In making this award, the Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government, indicated that this higher funding offer 'is in recognition of the case that Stevenage made for the national significance of the proposals to develop its life sciences sector' and that this presents 'an exciting opportunity to come together to drive long-term economic and productivity growth in Stevenage, particularly as we meet the challenges presented by Covid-19'.
- 1.7 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)) set out proposed Heads of Terms for the £37.5m award for the Town

Investment Plan). As set out by the Towns Fund programme, the Council and Chair of Stevenage Development Board proposed a funding profile. On 15 July 2021, DLUHC provided Grant Confirmation, allocating funding over a five year period – subject to approval of business cases by the Accountable Body and DLUHC conditions. This was allocated as follows:

- 1.8 This process also sets out a clear role for Stevenage Borough Council as the Accountable Body for the allocation of funding for Towns Fund projects, and requires the Council to undertake assurance assessments, review and approval of business cases to draw down funding for projects within the Town Investment Plan.
- 1.9 To secure the allocated Towns Fund package, all business cases must be complete and signed-off by the Accountable Body, with the accompanying project summary sheets submitted to DLUHC by 24 March 2022.
- 1.10 It is recognised that the funding and range of projects included within Stevenage's Town's Fund programme means that it is one of the largest programmes within the nationwide Towns Fund programme, the Council needs a clear and achievable plan for producing and signing-off the business cases. The Council does have significant experience in developing complex business cases for approval and government review, such as through the Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Deal Funding, in addition to the strategic outline case submitted to government in the form of the Stevenage Town Investment Plan. Preparation work has been undertaken for many of the projects, to enable development of the business cases in a timely way. In October 2021, at a meeting of the full Council, powers were delegated to the Council's Executive Committee to consider each of the business cases for approval.

Business case requirements

- 1.11 The requirements for business case development and assurance are set out by DLUHC as part of their Stage 2 guidance of the Towns Fund. Stage 2 of the Town's Fund process focusses on the development of business cases for each of the projects, and is required to be complete before 24th March 2022.
- 1.12 This stage of activity is to ensure local partners work with government to demonstrate the feasibility, viability and value for money of their projects. This includes:
 - Developing and submitting the Town Deal Summary Document
 - Business Case development for all approved projects
 - A full list of projects
 - Detail of the processes used for business case assurance and approval followed for each project
 - Confirmation of actions taken in response to any conditions applied in the agreed Heads of Terms between DLUHC and local partners

- A Delivery Plan (including details of the team, working arrangements and agreements with stakeholders)
 - A Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
 - Confirmation of funding arrangements and financial profiles for each project
 - Undertaking Public Sector Equalities Duty analysis
 - Approval from the Town Deal Board and Lead Council
- 1.13 Stevenage Borough Council and Stevenage Development Board are required to conduct project assurance for each individual project.
- 1.14 Each business case is expected to meet agreed criteria. DLUHC expect business cases to include:
- The evidence for the intervention using rigorous analysis of quality data and the application of best practice.
 - An assessment of value for money, including showing how different types of projects will be compared and assessed.
 - A clear economic rationale, justifying the use of public funds in addition to how a proposed project is expected to contribute to strategic objectives.
 - Clearly defined inputs, activities, outputs and anticipated outcomes.
 - Appropriate consideration of deliverability and risk along with appropriate mitigating action.
 - Whilst there is no minimum value for money threshold set for Towns Fund projects, in order to follow best practice, all business cases must contain robust value for money assessments.
 - Business cases should address, in a proportionate manner, the five cases set out in the HM Treasury Green Book.
- 1.15 Each business case should be assured by the Accountable Body (in this case, Stevenage Borough Council), prior to submitting summary documents to DLUHC.

Developing and reviewing business cases

- 1.16 Stevenage Development Board will continue to have a vital role through the development of business cases, with partners engaged in working groups to support the development and finalisation of business cases. The Board includes a wide range of key stakeholders, who will need to endorse the businesses cases and play a key role in engaging with the projects across a range of themes, including Culture, Skills, Sustainable Transport, and Town Centre Regeneration. This will ensure the experience and expertise across a range of sectors will be harnessed to support the development of robust and deliverable business cases, for projects that will have a significant positive impact for the town.

1.17 To support the assurance process, and ensure appropriate separation of interests when the Council is acting as Accountable Body, an Officer Panel ('Chair's Panel') consisting of senior Stevenage Borough Council and partner Officers (a Director, Section 151 Officer, Monitoring Officer, Hertfordshire LEP and, Hertfordshire County Council Officers) has been established to ensure business cases meet requirements before being recommended to the Development Board for approval. The following approval route will now be followed for the submission of business cases to DLUHC:

- Business case developed by Officers and Stevenage Development Board partners
- Review of business cases by a 'Assurance Panel' including key Council Officers to ensure strategic alignment, deliverability, value for money and the ability to implement the Town Investment Plan, as part of the assurance process
- Approval of the business case by Stevenage Development Board
- Business case to be approved by Stevenage Borough Council Executive Committee as the 'Accountable Body'
- Summary of the business case to be submitted to DLUHC to access funding.

Executive Summary: Garden Square and Diversification of Retail Space

*Prepared for the Stevenage Development Board
Full Business Cases are available on request*



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Executive Summary from Business Case Assurance Panel

Project Title

Garden Square and Diversification of Retail Space

Assurance Panel Feedback

Assurance Panel discussion was held on the 10th February 2022 and a summary of comments is provided below.

Overall the panel discussion was very positive and supportive of the business case.

The Panel unanimously supported the business case, with the following minor amendments to be incorporated:

- Ensure all legal protections are in place before funds committed
- Highlight opportunities within existing bus apron to bring vibrancy to the town square, and integrate with the events programme
- Positive examples in the town of these types of intervention already to learn from
- Identify opportunities to engage the public regarding existing bus apron
- Ensure the justification and narrative from the Regeneration Strategy (Stevenage Central Framework) are highlighted – there is a very strong justification for these types of intervention in response to market failure
- Ensure the economic benefits of the project are articulated

Recommendations for Stevenage Development Board

To acknowledge and endorse the progression of this business case to Accountable Body processes.

Overview

Project Title
Garden Square and Diversification of Retail Space
Project Location
Stevenage Town Centre
Partner/Co-Funding Organisations
Mace
Total Project Costs (£)
£3,750,000
Total Town's Fund Allocation (£)
£3,750,000
Other Public Sector Investment (£)
N/A
Total Third Sector Investment (£)
N/A
Total Private Sector Investment (£)
£6,250,000

Project Description

This business case sets out the proposal and rationale for the Garden Square and diversification of retail project in the town centre. The proposal has two elements, which both focus on the objective to support Stevenage Town Centre to adapt to changing retail habits, and create vibrant spaces that provide leisure, restaurants, cafes and experiential amenities. Stevenage Town Centre has a long history as a retail/social precinct, with the first pedestrianised town centre, and a number of innovative retailers, such as the Fine Fare supermarket in the Town Square. Leisure, culture and experience-based amenities have played a secondary role to the primary function of the town centre as a retail core. The subsequent change in retail patterns, with a significant shift towards online retail, and increased mobility for people to travel to supercentre locations (such as Bluewater), has made Stevenage particularly vulnerable to the diminishing attraction of clothing retail in particular. This project aims to facilitate the diversification of the Town Centre, utilising principles set out in the Grimsey Review, and the Stevenage Central Framework, to use leisure, culture, experience, food and beverage, and an exciting events programme, to create a vibrant town centre

The first element of the business case is to enable and enhance the development of Garden Square, the new high quality public space, which will be the foundation for the establishment of modern food and beverage spaces, placed firmly within the heart of the town centre, and support the transition towards this ahead of the full redevelopment coming forward. The Garden Square will be a pivotal location within the town centre which a high proportion of incoming residents, workers and visitors will see when they arrive and/or through which they are likely to pass. If this location is transformed to a high standard with a strong sense of place, it can remove the poor impression that currently constrains investment and footfall and help assure the success of the new housing and commercial developments currently planned or underway.

The second element is to invigorate currently vacant spaces and poorer retail assets to become catalysts for innovative regeneration, as shown by schemes such as Co-Space. Collectively these will help create a diverse town centre economy, which utilises retail, leisure, culture and experience as part of a high-quality environment to attract sufficient footfall to ensure that new and existing businesses can thrive, and provide the amenities that residents, businesses and visitors need to make Stevenage a vibrant 21st Century town.

Since the submission of this business case to the Assurance Panel, Stevenage has been shortlisted as one of 68 towns to receive support from the High Streets Task Force. The town has been shortlisted following analysis in to the regional indicators of deprivation, inequality and exposure to retail change following the effect of COVID -19 on town centres and high streets. This reinforces the need for these types of interventions as part of the short and long term solutions to mitigate town centre decline.

Key Purposes of the Project

The schemes being supported by the Town Fund will support diversification of the town centre, and directly support the wider Town's Fund and Regeneration activities throughout the town. The below table shows the schemes in relation to these other projects.

Activity	Parallel Projects	This Project
Creation of new Bus Interchange	√	
Multi Storey Car Park & zero carbon support infrastructure	√	
Marshgate Biotech Office project	√	
Town Enterprise Centre	√	
Heritage Museum and New Leisure Space	√	
New Sports and Leisure Centre	√	
Residential and Commercial Development Plot B	√	
Residential Development Plots A, F, G & K	√	
Enabling the Delivery and Enhancement of the Garden Square		√
Activating Core Vacant Space		√
Creation of New Gateway to Retail Core		√

Building on the success of the recent development North Block, which has taken underutilised retail space and transformed in to high quality employment space, the core essence of this proposal is to lay the foundations to continue to revive these spaces. This proposal outlines two key elements, with sub proposals underneath (as applicable):

1. Enabling the delivery and enhancement of Garden Square
2. Diversification of Retail:
 - i) Activating Core Space on the Vacated Bus Station
 - ii) Creation of a New Gateway to the Retail Core

Configuration of the Project

Key activities will involve:

1) Enabling Delivery and Enhancement of the Garden Square

The project will take the high-level proposals for Garden Square and enhance the design further to create a high-quality public space that will create the environment for vibrancy and activity. Garden Square is a key feature of the SG1 regeneration scheme- a square which will be a focal point for social interaction, with food and beverages spaces spreading from Plot B (SG1) in to the square, encouraging al fresco dining complementing the adjacent and historic Town Square, broadening the town centre offer. This proposal is to explore further opportunities in design to enhance the square's features, increase quality of materials and look to include a water feature which will add to the place creation and playfulness of the space, providing a different experience to the more formal/civic space in the historic Town Square Conservation Area. Creating this high-quality public space will increase the appeal of the surrounding sites, in particular the retail and residential units included in Plot B, which the square sits directly upon. Furthermore, there are a number of enabling activities, such as demolition and acquisitions, to create this square, and utilising this Town's Fund monies, will allow the elevation of quality in its delivery by alleviating its risks to delivery.

2) Diversification of Retail

The project aspires to lay the foundations to take underutilised spaces and assets and transform them to drivers for town centre transformational change. There are two schemes that align with the other regeneration activities over the next 18 months that will be this catalyst.

i) Vacant Bus Station Space:

The first is the activation Bus Station apron when the new Bus Interchange is opened. This space is at the heart of the town centre and is an opportunity to provide a key focal point, which is for town centre visitors, including a venue for night time activities, as this space await developments. Key elements could include planting to form a new urban park, informal street furniture, lighting, infrastructure for street traders and a flexible space for events. These elements will be versatile and capable of being dismantled and transported to other parts of the square or to adjacent locations to develop a coherent attraction.

ii) Creation of a New Gateway to Retail Core

The second is providing improved connectivity between to the town centre from the station to the retail core and town square, with the creation of a new entrance to the retail core of Queensway, by transforming the service yard entrance of the Westgate shopping to a new thoroughfare. This will connect the Arrival Square of the SG1 scheme, to Queensway creating a more cohesive experience. Furthermore, the new entrance will enable the maximisation of high density uses through the creation of secure car parking, another asset to support the regeneration programme.

Strategic Case

Indicate how this project meets the Town Investment Plan Vision (<i>tick</i>)		
	Reflecting and Re-Interpreting our New Town Heritage for future generations	✓
	Embracing Sustainable Travel to maximise the benefits of our strategic location and link our communities with jobs and leisure	✓
	Transforming our Town Centre as a key place of opportunity and integration for business, residents and visitors	✓
	Upskilling and providing opportunities for all our people to benefit from innovation & growth	
	Supercharging the growth of National and International Business Base	✓
Indicate which <i>challenge(s)</i> this project intends to meet (<i>tick</i>)		
	Challenge 1: Ageing Infrastructure – Urban Disconnections and a Brake on Growth	✓
	Challenge 2: Bridging the Skills Gap and Raising Aspirations	
	Challenge 3: Town Centre Transformation	✓
	Challenge 4: A Resident Population Being Left Behind	
	Challenge 5: Lack of Suitable Modern Space for Growth	✓
Indicate which <i>opportunity(ies)</i> this project supports (<i>tick</i>)		
	Opportunity 1: National and International Gateway for UK PLC	✓
	Opportunity 2: Innovation Hub, High Growth Potential and STEM City	✓
	Opportunity 3: The Untapped Potential of Stevenage People	
	Opportunity 4: Building Wealth and Reclaiming Expenditure	✓
	Opportunity 5: Reviving Stevenage’s Sustainable Travel Network	

Policy Alignment (List only, 2.3)

National Policy	Local Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The UK Government's Build Back Better Plan for Growth UK Innovation Corridor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hertfordshire Covid Recovery Plan Hertfordshire LEP Strategic Economic Plan Local Industrial Strategy Grand Challenges Stevenage Local Plan 2019-2031 Stevenage Central Framework

Expected Outputs/Outcomes (2.5.11)

Jobs Created	65
Commercial Floorspace Developed sqm	1,331
Net Increase in Commercial Floorspace sqm	1,331
Additional GVA Generated per Annum	£826,936

Wider Outcomes and Benefits (2.5.12)

Economic

- Improved visual quality and very high-quality public realm in the heart of the town centre will encourage more people to visit the town centre.
- These effects will attract a wider range of new residents to the area, providing a good choice of high-quality workers to the advanced high value industries Stevenage is seeking to attract.
- This should boost patronage of and investment in town centre retail and leisure businesses. The expanded demand will help assure long term commercial viability of the centre.
- The success of projects such as the Town Enterprise Centre and the new museum and cultural centre and acceleration of the redevelopment of key housing sites in the town centre will be assured.
- Improved town centre environment.
- Stronger perception of Stevenage as a good place to invest.

Environmental

- Enhanced scope for living and working in the town centre, thereby reducing the need to travel.
- More walking in the town centre leading to more active and healthier lifestyles.

Social

- Meets anticipated demand from population growth.
- Broadens scope for engaging more people in cultural activities.

Economic Case

Economic Benefits (3.3.1)

See table of outputs/outcomes above.

Benefits have been monetised as follows:

Increase in GVA from new jobs

By estimating the GVA per head for each of the new jobs to be created and by projecting additional spending in the town centre that would be generated as a result of the upgrades to the public realm improvements and the new retail core gateway.

Economic benefit from enhanced public realm

A willingness to pay model has been adopted to arrive at an economic value from the proposed public realm improvements (see calculations below). Account has been taken of the Cultural and Heritage Evidence Bank produced by Simerica Jacobs.

Increase in Town Centre Spending on Convenience Food

Based on the Family Expenditure Survey, this has assumed that each of the households occupying units in Plots A & B will spend £10.40 per week (on non-supermarket food and drink retail outlets and that one or more convenience stores in the commercial space in Plot B will make up the majority of this spending.

Increase in Town Centre Spending on F&B

This has assumed that of the 3,600 households created in new housing to be developed in Stevenage Central the majority (75%) will patronise the food and beverage outlets developed on Plot B, given the shortage of related provision elsewhere in this part of the town centre. It has been assumed that 60% of the Family Expenditure Survey estimate of weekly expenditure on restaurants and hotels (£52.90) will be spent on restaurants.

Increase in Town Centre Spending from Increase Events

In view of the increased level of animation in this part of the town centre, it has been assumed that there will be a significant increase in the numbers of fairs, festivals and live performance events in and around the Garden Square with a parallel increase in the numbers of people attending them. Estimates have been made of average spending on food, beverages and miscellaneous items in the town centre from these visitors.

A BCR has been calculated as shown below:

Value for Money Assessment	Present Value
	30 Years
Cost	£3,367,546
Benefits	£12,892,267
Net Present Value: Benefits Less Cost	£9,524,721
BCR Calculation	3.83

Non-quantified impacts and benefits are summarised below:

Project	Impact	Assessment of Benefits
Garden Square high- quality upgrade.	Scope for intensifying animation of the town centre.	New bars, restaurants, culture, leisure and entertainment activity will become more viable leading to increased investment in higher quality food and beverage and entertainment provision.
	Investment in food and beverage commercial development.	Increased appeal for home buyers, assuring the success of new housing schemes.
		Increased appeal for workers, assuring the success of new office schemes.
Activation and animation of the vacant Bus Station Apron. New Gateway to Retail Core	Enhanced investor confidence leading to uplift in land values.	As the landowner, SBC will be able to deploy more resources to propel on-going regeneration.
	Removal of run-down appearance of a vacant site.	Greater scope for attraction of town centre visitors, incoming residents and employers and associated spending. Improved investor confidence.
	Creation of a stronger street trading scene and night-time economy.	Greater scope for attraction of town centre visitors, incoming residents and employers and associated spending. Opportunity to transfer street trading to other parts of the town centre about to undergo

			transformation.
		Increased visual quality in the town centre.	Great investor confidence. Acceleration of house sales and ongoing residential development.
		Higher appeal of Westgate to potential visitors	Increase in town centre spending.
		Improved security in the car park.	More people encouraged to shop and relax in the town centre.

Place Based Analysis (3.6.1)

Target Area	Central Core, Stevenage Town Centre, SG1
External Dependencies	Revitalisation of the town centre relies on the attraction of more shopping and day and night time leisure spending visitors. This depends on successful development of new homes, offices and other commercial space, then on the attraction of prosperous incoming residents to take up the new homes and well qualified workers to take up the new jobs as these are the people who will boost footfall and spending within the town centre, along with shopping visitors from outside.
Benefits to the Target Area: Quantified	As above
Benefits to the Target Area: Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of a high quality visual, operational and leisure environment and amenities attractive to its residents, workers, other users and investors. • Increased footfall boosting prospects for revived retail, leisure and hospitality sector. • Enhances the appeal of living in the town centre, accelerating sales and development of new homes.
Possible collateral effects in the target area or wider spatial area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will help reprofile Stevenage as a cultural and entertainment destination. • Will help generate greater footfall for Stevenage. • Stronger attraction of well qualified home buyers to live and work in Stevenage. • Increased investor confidence. • Acceleration of sales of new homes and transformation. • Generation of indirect employment.
Adverse	None identified.

effects on protected groups	
Different impacts by income group	Most jobs will be for low-income groups in activities such as retail, hospitality, cleaning and maintenance.
Views of local stakeholders	Desire to create aspiring communities and opportunities that create a lasting legacy.
Alignment with wider public policy in the relevant area/s and the UK as a whole/s	<p>National Policy Alignment</p> <p>The project meets The UK Government’s Build Back Better Plan for Growth in terms of stimulating short term activity and driving long term productivity through investment in cities.</p> <p>Grimsey Reviews:</p> <p>The project directly address the need for varied uses to be established within town centres to create a ‘patchwork’ of different uses that draw in a number communities, businesses and visitors to the town driving footfall and creating and vibrancy environment. There have been 4 Grimsey Reviews, the most recent released during the COVID- 19 pandemic, which reiterates the exacerbation issues facing town centres and high streets.</p> <p>Sub-regional Policy Alignment</p> <p><i>Hertfordshire Covid Recovery Plan</i></p> <p>The projects directly address the plan’s two transformational programmes: equipping Hertfordshire’s places for mid-21st Century living supporting town centres and town-level economies and connecting Hertfordshire for mid-21st Century living and working building digital connectivity.</p> <p><i>Hertfordshire LEP Strategic Economic Plan</i></p> <p>The project addresses Priority 3 within the current Hertfordshire LEP Strategic Economic Plan: Reinvigorating our places for the 21st-century. This will be directly addressed by this project as it will help diversify and bring more demand wealth creation into the town centre.</p> <p><i>Local Industrial Strategy Grand Challenges</i></p> <p>This project provides the conditions for improved access to recreational activities and will be conducive to helping the increasing numbers of older people participate in culture and leisure activities and to stay active, productive and independent.</p> <p>Local Policy Alignment</p> <p>Stevenage Local Plan 2019-2031. This was adopted in 2019 following Examination in Public and sets the overall spatial vision for the borough and growth direction to 2031. In total 7,600 homes are planned, 3,000 of these targeted for a regenerated Town Centre. The Local Plan looks to</p>

	<p>provide at least 140,000 m2 of new B-class employment floorspace and is promoting new employment opportunities as a critical component of the town centre regeneration. This project directly reflects the Local Plan's ambitions.</p> <p>Stevenage Central Framework. This was prepared in 2015 to set a direction of change for the regeneration of Stevenage Town Centre. Now supported by the Local Plan, the Framework sets out a strategy for accelerated employment and housing provision on a large scale in the town centre to meet the demands of significant population growth and revitalised and enhanced and modernised amenities to service it.</p>
Dependency on the successful delivery of other proposals	Continued house building and new offices in the town centre to assure demand for the facilities is maintained.
Link of Benefits Estimated Link to Theory of Change and Strategic Case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scheme will make Stevenage more attractive to well qualified workers. • Increased footfall boosting prospects for revived retail, leisure and hospitality sector. • More high quality and high value businesses will be attracted to Stevenage. • Recognition of Stevenage Town Centre as a high prestige business location. • Increased investor confidence. • Acceleration of transformation of other SG1 major opportunity areas and sites.

Financial Case

Funding Profile (4.2.6)							
		Funding Profile	Total				
		Town's Fund	£3,750,000				
		Total	£3,750,000				
Funding Schedule (4.2.7)							
		Source	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	Total
		Town's Fund	£100,000	£1,150,000	£50,000	£2,450,000	£3,750,000

Commercial Case

Delivery Model (5.2.4-6)

The proposed delivery model is for the Council to take the lead as the developer for diversification of retail (parts i) and ii)) directly appointing design teams and construction partners for the delivery of the schemes. The Garden Square element of the project will be delivered in partnership with developer Mace, as part of the SG1 scheme.

These arrangements have a number of advantages. For Garden Square, outline planning permission has already been approved for the totality of the SG1 scheme, and experts in development management and design are already on board preparing for the delivery of Plot A.

For the Diversification of Retail aspect of the project, the Council has significant experience in directly appointing design teams and construction partners to complete schemes.

- a) Take advantage of its position as landowner and thereby control over the assets involved.
- b) Provide an important building block for the regeneration of the town centre.
- c) Use its expertise and funding need to be deployed to stimulate leveraged investment and transformation.

For these reasons, the Council is best placed to initiate and deliver the scheme and fund a major part of the cost.

Risks (5.2.11)

Risks	Likelihood	Mitigation
Renewed risk of Covid-19 outbreak and possible introduction of lockdown measures.	High	Scenario planning to assess the impact of the closedown and reduced output levels and advise clients accordingly to ensure timely completion. Bring in additional temporary labour. Review planning conditions and seek changes where possible to enable sites to operate in shifts over longer working hours. Manage cashflow.
Pace of change of retail increases, with more closures/retailers moving out	High	Keep flexibility within the business case, to enable initiatives to be brought online quickly to address unexpected market failure or change.
Labour shortages in construction, freight transport and supply industries delay construction progress.	High	Include in development agreement the commitment to bring in additional temporary labour and stocks of materials to ensure projects are completed on time.
Climate changes and weather conditions	Medium to High	Build in sufficient slack in the programme to cover for unforeseen eventualities such as weather.

retarding progress of the construction programme		
The construction cost exceeds the limit for the project or other issues arising during the design & development phase.	Medium	A cost consultant will be involved from an early stage of the project to ensure contractor's proposals are realistic and within budget.
Dissatisfaction of local residents with proposed content and/or design of the public realm and retail diversification proposals.	Low to Medium	Market Research and focus groups to provide ample evidence of what the public expect from the upgraded public realm, animation of the discussed bus station apron and new gateway to the retail core. Extend process to enable preliminary designs to be market tested with the public.

Management Case

Next steps and project organisation

Subject to Stevenage Development Board endorsement of the project, there will be a number of activities that will form the next steps of the project's development.

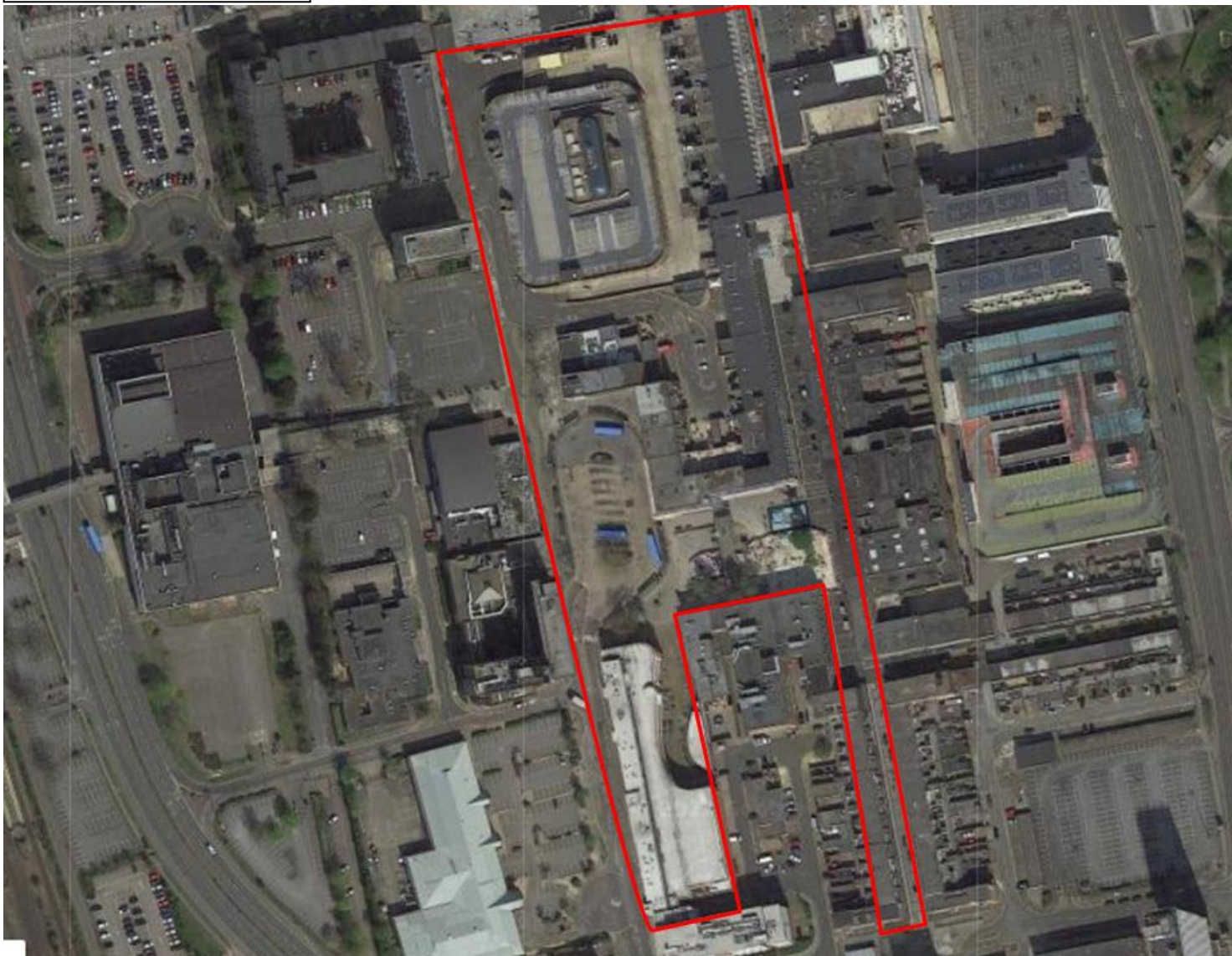
These include:

- Scoping a series of engagement and consultation events with stakeholders and residents
- Market engagement with commercial and cultural opportunities

Participants	To Whom Accountable	Accountabilities	Responsibilities
Stevenage Borough Council	Central Government	Successful completion of the enhanced Garden Square and proposed retail diversification measures.	Correct use of Town Fund award to deliver this project and associated regeneration outcomes and impacts within the town centre.
	Local Residents	Delivery of a high-quality public space attractive and accessible to local residents, workers and visitors to the town centre.	Adequate consultation.

			<p>Creating the conditions for expanded provision of food and beverage outlets adjacent to the scheme and a vibrant town centre scene and atmosphere.</p>	<p>Supporting arrangements to ensure that live performances, festival activities, other and street trading deliver the level of animation are adequately devised and resourced. To assure the success of the new food and beverage outlets.</p>
			<p>Minimisation of adverse impacts of the scheme.</p>	<p>Ensuring a comprehensive design scheme.</p>
		<p>Retail core tenants</p>	<p>Ensuring that the proposed new retail core gateway scheme delivers the increased footfall expected.</p>	<p>Adequate consultation.</p>

Red Line Boundary



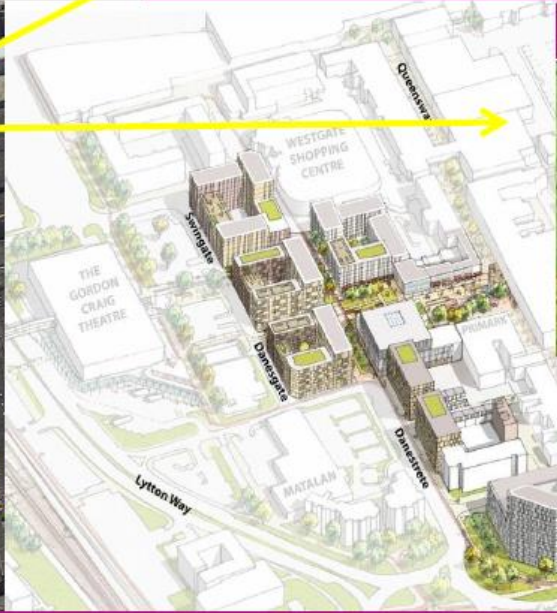


Plot A Proposals (After)

Swinggate House (Current)

Westgate Entrance (Current)

Westgate Artist Impression (After)



Bus Apron & Town Square (Current)

Garden Square Artist Impression (After)

Artist Impression (Enabling Works)



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BETTER

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Stage 2 – Garden Square and Diversification of Retail Space

Business Case template (optional) to be used by Towns as guidance for structuring their business cases

Version 6: 24th February 2022

VERSION CONTROL

Document version	Publication date	Description of changes	Modified by

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Foreword from the TFDP

Business Case Template Guide

Executive Summary

Introduction

Strategic Case

Economic Case

Financial Case

Commercial Case

Management Case

INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Purpose of the Business Case

- This business case sets out the proposal and rationale for the Garden Square and diversification of a retail project in the town centre. The proposal has two elements, which both focus on the objective to support the town centre to adapt the town centre to changing retail habits and create vibrant spaces that provide leisure, restaurants, cafes and experiential amenities, in accordance with the Grimsey Reviews, and the regeneration strategy.

The first element is to enable and enhance the development of Garden Square, the new high quality public space, which will be the foundation for the establishment of modern food and beverage spaces, placed firmly within the heart of the town centre, and support the transition towards this ahead of the full redevelopment coming forward. The Garden Square will be a pivotal location within the town centre which a high proportion of incoming residents, workers and visitors will see when they arrive and/or through which they are likely to pass. If this location is transformed to a high standard with a strong sense of place, it can remove the poor impression that currently constrains investment and footfall and help assure the success of the new housing and commercial developments currently planned or underway.

- The second element is to invigorate currently vacant spaces and poorer retail assets to become catalysts for innovative regeneration, as shown by schemes such as Co-Space. Collectively these will help create a diverse town centre economy, which utilises retail, leisure, culture and experience as part of a high-quality environment to attract sufficient footfall to ensure that new and existing businesses can thrive, and provide the amenities that residents, businesses and visitors need to make Stevenage a vibrant 21st Century town.
- Since the submission of this business case to the Assurance Panel, Stevenage has been shortlisted as one of 68 towns to receive support from the High Streets Task Force. The town has been shortlisted following analysis in to the regional indicators of deprivation, inequality and exposure to retail change following the effect of COVID -19 on town centres and high streets. This reinforces the need for these types of interventions as part of the short and long term solutions to mitigate town centre decline.

Background to Towns Fund and Stage 2 Process

- 1.1.2 In November 2019, Stevenage was included in the 101 places eligible to develop and submit a Town Investment Plan following an application to the Town Fund. This presented an opportunity for Stevenage to bid for up to £50 million capital funding to support and address key challenges facing the town.
- 1.1.3 Working closely with key public, private and third sector partnerships the Stevenage Development Board was established and a Stevenage Town Investment Plan was created and submitted to MHCLG (now renamed DLUHC) in October 2020. In March 2021, the partnership was notified of its award of £37.5m of funding.

- 1.1.4 The investment plan was predicated on maximising the success of Stevenage-based businesses in the science and engineering sectors, regenerating the town centre, and delivering opportunities for local people including enhanced skills & training. Ten projects were submitted as part of the ask to central government, ranging across Transport and Active Travel Infrastructure, Skills and Enterprise, Arts, Heritage and Cultural and Town Centre Regeneration.
- 1.1.5 Amongst the various Town Investment Projects, retail diversification and the enhancement of the Garden Square was identified as pivotal to the success of most of the other TIP projects, and to the success of major residential and office developments, widely across Stevenage Central and the food and beverage complex planned for Plot B.
- 1.1.6 Building on the Town Investment Plan, this document sets the strategic, economic and financial case for the project and the commercial arrangements for procuring its delivery, and the processes and arrangements for the governance and management of the project.

Scheme Promoter and Accountable Body for the Project

- 1.1.7 The scheme promoter is Stevenage Borough Council who will also act as the accountable body.

1.2 Summary of the Scheme

- 1.2.1 The schemes being supported by the Town Fund will become the driving forces for diversification of the town centre, and directly support the wider Town's Fund and Regeneration activities throughout the town. The below table shows the schemes in relation to these other projects.

Activity	Parallel Projects	This Project
Creation of new Bus Interchange	√	
Multi Storey Car Park & zero carbon support infrastructure	√	
Marshgate Biotech Office project	√	
Town Enterprise Centre	√	
Heritage Museum and New Leisure Space	√	
New Sports and Leisure Hub	√	
Residential and Commercial Development Plot B	√	
Residential Development Plots A, F, G & K	√	
Enabling the Delivery and Enhancement of the Garden Square		√
Activating Core Vacant Space		√
Creation of New Gateway to Retail Core		√

- 1.2.2 Building on the success of the recent development North Block, which has taken underutilised retail space and transformed in to high quality employment space, the core essence of this proposal is to lay the foundations to continue to revive these spaces. This proposal outlines two key elements, with sub proposals underneath (as applicable):

1. Enabling the delivery and enhancement of Garden Square

2. Diversification of Retail:

i) Activating Core Space on the Vacated Bus Station

- ii) Creation of a New Gateway to the Retail Core

1.2.3 Key activities will involve:

1) Enabling Delivery and Enhancement of the Garden Square

The project will take the high-level proposals for Garden Square and enhance the design further to create a core public space that will create the environment for vibrancy and activity. Garden Square is a key feature of the SG1 regeneration scheme- a square which will be a focal point for social interaction, with food and beverages spaces spreading from Plot B (SG1) in to the square, encouraging al fresco dining complementing the adjacent and historic Town Square, broadening the town centre offer. This proposal is to explore further opportunities in design to enhance the square's features, increase quality of materials and look to include a water feature which will add to the place creation and playfulness of the space. Creating this high-quality public space will increase the appeal of the surrounding sites, in particular the retail and residential units included in Plot B, which the square sits directly upon. Furthermore, there are a number of enabling activities, such as demolition and acquisitions, to create this square, and utilising this Town's Fund monies, will allow the elevation of quality in its delivery by alleviating its risks to delivery.

2) Diversification of Retail

The project aspires to lay the foundations to take underutilised spaces and assets and transform them to drivers for town centre transformational change. There are two elements within this strand, which aligned with other regeneration activities over the next 18 months, will act as the catalyst for the transformational change.

- i) Vacant Bus Station Space:

The first element of this project, is the activation of the vacant Bus Station apron when the new Bus Interchange is opened. This space is at the heart of the town centre and is an opportunity to provide a key focal point, which is for town centre visitors, including a venue for night time activities, as this space await developments. Key elements could include planting to form a new urban park, informal street furniture, lighting, infrastructure for street traders and a flexible space for events. These elements will be versatile and capable of being dismantled and transported to other parts of the square or to adjacent locations to develop a coherent attraction.

- ii) Creation of a New Gateway to Retail Core

The second is providing improved connectivity between to the town centre from the station to the retail core and town square, with the creation of a new entrance to the retail core of Queensway, by transforming the service yard entrance of the Westgate shopping to a new thoroughfare. This will connect the Arrival Square of the SG1 scheme, to Queensway creating a more cohesive experience. Furthermore, the new entrance will enable the maximisation of high density uses through the creation of secure car parking, another asset to support the regeneration programme.

1.3 Business Case Structure and Content

1.3.1 The full rationale for the project, covering the context, challenges to be address objectives and approach to delivery, are set out below under the following headings.

- Strategic Case
- Economic Case
- Financial Case
- Commercial Case
- Management Case.

STRATEGIC CASE

2. STRATEGIC CASE

2.1 Introduction to the Strategic Case

2.1.1 This strategic case defines the scope of the project. It explains how the project will enable the delivery and enhancement of Garden Square and the diversification of retail by activating core space on the vacated Bus Station and through the creation of a new gateway to the retail core.

2.2 Case for Change

Current Context, Challenges and Arrangements

Regeneration Challenges and Priorities

2.2.1 Stevenage Town Centre has continues to poor perception down due to time expired buildings and infrastructure; leading to a uninspiring appearance and a public realm and hospitality offer that is failing to attract people. The Council has utilising grant funding from Growth Deals and where possible the Council's own captail, to perform small scale interventions to catalyse the improvements. However, signficiant intervention is still required. Furthermore, its retail core is losing businesses and major retailers have moved out, leaving an oversupply of older retail space that is no longer fit for purpose.

2.2.2 Stevenage New Town was originally designed to serve a population of 60,000 but the population is forecast to increase to just under 93,000 by 2035 – growth of 50% of that of the original new town, yet there has been no increase in the size of the town centre and growth of surrounding districts will have a significant influence on the town centre. Meanwhile the economy of Stevenage has grown beyond the regional and national average over the past 17 years principally through expansion of knowledge-based industries and with the presence of an impressive array of world class businesses in life sciences, agri-tech, IT, advanced engineering and high value manufacturing.

2.2.3 Current challenges that need to be addressed can be summarised as follows.

- Significant investment in new infrastructure and buildings is needed to meet these conditions and to rectify the current shortcomings of Stevenage town centre.
- Investor confidence and viability remains a challenge, even following small scale interventions. The market has not responded in terms of residential schemes, but to meet the expectations of a diverse population more intervention is need to crate the appropriate environment for leisure, food and beverage provisions to come to the town.
- Town centres will have an important role to play in the post-Covid world in supporting businesses and their workforces. They are now having to assume greater importance as employment and residential locations, focal points for community, social and recreation activity and as hubs for integrated transport.

Stevenage Central Framework

2.2.4 The Stevenage Central Framework published in 2015 identified the need for significant amounts of new employment space and residential development to make investment in upgraded retailing, food and beverage and other key town centre amenities viable and fit for the 21st century. The Stevenage Central Framework has defined six major opportunity areas.

- Southgate Park
- Central West (Leisure Park)
- Park Place and Town Centre Gardens
- Stevenage Central Core
- Station Gateway
- Northgate

Regeneration Proposals for the scheme

2.2.5 This project will bring about the enhancement of the Garden Square and enable the diversification of retail by activating core space on the vacated Bus Station and by creating a new gateway to the retail core. These initiatives are intended to assure the success of the Stevenage Central proposals by making the town centre attractive to new home buyers, incoming employers and their workforces, shopping visitors, night-time visitors and investors. In so doing it will assure the success of the current and forthcoming housing and office development schemes. It will in parallel, boost the prospects for a number of catalytic regeneration projects such as the Marshgate Biotech Office, Town Enterprise Centre, New Towns Heritage Centre and Museum whose combined purpose is to increase the vitality and appeal of the town centre.

Progress to Date in Delivering the Stevenage Central Framework

2.2.6 To transform the town centre, public sector intervention is needed to enable more opportunities to be brought forward for development. To this end, the Stevenage Central Framework published in 2015 identified the need for significant amounts of new employment space and residential development to make investment in upgraded retailing, food and beverage and other key town centre amenities viable and fit for the 21st century. In accordance with the Stevenage Central Framework, Marshgate and Queensway have been defined as a major opportunity area.

2.2.7 An early start has been made in delivering the objectives of the Stevenage Central Framework, with a number of key building blocks already in place to accelerate transformation and new development.

- A dynamic development board, comprised of prominent business leaders, university and local authority representatives has been assembled. A proactive vision has been formulated. High powered regeneration solutions have been defined and are being initiated.
- A development agreement has been signed with Mace as a private sector development partner, enabling fast track approaches to the new development and construction.
- Construction of a new bus interchange on a new site alongside the station has been approved for funding and construction has now started. This has released a major development site which provides a major catalyst for transformation of the town centre.

- Approval for the creation of a Sustainable Transport Hub complementing the new bus station, comprising a new multi-story car park alongside the station, the provision of copious electrical charging and associated renewable energy infrastructure and a cycling hub.
- The Marshgate Biotech Office project has now been approved and has started on site.
- Advanced proposals and expected approval for a series of key catalytic projects brought about under the Town Fund including:
 - Stevenage Enterprise Centre
 - Gunnels Wood Road Infrastructure
 - Stevenage Technology and Innovation Centre
 - A National New Towns Heritage Centre and enhanced culture and leisure space
 - A new Sports & Leisure Hub
 - Improved Cycling Connectivity and Arts & Heritage Trail
- In addition to initiation by Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) of the SG1 and Queensway, a number of private sector developments have already been completed including Park Place, Vista Tower and Skyline.
- A number of redevelopment sites in the central core, northern and southern gateway major opportunity areas, pivotal to kick starting transformation, have been acquired. Preliminary enabling works are either underway or are scheduled.
- Development agreements have been signed or are at an advanced stage for new town centre housing development on Plots, A, B, K, F & G.

Evidence of Need

Challenges that Would be Addressed

2.2.8 If successfully developed, the Town Enterprise Centre will help to address the following challenge set out in the Town Investment Plan.

Challenge 1: Ageing Infrastructure – Urban Disconnections and a Brake on Growth. Investment in our town’s infrastructure has not kept pace with the growth of our population and economy. Our town’s facilities and infrastructure are all ageing at the same time; our transport infrastructure, station, shopping centre, sports centre and theatre are reaching the end of their realistic economic life. As Stevenage has continued to grow, these issues are becoming more pronounced. All growth scenarios show a deficit in infrastructure funding. The town centre is a prominent example of this, with areas of poor public realm, empty units that are not fit for purpose. Stevenage, once an exemplar of urban development, has remained largely unchanged. Without comprehensive regeneration and significant investment, the town centre will not be resilient to the future challenges that it faces and will fail to be a focal point or driver for future economic growth.

Challenge 3: Town Centre Transformation. The town centre has aged, retail is losing business due to dated floorspace, catchment leakage, high representation of lower value outlets, and an over-reliance on traditional retail, with limited diversification. Expansion of housing and employment space in the town centre are needed to create natural footfall and increase demand sustainably. To address this, the Stevenage Central Framework adopted in 2015 sets out a £1bn programme to transform the town centre delivering over 3,600 new homes and 55,750 sqm of offices and other commercial space. To achieve this, Stevenage needs to create the conditions for investment in the town centre and whilst the early phases of our regeneration programme have begun to improve values in the town, development viability remains challenging without public sector intervention.

Challenge 5: Lack of Suitable Modern Space for Growth. The lack of suitable space is constraining market and growth of sectors that hold national significance. Life sciences, agri-tech, advanced engineering and manufacturing, where Stevenage is very strong are generating significant demand for modern space. Increasing demand is emerging for space the town centre. Over the last 10 years, 67,000sqm of commercial floorspace has been lost in Stevenage, 75% to residential. This lack of supply threatens Stevenage's potential to maintain its competitive edge, meet the demand that is coming and the ability to retain key businesses. Achilles Therapeutics, which raised more than £100m of investment moved away from Stevenage to Hammersmith to continue its expansion in 2020. Addressing the demand for town centre space would also drive investment in the broad range of facilities that will help attract and retain skilled employees and businesses, enhancing footfall. This will propel the town centre's revitalisation, wider regeneration and post-Covid resilience.

Future Needs

Key Dependencies

- 2.2.9 There are considerable number of inter-dependencies within the Stevenage Central Framework. Revitalisation of the town centre relies on making its retail and leisure activities fully viable through the attraction of more shopping and day and night-time leisure spending visitors.
- 2.2.10 Achieving this relies to a large degree on the successful development of a new homes, offices and other commercial space on a number of allocated development sites within the town centre, then on the attraction of prosperous incoming residents to take up the new homes and well qualified workers to take up the new jobs. These are the people who will boost footfall and spending within the town centre, along with existing local residents and shopping and other visitors from outside.

Constraints to Successful Town Centre Regeneration

- 2.2.11 At present, Stevenage Town Centre gives the impression of a rundown, visually unattractive, dated and declining town centre. At night-time, it is soulless, with a lack of bars, restaurants, culture, leisure and entertainment activity. In its current state, this poor-quality environment presents a serious constraint to attracting spending from new residents and workers on which successful regeneration of the town centre and its component redevelopment projects depend.

Supporting the Development Catalysts

- 2.2.12 Stevenage Borough Council is currently putting together a number of building blocks to propel the regeneration of the town centre comprehensively, many of which are being supported by the Town Fund.

- The Station Gateway Enabling Works
- Release of sites for new development
- Stevenage Enterprise Centre
- Marshgate Biotech Office
- Stevenage Innovation & Technology Centre
- National New Towns Heritage Centre
- The new Stevenage Sports & Leisure Hub
- Allocation of sites for high-density residential units on Plots A, B, F, G and K and for provision of more A3 restaurant and cafe uses
- Provision of redevelopment sites for offices.

2.2.13 These are each excellent projects and as well as fulfilling an important social, cultural or business need, each has been initiated with a wider regeneration purpose. Without an attractive and vibrant setting around them, their commercial success and the intended beneficial impacts they are supposed to generate will be similarly constrained.

Removing the Constraint

2.2.14 The Garden Square is a pivotal location within the town centre which a high proportion of incoming residents, workers and visitors will see when they arrive and/or through which they are likely to pass. If this location is transformed to a high standard with a strong sense of place, it can remove the poor impression that currently constrains investment and footfall and help assure the success of the new housing and commercial developments currently planned or underway.

2.2.15 Otherwise, the redevelopment of Stevenage Central will struggle to achieve the strategic objectives, generating sub-optimal outcomes and benefits. Because Stevenage is identified as the No.1 priority for regeneration of Hertfordshire's new towns, the local authorities cannot afford to let this happen.

Creating a Town Centre Fit for Purpose

2.2.16 Research from KPMG says with the reduction in commuter footfall and reduction in commercial rent, consumers buying online and getting better pricing, city centres may now have to consider serving their inhabitants in a different way. (*Source: The future of towns and cities* (January 2021) KPMG).

2.2.17 The view that post-Covid, city centres will still play a key role in the future is corroborated by various findings from the Centre for Cities. Other countries who have faced more frequent pandemics have continued to urbanise and have seen their cities grow. Companies from similar sectors geographically have tended to cluster together because connections and collaborations to create new ideas, innovation and other synergies. Specialist forms of amenities will remain in city centres in the post pandemic world.

2.2.18 Research by Legal and General and Demos showed that that perceived mass exodus from cities is overblown as young people and those with jobs that cannot be done remotely made up the majority of those that moved last year and moved within larger cities.

2.2.19 Office space will be focused on space attractive to staff rather than being purely functional, amenity-rich, with well-being and community high on priorities." (*Source: Financial Times; UK businesses think big about smaller office spaces'; 4th March, 2021.*) These changes call for work environments that are state of the art and designed to provide these conditions. Where this is not possible, the role of town centres in providing an amenity rich offer assumes greater

prominence.

2.2.20 Against this background it is vital that Stevenage creates the required conditions to adapt to these changes, providing a town centre fit for purpose by the provision of a high quality visual, operational and leisure environment with amenities attractive to its residents, workers, visitors and investors. That is the core aim of this project.

2.2.21 Public realm enhancements also help to create walkable places; as highlighted in the Cities Alive report by Arup, the benefits of walkable places include boosts to prosperity as a dense and walkable urban network may facilitate the spread of small local shops and street markets, able to increase variety of goods and services, independent retailing, local employment and start-up opportunities. They also enhance a identity and tourism where cultural and social interactions take place by improvements in the public realm and creating “sense of place.” Public investment can generate private investment due to the competitive advantages of businesses locating in a place where employees and clients want to be, by attracting more visitors, creating new jobs and increasing the property value in the neighbourhood as due to higher levels of safety, accessibility and liveability pedestrian areas. A walkable neighbourhood reduces car usage, freeing up disposable income for other purposes and reducing infrastructure maintenance costs over the long term.

Opportunities

Major Project Drivers and Opportunities Addressed

2.2.22 A number of factors have come together that can help accelerate the Retail Diversification project.

- High density town centre housing development so far designated on Plots A, B, F, G and K as part of the SG1 regeneration scheme.
- Future office development intended to establish Stevenage town centre as a regionally significant office location.
- The town’s innovation focus and demand for high tech space in the town centre. The Marshgate Biotech Office and the Town Enterprise Centre will attract very highly qualified and well paid workers to the town centre. Many are expected to move here but will demand high lifestyle quality.
- The planned National New Towns Heritage Centre, new Stevenage Sports & Leisure Hub and provision of more A3 restaurant and cafe uses.

2.2.23 These schemes will drive demand for improved leisure, culture, shopping and amenities and a strong and vibrant sense of place which this project will address. This project will in turn boost town centre regeneration by complementing and enhancing the prospects for successful development and occupancy of offices and housing on the sites released for redevelopment. In so doing, the project will address three of the five major opportunities defined in the Strategic Town Investment Plan.

Opportunity 1: National & International Gateway for UK PLC. Stevenage can be a critical asset to UK PLC. Located 45 minutes from 3 airports, 19 minutes by train to the capital. A town centre that matches the profile of its international businesses and an arrival gateway befitting this status will help drive the hundreds of millions of investment that we know the town can deliver.

Opportunity 2: Innovation Hub, High Growth Potential and STEM City. These effects will truly position Stevenage at the heart of the UK Innovation Corridor, enhancing its status as High Potential Opportunity location and a business location of international significance.

Opportunity 4: Building Wealth and Reclaiming Expenditure. The town centre can be a UK top 100 town. Our vision is to bring back what Stevenage once was - a destination town centre with a combined retail, office, leisure and residential offer that will meet the needs not only of our residents but attract visitors and encourage our great industries and businesses to use it.

2.3 Policy Alignment

National Policy Alignment

The UK Government's Build Back Better Plan for Growth

2.3.1 Following the UK Government's unprecedented economic package to minimise the adverse effects of the Covid-19 and the largest fall in annual GDP in 300 years, the Build Back Better plan takes a transformational approach, by building on three core pillars of growth.

- Infrastructure: stimulating short term activity and driving long term productivity through investment in cities, broadband and transport infrastructure with capital spending over £100 bn per year, whilst maintaining a focus on carbon neutral growth.
- Skills and learning to support productivity growth through skills and training, whilst aligning post- 16 technical education with employer demand.
- Innovation: supporting and incentivising the development of the creative ideas and technologies, that will shape the UK's future high growth and sustainable secure economy.

UK Innovation Corridor

2.3.2 Stevenage is situated centrally within the UK Innovation Corridor (UKIC). More than 70 companies in the life sciences field have clustered around Stevenage over the past 8-10 years, more than 60% of them focussed on R&D in the Cell and Gene therapy. Stevenage is one of six Life Science Opportunities Zones identified by the Government and has recently been designated by the Department International Trade (DIT) as a High Opportunity Area. The opportunity for Stevenage is not only to retain but to grow its share of the global market and be promoted nationally and internationally.

Sub-regional Policy Alignment

Hertfordshire Covid Recovery Plan

TFDP Stage 2 – Business Case Template

2.3.3 Stevenage has a pivotal role to play in delivering the Recovery Plan for Hertfordshire. Its current regeneration strategy and Town Fund projects directly address the plan's two transformational programmes:

- equipping Hertfordshire's places for mid-21st Century living supporting town centres and town-level economies.
- connecting Hertfordshire for mid-21st Century living and working building digital connectivity.

Hertfordshire LEP Strategic Economic Plan

2.3.4 The project addresses Priority 3 within the current Hertfordshire LEP Strategic Economic Plan.

- Reinvigorating our places for the 21st-century. The strategy calls for high-density solutions recognising particular opportunities linked to railway hubs and transforming town centres into vibrant lively urban hubs underpinned by new models of living and working. The Stevenage Central Framework and this scheme align closely with this approach. This will be directly addressed by this project as it will help diversify the Town Centre and bring more demand wealth creation into the town centre.

Local Industrial Strategy Grand Challenges

2.3.5 Grand Challenges for Hertfordshire highlights the importance of clean growth challenges. This project provides the conditions for improved access to recreational activities and will be conducive to helping the increasing numbers of older people participate in culture and leisure activities and to stay active, productive and independent.

Local Policy Alignment

2.3.6 Stevenage Local Plan 2019-2031. This was adopted in 2019 following Examination in Public and sets the overall spatial vision for the borough and growth direction to 2031. In total 7,600 homes are planned, 3,000 of these targeted for a regenerated Town Centre. The Local Plan looks to provide at least 140,000 m² of new B-class employment floorspace and is promoting new employment opportunities as a critical component of the town centre regeneration. This project directly reflects the Local Plan's ambitions.

2.3.7 Stevenage Central Framework. This was prepared in 2015 to set a direction of change for the regeneration of Stevenage Town Centre. Now supported by the Local Plan, the Framework sets out a strategy for accelerated employment and housing provision on a large scale in the town centre to meet the demands of significant population growth and revitalised and enhanced and modernised amenities to service it.

2.4 Vision and Objectives

Vision

2.4.1 The transformation of the heart of Stevenage Town Centre repositioning it as a visually attractive and vibrant destination with strong appeal to incoming residents, workers as well as shopping and leisure visitors and providing a catalyst for significant new investment.

2.4.2 Key outcomes sought are:

- Enlargement and enhancement of the Garden Square to create a visually attractive public realm, vibrant outside entertainment venue and meeting place for day and night-time visitors and a thriving food and beverage and leisure scene.
- Adaptation of the vacated Bus Station apron to urban parkland and to permanently establish a stronger scene for events, street trading and night-time activities scene that can over time extend into other suitable venues in and around the town centre.
- Vastly improved visual appeal and security for the Westgate shopping centre generating higher numbers of shopping visitors.
- The stimulation of subsequent investment commitments of developers and international companies to the development and occupancy of an extensive portfolio of new, high-quality housing and commercial space within the town centre.

SMART Objectives Related to the Project

- 1) To create a strong sense of place in the heart of the town centre through high quality public realm enhancements, making it attractive to new employers, incoming residents and workers and shopping and leisure visitors.
- 2) To improve the image, appeal and security of the retail core.
- 3) To build a thriving and viable leisure and night-time scene and economy for Stevenage Town centre.
- 4) To remove a constraint to the success of each of the major town centre regeneration initiatives in prospect or underway within the town centre.

Measures of Success

2.4.3 Successes to be measured and the method of measurement each of element of the scheme are summarised below.

Project	Successes to be Measured	Method of Measurement
Enlargement and Enhancement of the Garden Square.	Increase in the number of external shows and concerts held in the garden square.	Records maintained by council leisure officers.
	Increase in the number of food and beverage and other leisure operators setting up in the town centre over the coming five years.	Monitoring by council planning officers.
	Increase footfall and turnover for food and beverage outlets.	Surveys with food and beverage operators.
	Increase in footfall and spending amongst town centre retail operators.	Shopping surveys and regular findings from specialist retail data providers.

Project	Successes to be Measured	Method of Measurement
Animation of the vacant Bus Station apron.	Establishment of a street trading scene.	Contract data of street trading sites. Success in transferring to and operating in other locations in the town centre.
	Expansion in the town centre events portfolio.	Visitor counts on event days.
	Increased spending in the town centre.	Surveys of street trading, hospitality and retail operators.
Creation of a New Gateway to the Queensway Retail Core.	Delivery on time and to budget.	Tracking with project managers.
	Improvement in perceptions amongst town centre visitors	Town centre visitor surveys.
	Increase in footfall and spending amongst town centre retail operators.	Shopping surveys and regular findings from specialist retail data providers.

2.5 The Proposed Investment

Options Considered

2.5.1 The Do nothing and do minimum options considered in the first instance to deliver the solutions to meet the above objectives were:

- a) Do nothing: no enhancement of the Garden Square, animation of the vacant bus station site or creation of a new gateway to the retail core.
- b) Do minimum: some basic cosmetic improvements to the former bus station site but leave the existing Garden Square and exterior of the retail core as they are.

2.5.2 A full list of the options considered is set out in Section 3 along with the criteria adopted in shortlisting them.

Preferred Option

2.5.3 The proposed option is the and enhancement of Garden Square and the diversification of retail by activating core space on the vacated Bus Station and through the creation of a new gateway to the retail core.

Project Risks, Constraints, and Interdependencies



2.5.4 Risks have been set out in the Register below, which is based on a 5x5 matrix indicating the exposure to risk, which is defined as the relationship between the likelihood of the risk occurring and its impact. Plotting the likelihood and Impact Scores assigned on the risk matrix will result in a risk level of between 1 and 25 and a colour code from Blue (insignificant to Red (major) set out in the diagram below.

Risk matrix

		LIKELIHOOD				
		Rare (1)	Unlikely (2)	Possible (3)	Likely (4)	Almost Certain (5)
IMPACT	Major (5)	5	10	15	20	25
	Significant (4)	4	8	12	16	20
	Moderate (3)	3	6	9	12	15
	Minor (2)	2	4	6	8	10
	Insignificant (1)	1	2	3	4	5

Retail Diversification and Garden Square: Project Risk Register

Risk Register L: Likelihood; I: Impact; T: Total

Ref.	Risk	Triggers	Consequences	Controls	Risk Score			Contingency	Responsible Person	Date: Added/ Updated
					L	I	T			
001	Covid-19 Outbreak and possible introduction of lockdown measures	Negative changes to working practices through social distancing. Uneconomical for construction supply train to operate. Added delays due to drop in output levels through covid	Shortfalls in manufacturing capacity causing price inflation. Project delay by significant social distancing measures. Negative Change in payment practices.	The need to implement practices to ensure safety. Client, consultants, and contractors work together to agree common solutions. Innovative approaches to procurement are in place. Allow for time extension in contracts. Monitor financial resilience of supply chains.	3	4	12 	Scenario planning to assess the impact of the closedown and reduced output levels and advise clients accordingly to ensure timely completion. Bring in additional temporary labour. Review planning conditions and seek changes where possible to enable sites to operate in shifts over longer working hours. Manage cashflow.		
002	Construction labour shortages create delays	Conclusion of contracts with building contractors for public realm and site redevelopment EU restrictions (Brexit) on contractors and independent consultants	Delays to completion of both due to recruitment difficulties for contractors and consultants, Cost overruns	Appropriate and timely contractual arrangements	4	5	20 	In development agreement ensure there is commitment to bring in additional temporary labour to ensure projects are completed on time		

003	Labour shortages in freight transport and supply industries delay construction progress	Construction progress reports noting failure to progress on schedule. National shortfall in haulage capacity	Delays to completion of project due to shortages of materials and components . Cost overruns	Contractual arrangements	5	5	25 R	In development agreement incorporate commitment to build up advanced stocks of materials. Build in sufficient contingency time in delivery programme to address possible delays.		
004	Climate changes and weather conditions	Unusually harsh weather conditions. Impact of unusually harsh weather conditions on aspects of project	Bad weather retards progress of the construction programme or parts of the construction programme	Regular progress reviews. Timely communication	3	4	12 O	Build in sufficient slack in the programme to cover for unforeseen eventualities such as weather		
005	The construction cost exceeds the limit for the project or other issues arising during the design & development phase	Capital & revenue overspends. Inadequate project management. Failure to resolve conflicting priorities. Robust financial systems are not established.	Impact on capital programme. Revenue overspends. Requirements to make compensatory savings to balance budget. Increased legal fees. Reputational damage.	Client management relationship. Rigorous and well-informed project monitoring reports. Effective communication. Appointment of key personnel.	3	4	12 O	Appointment of a B&D contractor in a two-stage process with a caveat to end the contract after the first stage should the Council wish to make that decision (PCSA - Pre-Construction Service Agreement). A cost consultant will be involved from an early stage of the project to ensure contractor's proposals are realistic and within budget.		
006	Decline in levels of footfall	Government legislation to minimise the impact of covid-19. Failure of collaborative working of service	The significance of the high street or main shopping areas will continue to dwindle. Vacant properties will	Ensure trading hours meet customer needs. Provision of the right mix of retail and other services providing the	2	5	10 O	A cohesive vision and strategy for the location, developed by the Council, businesses and public services, shared by as many people as possible is communicated.		

		providers – leisure, shopping, eating, drinking. Local businesses and public bodies slow in adapting to change.	impact the managing of the location as F&B and other operators may not buy into the vision and strategy. Closure of business will impact the local economy and put pressure of public service budgets.	right offer to consumers. Market and share the vision and strategy. Maintain a clean environment – roads and pavements.				Use of social media to identify problem areas and a sense of collective responsibility to encourage improvements Encourage the adoption of the Business Improvement District Model.		
007	Failure to achieve planning approval for adaptations	Notification of Council decision	Major delay to completion. and project interdependencies.	Planning approval has been expedited and is well advanced. Through consultation, scope of objections well understood.	1	5	5 Y	Close cooperation with Planning.		
008	Constrained nature of the site limits both the range of uses organised on site.	Funding restricted / stopped. Poor management decisions. Failures in contractor / partnership working. Poor project management. Poor planning	Project delays/overruns. Reputational damage. Cost overruns. Public dissatisfaction. Discouragement of future partnerships. Delay, impact on service delivery.	Regular meetings with designers / contractors. Effective procurement strategy. Post contract reviews. Regular and timely meetings with planning. Robust project management.	3	3	9 Y	Close cooperation with Planning.		

009	Dissatisfaction of local residents with proposed content and/or design of Garden Square proposals	Publication of outline and detailed designs	Likely delays to construction if design changes are needed	Comprehensive consultation programme to be maintained particularly at early stage to capture preferences from local residents.	2	5	10 Y	Market Research and focus groups to provide ample evidence of what the public expect from the upgraded public realm, animation of the discussed bus station apron and new gateway to the retail core. Extend process to enable preliminary designs to be market tested with the public.		
010	Delayed delivery due to slippage in previous phases	Project slippage of Phase 1 (Plot A)	Delayed drawn down of Phase 2 and 3 in development agreement. Project delays and could slip out of funding spend window.	The need to implement mitigation to ensure smooth delivery of Plot A with Mace. Creation of alternative options for project spend (subject to Development board and Accountable body approval).	3	4	12 O			

2.6 Description of the Project

Purpose and Key Elements of the Project

2.6.1 The project will enable the delivery and enhancement of Garden Square and the diversification of retail by activating core space on the vacated Bus Station and through the creation of a new gateway to the retail core.

2.6.2 Key activities will involve:

1) Enabling Delivery and Enhancement of the Garden Square

The project will take the high-level proposals for Garden Square and enhance the design further to create a core public space that will create the environment for vibrancy and activity. Garden Square is a key feature of the SG1 regeneration scheme- a square which will be a focal point for social interaction with food and beverages spaces spreading from Plot B (SG1) into the square, encouraging al fresco dining complementing the adjacent and historic Town Square, broadening the town centre offer. This proposal is to explore further opportunities in design to enhance the square's features, increase quality of materials and look to include a water feature which will add to the place creation and playfulness of the space. Creating this high-quality public space will increase the appeal of the surrounding sites, in particular the retail and residential units included in Plot B, which the square sits directly upon. Furthermore, there are a number of enabling activities, such as demolition and acquisitions, to create this square, and utilising this Town's Fund monies will allow the elevation of quality in its delivery by alleviating its risks to delivery.

2) Diversification of Retail

The project aspires to lay the foundations to take underutilised spaces and assets and transform them to drivers for town centre transformational change. There are two schemes that align with the other regeneration activities over the next 18 months that will be this catalyst.

i) Vacant Bus Station Space:

The first is the activation Bus Station apron when the new Bus Interchange is opened. This space is at the heart of the town centre and is an opportunity to provide a key focal point for town centre visitors including a venue for night-time activities as this space await developments. Key elements could include planting to form a new urban park, informal street furniture, lighting, infrastructure for street traders and a flexible space for events. These elements will be versatile and capable of being dismantled and transported to other parts of the square or to adjacent locations to develop a coherent attraction.

ii) Creation of a New Gateway to Retail Core

The second is providing improved connectivity between to the town centre from the station to the retail core and town square, with the creation of a new entrance to the retail core of Queensway by transforming the service yard entrance of the Westgate shopping to a new thoroughfare. This will connect the Arrival Square of the SG1 scheme, to Queensway creating a more cohesive experience. Furthermore, the new entrance will enable the maximisation of high

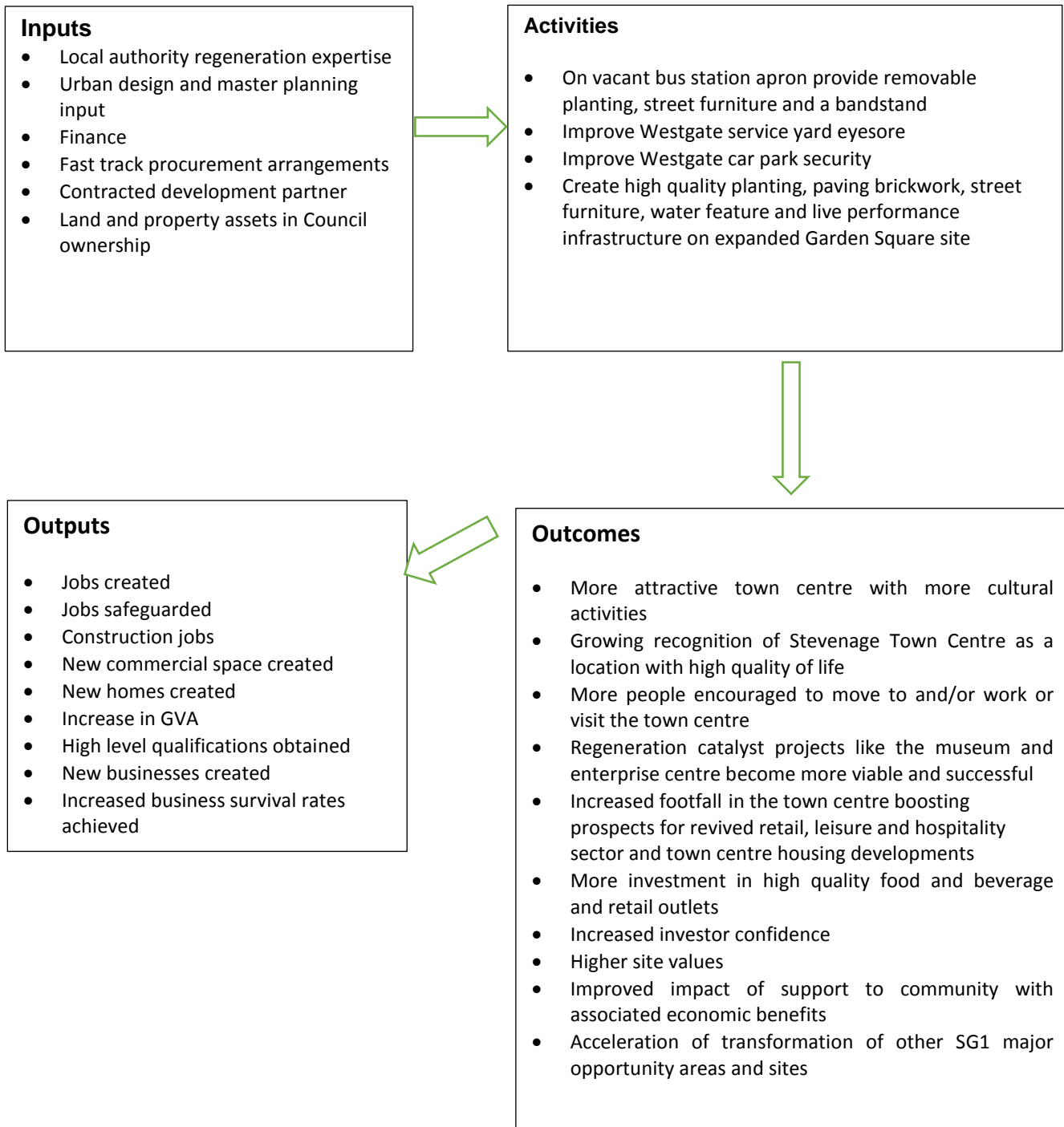
density uses through the creation of secure car parking, another asset to support the regeneration programme.

2.7 How the Project Addresses the Objectives and Vision

- 2.7.1 Building on two public realm improvement schemes currently approved and underway, this project will reverse the run down, dated and unsightly appearance of this part of the town centre and replace current negative perceptions of the environment with a sense of pride, local distinctiveness and a positive identity that generates social and economic confidence.
- 2.7.2 This will be achieved by replacing the visually unattractive service yard situated at the west side of the Westgate shopping centre, which is one of the first impressions received by those arriving from the station. Instead, there will be an accessible new entrance created in its place.
- 2.7.3 In addition, the site of the disused bus station will be made attractive through the creation of removable planting, street furniture and a bandstand and the existing Garden Square will be significantly upgraded with very high-quality planting, paving, brickwork, street furniture and a water feature to create a considerably more visually attractive place. This will encourage more people to meet and spend time there and with the creation of a new bandstand and supporting infrastructure to attend live performances during both daytime and evening.
- 2.7.4 This will improve the viability of the town centre, build and strengthen the night-time economy. Many more people will visit this part of the town centre as a result. This will boost its image and improve footfall and spending in town centre in retail and food and beverage outlets, in turn making them more commercially viable and sustainable.
- 2.7.5 Increased investment in and prosperity of existing and new commercial outlets and the strong sense of place created will add to the general appeal of the town centre to prospective house buyers and employees considering relocating to Stevenage.
- 2.7.6 The security of the car park, which is currently poor, will be significantly improved through the removal of one of the entrances as a result of parallel internal works. The project will enhance the appeal of the Westgate shopping centre and attract back shoppers who have been deterred by a poor external environment and security risks. Preliminary discussions with the Westgate operator as leaseholder has progressed well, although this remains subject to legal due diligence. SBC own the freehold of the site.
- 2.7.7 Overall, it will remove a major constraint to the regeneration of Stevenage as in the current situation the poor quality of the town centre and its environment is a major deterrent to investment by the private sector and to prospective home buyers and incoming employers.
- 2.7.8 The success of the regeneration catalyst projects such as the new heritage centre and leisure space and the new housing and office developments currently planned or underway will thereby be assured. This scheme will boost investor confidence and accelerate investment commitments on other redevelopment sites.

2.8 Project Theory of Change

2.8.1 The following logic model explains the theory of change.



2.9 Expected Outputs and Outcomes

2.9.1 Quantified Outputs

Summary of Outputs	
Jobs Created	7
Commercial Floorspace Developed sqm	1,331
Net Increase in Commercial Floorspace Sqm	1,331
Additional homes brought forward	172
Construction Jobs	83
Additional GVA Generated per Annum	£826,936
Additional Annual High Level Skills Qualifications Attained	2

2.9.2 Wider Outcomes and Benefits

Economic

- Improved visual quality and very high-quality public realm in the heart of the town centre will encourage more people to visit the town centre.
- These effects will attract a wider range of new residents to the area, providing a good choice of high-quality workers to the advanced high value industries Stevenage is seeking to attract.
- This should boost patronage of and investment in town centre retail and leisure businesses. The expanded demand will help assure long term commercial viability of the centre.
- The success of projects such as the Town Enterprise Centre and the new museum and cultural centre and acceleration of the redevelopment of key housing sites in the town centre will be assured.
- Improved town centre environment.
- Stronger perception of Stevenage as a good place to invest.

Environmental

- Enhanced scope for living and working in the town centre, thereby reducing the need to travel.
- More walking in the town centre leading to more active and healthier lifestyles.

Social

- Meets anticipated demand from population growth.
- Broadens scope for engaging more people in cultural activities.

2.10 Stakeholders

2.10.1 Key stakeholders and their role or interest in the project are listed below.

Project	Primary Stakeholder	Comment
New entrance to Westgate.	Local retailers	Opportunity to move in to the organised spaces (to be arranged by Westgate operator).
Garden Square high-quality upgrade.	Local residents	Major boost in activities in the town centre.
	Local residents	Increased incentive for living and working locally.
	Businesses	Stevenage more likely to attract workers.

ECONOMIC CASE

3. ECONOMIC CASE

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This economic case defines the benefits from the scheme identified and how they will have come about, the geographical scale of the benefits by way of a place-based analysis and how the how benefits estimated link to the theory of change and strategic case set out above. Quantified benefits have been calculated and an assessment made of non-quantifiable benefits. The economic case indicates which benefits have been monetised and how these will be generated year by year. Factors such as additionality, deadweight and displacement of benefits and double counting have been considered as have distributional impacts.

3.2 Approach to the Economic Case

Options Initially Considered

3.2.1 In the first instance, the following long list of options was considered for addressing the opportunities and constraints described above.

- a) Do nothing: no enhancement of the Garden Square, animation of the vacant bus station site or creation of a new gateway to the retail core.
- b) Do minimum: some basic cosmetic improvements to the former bus station site but leave the existing Garden Square and exterior of the retail core as they are.
- c) Delivery and enhancement of Garden Square and the diversification of retail by activating core space on the vacated Bus Station and through the creation of a new gateway to the retail core.
- d) Increase the size of the Garden Square, with improvements to the exterior the retail core.
- e) Reduce the site envelope of the Garden Square, with a corresponding increase in the envelope of adjacent development sites but with improvements to the exterior the retail core.
- f) Turn the Garden Square into a permanent street market.
- g) Keep the project as it is but save money on cheaper materials for the public realm.
- h) Keep the project as it is but exclude investment in any part of the disused bus station.

How Project Options Were Shortlisted

3.2.2 The following criteria have been adopted in shortlisting options. Projects must be able to:

- Address the stated objectives of and benefits sought from the project and those of associated strategic policies.
- Be delivered within a 36 month timescale.
- Significantly accelerate delivery of the Stevenage Central SG1 Regeneration Strategy.
- Significantly improve accessibility in an out of the Town Centre.
- Demonstrate a significant impact on the growth of high technology growth businesses Stevenage.

How Options were Shortlisted

3.2.3 Of these options:

- Do nothing: No enhancement of the Garden Square, animation of the vacant bus station site or creation of a new gateway to the retail core was rejected because it would mean continuing to live with a poor and dated visual environment that would severely reduce the success and regeneration impact of all of the Stevenage Central schemes which depend on this part of the town centre being enhanced.
- Turning the Garden Square into a permanent street market was rejected because provision will be made for temporary themed street trader uses to animate the vacant bus station apron and because once regularly established there would be options to hold themed events in a range of different places across the town centre, particularly where they are about to undergo regeneration.

Shortlisted Options

3.2.4 The remaining options, which have been shortlisted are appraised as follows.

Option 1	Do minimum: Some basic cosmetic improvements to the former bus station site but leave the existing Garden Square and exterior of the retail core as they are.
<i>Appraisal</i>	<i>Inadequate treatment leaving a poor and dated visual environment that would severely reduce the success and regeneration impact of all the Stevenage Central schemes which depend on this part of the town centre being enhanced.</i>
Option 2	Delivery and enhancement of Garden Square and the diversification of retail by activating core space on the vacated Bus Station and through the creation of a new gateway to the retail core.
<i>Appraisal</i>	<i>This will improve the viability of the town centre, build and strengthen the night-time economy. Many more people will visit this part of the town centre as a result. This will boost its image and improve footfall and spending in town centre in retail and food and beverage outlets, in turn making them more commercially viable and sustainable.</i>
Option 3	Increase the size of the Garden Square, with improvements to the exterior the retail core.
<i>Appraisal</i>	<i>This would result in a grander public realm, but would constrain the breadth and quality of food and beverage and other commercial public activities that are needed to make the town centre</i>

	<i>attractive to incoming residents, workers and visitors from outside.</i>
Option 4	Reduce the site envelope of the Garden Square, with a corresponding increase in the envelope of adjacent development sites but with improvements to the exterior the retail core.
<i>Appraisal</i>	<i>This would lead to a general reduction of the benefits the scheme would bring about such as boosting retail and leisure businesses more widely in the town centre.</i>
Option 5	Keep the project as it is but save money on cheaper materials for the public realm.
<i>Appraisal</i>	<i>This will only temporarily reverse the negative unsightly appearance of this part of the town centre and weaken the strength of the identity generated. This will detract from the quality and value that could otherwise be achieved in surrounding new developments.</i>
Option 6	Keep the project as it is but exclude investment in any part of the disused bus station.
<i>Appraisal</i>	<i>This would leave behind a major eyesore that would delay the successful and comprehensive regeneration of Stevenage Central and could prejudice the success of schemes such as the development of Plot B.</i>

Preferred Option

3.2.5 The proposed option is the delivery and enhancement of Garden Square and the diversification of retail by activating core space on the vacated Bus Station and through the creation of a new gateway to the retail core.

3.3 Economic Benefits

3.3.1 Quantified Benefits

Summary of Outputs	
Jobs Created	7
Commercial Floorspace Developed sqm	1,331
Net Increase in Commercial Floorspace Sqm	1,331
Additional homes brought forward	172
Construction Jobs	83
Additional GVA Generated per Annum	£826,936
Additional Annual High Level Skills Qualifications Attained	2

How Benefits Have Been Monetised

3.3.2 Benefits have been monetised as follows.

Increase in GVA from new jobs

By estimating the GVA per head for each of the new jobs to be created and by projecting additional spending in the town centre that would be generated as a result of the upgrades to the public realm improvements and the new retail core gateway.

Economic benefit from enhanced public realm

A willingness to pay model has been adopted to arrive at an economic value from the proposed public realm improvements (see calculations below). Account has been taken of the Cultural and Heritage Evidence Bank produced by Simetrica Jacobs.

Increase in Town Centre Spending on Convenience Food

Based on the Family Expenditure Survey, this has assumed that each of the households occupying units in Plots A & B will spend £10.40 per week (on non-supermarket food and drink retail outlets and that one or more convenience stores in the commercial space in Plot B will make up the majority of this spending.

Increase in Town Centre Spending on F&B

This has assumed that of the 3,600 households created in new housing to be developed in Stevenage Central the majority (75%) will patronise the food and beverage outlets developed on Plot B, given the shortage of related provision elsewhere in this part of the town centre. It has been assumed that 60% of the Family Expenditure Survey estimate of weekly expenditure on restaurants and hotels (£52.90) will be spent on restaurants.

Increase in Town Centre Spending from Increase Events

In view of the increased level of animation in this part of the town centre, it has been assumed that there will be a significant increase in the numbers of fairs, festivals and live performance events in and around the Garden Square with a parallel increase in the numbers of people attending them. Estimates have been made of average spending on food, beverages and miscellaneous items in the town centre from these visitors.

Additionality, Deadweight, Displacement and Substitution of Benefits

3.3.3 These are explained as follows.

Additionality	Additionality affects that would not have been realised but for this project are additional public realm capacity enabling more people to attend fairs, street markets, festivals and external live performances. Increased visits and spending in the town centre.
Leakage	This project is about place specific site development which cannot take place elsewhere in the borough, so no leakage is anticipated as regards job creation. Allowance has been made in the projections for the market share of food retail and food and beverage provision that the scheme will account for, so leakage has been accounted for.
Deadweight	The benefits from this project could not have happened anyway given identified market failures and the amount of investment needed to take the proposed scheme forward for development. The private sector could not accomplish the range of activities and benefits made possible offered by this

	council initiative.
Displacement	There is a limited choice of food and beverage provision in the town centre and much of the incoming residential population would account for the levels of demand assumed, so the scheme should not displace other activities.
Substitution	The scheme will give rise to spending on activities that are largely absent elsewhere in the borough.

Assessment of Non-Quantified Benefits

3.3.4 Non-quantified impacts and benefits are summarised below.

Project	Impact	Assessment of Benefits
Garden Square high-quality upgrade.	Scope for intensifying animation of the town centre.	New bars, restaurants, culture, leisure and entertainment activity will become more viable leading to increased investment in higher quality food and beverage and entertainment provision.
	Investment in food and beverage commercial development.	Increased appeal for home buyers, assuring the success of new housing schemes.
		Increased appeal for workers, assuring the success of new office schemes.
	Enhanced investor confidence leading to uplift in land values.	As the landowner, SBC will be able to deploy more resources to propel on-going regeneration.
Activation and animation of the vacant Bus Station Apron.	Removal of run-down appearance of a vacant site.	Greater scope for attraction of town centre visitors, incoming residents and employers and associated spending. Improved investor confidence.
	Creation of a stronger street trading scene and night-time economy.	Greater scope for attraction of town centre visitors, incoming residents and employers and associated spending. Opportunity to transfer street trading to other parts of the town centre about to undergo transformation.
New Gateway to Retail Core	Increased visual quality in the town centre.	Great investor confidence. Acceleration of house sales and ongoing residential development.
	Higher appeal of Westgate to potential visitors	Increase in town centre spending.
	Improved security in the car park.	More people encouraged to shop and relax in the town centre.

Consideration of Distribution of Impacts

Employment and income

3.3.5 The project will predominantly lower income occupations due to increased demand for retail, food and beverage activity in the town centre and cleaning, maintenance, security and delivery services to service the new facilities and new housing. The upgraded public realm will make Stevenage attractive to well qualified workers. Incoming employers will predominantly employ white collar workers, but the additional demand they will generate for food and beverage outlets will benefit those on lower incomes.

Geographical

3.3.6 Beneficiaries will be primarily current residents of Stevenage for entertainment, cultural fulfilment, but benefits will also be felt by residents of adjacent districts attending events and new food and beverage outlets in the town centre.

Protected Groups

3.3.7 No adverse impacts have been identified.

3.4 Economic Costs

Retail Diversification		21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	Total
Garden Square Enabling Works						
Detailed construction design	£100,000		£50,000	£25,000	£25,000	£100,000
Professional fees	£50,000				£50,000	£50,000
Technical Assistance	£50,000				£50,000	£50,000
Delivery of public realm	£400,000				£400,000	£400,000
Revenue	£100,000	£100,000				£100,000
Enabling works	£550,000				£550,000	£550,000
Sub Total	£1,250,000	£100,000	£50,000	£25,000	£1,075,000	£1,250,000
Garden Square Delivery						£0
Design & professional services	£200,000		£125,000		£75,000	£200,000
Technical Assistance	£75,000				£75,000	£75,000
Delivery of Public Realm	£1,225,000				£1,225,000	£1,225,000
Sub Total	£1,500,000	£0	£125,000	£0	£1,375,000	£1,500,000
Diversification of Retail						£0
Design & professional fees	£100,000		£100,000			£100,000
Construction budget	£900,000		£875,000	£25,000		£900,000
Sub Total	£1,000,000	£0	£975,000	£25,000	£0	£1,000,000
Grand Total	£3,750,000	£100,000	£1,150,000	£50,000	£2,450,000	£3,750,000

3.5 Value for Money Assessment

3.5.1 A BCR has been calculated as shown below.

	Present Value
	30 Years
Cost	£3,367,546

Benefits	£12,892,267
Net Present Value: Benefits Less Cost	£9,524,721
BCR Calculation	3.83

3.5.2 As can be seen from the table above, the net cash flow taking account of economic benefits gives a benefit cost ratio of 3.83.

3.5.3 Appropriate measures are being applied to ensure that the construction works for the project can be delivered in the most cost-effective manner possible, without sacrificing the quality and functionality of the end product. To this end, the appointed contractors will be asked to assess scope for further savings from the supply chain, alternative configurations and materials with a view to optimise value for money. In addition, quotes for ongoing design and survey activity will be retendered should this be considered to have scope for further savings.

3.6 Place Based Analysis

3.6.1 Benefits related to the preferred option which are quantifiable and those wider in scope or non-quantifiable are set in the place-based analysis described below, taking account of local employment impacts.

Place Based Analysis		
Target Area	Central Core, Stevenage Town Centre, SG1	
External Dependencies	Revitalisation of the town centre relies on the attraction of more shopping and day and night time leisure spending visitors. This depends on successful development of new homes, offices and other commercial space, then on the attraction of prosperous incoming residents to take up new homes and well qualified workers to take up the new jobs as these are the people who will boost footfall and spending within the town centre, along with shopping visitors from outside.	
Benefits to the Target Area: Quantified.	Summary of Outputs	
	Jobs Created	7
	Commercial Floorspace Developed sqm	1,331
	Net Increase in Commercial Floorspace Sqm	1,331
	Additional homes brought forward	172
	Construction Jobs	83
	Additional GVA Generated per Annum	£826,936
	Additional Annual High Level Skills Qualifications Attained	2
Benefits to the Target Area: Qualitative.	Provision of a high quality visual, operational and leisure environment and amenities attractive to its residents, workers, other users and investors. Increased footfall boosting prospects for revived retail, leisure and hospitality sector. Enhances the appeal of living in the town centre, accelerating sales and development of new homes.	
Possible collateral effects in the target area or wider spatial area.	Will help reprofile Stevenage as a cultural and entertainment destination. Will help generate greater footfall for Stevenage. Stronger attraction of well qualified home buyers to live and work in Stevenage. Increased investor confidence.	

Place Based Analysis	
Target Area	Central Core, Stevenage Town Centre, SG1
	Acceleration of sales of new homes and transformation. Generation of indirect employment.
Adverse effects on protected groups	None identified.
Different impacts by income group	Most jobs will be for low-income groups in activities such as retail, hospitality, cleaning and maintenance.
Views of local stakeholders	Desire to create aspiring communities and opportunities that create a lasting legacy.
Alignment with wider public policy in the relevant area/s and the UK as a whole/s.	<p>National Policy Alignment</p> <p>The project meets The UK Government’s Build Back Better Plan for Growth in terms of stimulating short term activity and driving long term productivity through investment in cities.</p> <p>Grimsey Reviews: The project directly address the need for varied uses to be established within town centres to create a ‘patchwork’ of different uses that draw in a number communities, businesses and visitors to the town diriving footfall and creating and vibrancy environment. There have been 4 Grimsey Reviews, the most recent released during the COVID- 19 pandemic, which reiterates the exacerbation issues facing town centres and high streets.</p> <p>Sub-regional Policy Alignment</p> <p><i>Hertfordshire Covid Recovery Plan</i></p> <p>The projects directly address the plan’s two transformational programmes: equipping Hertfordshire’s places for mid-21st Century living supporting town centres and town-level economies and connecting Hertfordshire for mid-21st Century living and working building digital connectivity.</p> <p><i>Hertfordshire LEP Strategic Economic Plan</i></p> <p>The project addresses Priority 3 within the current Hertfordshire LEP Strategic Economic Plan: Reinvigorating our places for the 21st-century. This will be directly addressed by this project as it will help diversify and bring more demand wealth creation into the town centre.</p> <p><i>Local Industrial Strategy Grand Challenges</i></p> <p>This project provides the conditions for improved access to recreational activities and will be conducive to helping the increasing numbers of older people participate in culture and leisure activities and to stay active, productive and independent.</p> <p>Local Policy Alignment</p> <p>Stevenage Local Plan 2019-2031. This was adopted in 2019 following Examination in Public and sets the overall spatial vision for the borough and growth direction to 2031. In total 7,600 homes are planned, 3,000 of these targeted for a regenerated Town Centre. The Local Plan looks to provide at least 140,000 m2 of new B-class employment floorspace and is promoting new</p>

Place Based Analysis	
Target Area	Central Core, Stevenage Town Centre, SG1
	<p>employment opportunities as a critical component of the town centre regeneration. This project directly reflects the Local Plan’s ambitions.</p> <p>Stevenage Central Framework. This was prepared in 2015 to set a direction of change for the regeneration of Stevenage Town Centre. Now supported by the Local Plan, the Framework sets out a strategy for accelerated employment and housing provision on a large scale in the town centre to meet the demands of significant population growth and revitalised and enhanced and modernised amenities to service it.</p>
Dependency on the successful delivery of other proposals	Continued house building and new offices in the town centre to assure demand for the facilities is maintained.
Link of Benefits Estimated Link to Theory of Change and Strategic Case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scheme will make Stevenage more attractive to well qualified workers. • Increased footfall boosting prospects for revived retail, leisure and hospitality sector. • More high quality and high value businesses will be attracted to Stevenage. • Recognition of Stevenage Town Centre as a high prestige business location. • Increased investor confidence. • Acceleration of transformation of other SG1 major opportunity areas and sites.

3.7 Summary of Preferred Option for Investment

Purpose of the Project

3.7.1 The purpose of the project is to enable the delivery and enhancement of Garden Square and the diversification of retail by activating core space on the vacated Bus Station and through the creation of a new gateway to the retail core.

Key Elements of the Project

3.7.2 Key activities will involve:

1) Enabling Delivery and Enhancement of the Garden Square

The project will take the high-level proposals for Garden Square and enhance the design further to create a core public space that will create the environment for vibrancy and activity. Garden Square is a key feature of the SG1 regeneration scheme- a square which will be a focal point for social interaction with food and beverages spaces spreading from Plot B (SG1) into the square, encouraging al fresco dining complementing the adjacent and historic Town Square, broadening the town centre offer. This proposal is to explore further opportunities in design to enhance the square's features, increase quality of materials and look to include a water feature which will add to the place creation and playfulness of the space. Creating this high-quality public space will increase the appeal of the surrounding sites, in particular the retail and residential units included in Plot B, which the square sits directly upon. Furthermore, there are a number of enabling activities, such as demolition and acquisitions, to create this square, and utilising this Town's Fund monies will allow the elevation of quality in its delivery by alleviating its risks to delivery.

2) Diversification of Retail

The project aspires to lay the foundations to take underutilised spaces and assets and transform them to drivers for town centre transformational change. There are two schemes that align with the other regeneration activities over the next 18 months that will be this catalyst.

Activation and Animation of the Vacant Bus Station Space

The first is the activation Bus Station apron when the new Bus Interchange is opened. This space is at the heart of the town centre and is an opportunity to provide a key focal point with a for town centre visitors including a venue for night-time activities as this space await developments. Key elements could include planting to form a new urban park, informal street furniture, lighting, infrastructure for street traders and a flexible space for events. These elements will be versatile and capable of being dismantled and transported two other parts of the square or to adjacent locations to develop a coherent attraction.

Creation of a New Gateway to Retail Core

The second is providing improved connectivity between to the town centre from the station to the retail core and town square, with the creation of a new entrance to the retail core of Queensway by transforming the service yard entrance of the Westgate shopping to a new

thoroughfare. This will connect the Arrival Square of the SG1 scheme, to Queensway creating a more cohesive experience. Furthermore, the new entrance will enable the maximisation of high density uses through the creation of secure car parking, another asset to support the regeneration programme.

Key Benefits of the Project

3.7.3 Key benefits of the project are as follows.

- This project will reverse the run down, dated and unsightly appearance of this part of the town centre and replace current negative perceptions of the environment with a sense of pride, local distinctiveness and a positive identity that generates social and economic confidence.
- More people will meet and spend time there and attend live performances during both daytime and evening. This will improve the viability of the town centre, build and strengthen the night time economy.
- Many more people will visit this part of the town centre as a result. This will boost its image and improve footfall and spending in town centre in retail and food and beverage outlets, in turn making them more commercially viable and sustainable. Increased investment in and prosperity of existing and new commercial outlets and the strong sense of place created will add to the general appeal of the town centre to prospective house buyers and employees considering relocating to Stevenage. The success of the regeneration catalyst projects such as the new museum and leisure space and the new housing and office developments currently planned or underway will thereby be assured.
- Overall, it will remove a major constraint to the regeneration of Stevenage as in the current situation the poor quality of the town centre and its environment is a major deterrent to investment by the private sector and to prospective home buyers and incoming employers. This scheme will boost investor confidence and accelerate investment commitments on other redevelopment sites.

FINANCIAL CASE

4. FINANCIAL CASE

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This section sets out the financial case for the project first describing the approach and funding options, details of the build-up of costs, proposed funding and an affordability assessment.

4.2 Approach to Financial Case

Funding Options Considered

4.2.1 Stevenage Borough Council has been investigating a range of funding opportunities to fund projects within the Regeneration programme and working across the organisation to create a centralised review of available funding opportunities and determine which projects are most appropriate. The financial impact on the council following COVID 19 will be significant, and it is anticipated that the capital programme will be affected. Having said that, the Council needs to be the initiator and owner of the project because of the business model being wider in scope from that of the private sector, as criteria such as widening participation in cultural pursuits is conducive to increasing the aspirations and cohesiveness of the population come into play particularly measures to engage with those on low incomes and in high areas of deprivation and who may be marginalised. For these reasons, the Council will be obliged to fund a major part of the cost of the scheme. However, were this project to be funded 100% by the Council, it would divert funds earmarked for other initiatives essential to accelerating the regeneration and renewal of the SG1 area, such as strategic site acquisitions and associated enabling works.

Other Public Sector Funding Options

4.2.2 Other funding options such as Future High Street, One Public Estate and Levelling Up funding are less aligned in terms of criteria and the urgency surrounding the scheme, though these were explored in conjunction with the Town Development Board. However, due to the volume of associated house building, there is scope for a major contribution to the project from Section 106 and the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Private Sector

4.2.3 The private sector is not typically oriented towards the creation of public realm spaces unless in the case of huge enterprises who have control of large swathes of development land. This is not the case here as the landowner is the Borough Council who are also the freeholder of the retail core. Public realm provision is the traditional role of the public sector, as the impacts and benefits involved are widespread and transcend those which would normally be of interest to private sector entities. For these reasons the project would not be attractive as an investment proposition for the private sector.

Town Fund

4.2.4 The Town Fund is an ideal option to be deployed where there is a funding gap which presents a barrier to a project being able to move forward and where a number of collateral benefits can be identified as a consequence of being able to make up the funding as is the case with this project.

Preferred Funding Option

4.2.5 The Town Fund is considered to be an ideal option for this scheme as it makes up the required amount of resources to implement the scheme. This can realistically be expected to create the level of confidence needed to secure the investment and development commitment necessary for the retail diversification and Garden Square to move forward.

Funding Profile and Scheduling

4.2.6 The funding profile is summarised as follows.

Funding Profile	Total
Town Fund	£3,750,000
Total	£3,750,000

4.2.7 The table below shows the scheduling of the funding.

Funding Profile	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	Total
Town Fund	£100,000	£1,150,000	£50,000	£2,450,000	£0	£3,750,000
Total	£100,000	£1,150,000	£50,000	£2,450,000	£0	£3,750,000

4.3 Costs

4.3.1 The project costs are as set out below.

Retail Diversification		21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	Total
Garden Square Enabling Works						
Detailed construction design	£100,000		£50,000	£25,000	£25,000	£100,000
Professional fees	£50,000				£50,000	£50,000
Technical Assistance	£50,000				£50,000	£50,000
Delivery of public realm	£400,000				£400,000	£400,000
Revenue	£100,000	£100,000				£100,000
Enabling works	£550,000				£550,000	£550,000
Sub Total	£1,250,000	£100,000	£50,000	£25,000	£1,075,000	£1,250,000
Garden Square Delivery						£0
Design & professional services	£200,000		£125,000		£75,000	£200,000
Technical Assistance	£75,000				£75,000	£75,000
Delivery of Public Realm	£1,225,000				£1,225,000	£1,225,000
Sub Total	£1,500,000	£0	£125,000	£0	£1,375,000	£1,500,000
Diversification of Retail						£0
Design & professional fees	£100,000		£100,000			£100,000
Construction budget	£900,000		£875,000	£25,000		£900,000
Sub Total	£1,000,000	£0	£975,000	£25,000	£0	£1,000,000
Grand Total	£3,750,000	£100,000	£1,150,000	£50,000	£2,450,000	£3,750,000

4.4 Funding and Revenues

4.4.1 Funding options considered are as described above. Sources and uses of funds are summarised below.

Funding Profile				21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	Total Uses
Sources	Value	Uses	Value					Total
Town Fund	£3,750,000				£0	£0	£0	
		Garden Square Enabling Works	£1,250,000	£100,000	£50,000	£25,000	£1,075,000	£1,250,000
		Garden Square Delivery	£1,500,000	£0	£125,000	£0	£1,375,000	£1,500,000
		Diversification of Retail	£1,000,000	£0	£975,000	£25,000	£0	£1,000,000
Total	£3,750,000		£3,750,000	£100,000	£1,150,000	£50,000	£2,450,000	£3,750,000

4.5 Affordability Assessment

4.5.1 A BCR has been calculated as shown below.

	Present Value
	30 Years
Cost	£3,367,546
Benefits	£12,892,267
Net Present Value: Benefits Less Cost	£9,524,721
BCR Calculation	3.83

4.5.2 As can be seen from the table above, the net cash flow taking account of economic benefits gives a net present value of **3.83**

4.5.3 It is proposed that the Town Fund provides £3,750,000 to the project.

COMMERCIAL CASE

5. COMMERCIAL CASE

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1. This section sets out the commercial case, describing the potential commercial options for delivery of the project model and supporting rationale, taking account of the existing commercial strategy of Stevenage Borough Council and on this basis the procurement strategy adopted, based on a review of possible options for the preferred procurement route. The proposed procurement process, including key milestones, and processes for assurance and approvals are then set out.

5.2 Commercial Deliverability

Potential Delivery Options

5.2.1 There are two delivery options.

1. Stevenage Borough Council promoting a development with its own finances and management resources, working with a construction partner.
2. Attracting proposals from a developer.

5.2.2 The first option, where the Council would act as the developer is an acceptable use of its resources and expertise if it is able leverage investment from sources such as the Town Fund. The project relates entirely to the support of traditional public sector and voluntary and community sector activity.

5.2.3 Attracting proposals from developers has the advantage of bringing in private sector investors and developers who have strong expertise in development schemes and can potentially deliver at less cost than the public sector. However, the purpose of this scheme is catalytic, aiming to generate positive knock-on benefits rather than directly to generate revenue streams and profits. For this reason and given that the Council's is the landowner it is hard to imagine how the development of the scheme could be of interest to a developer. (Private sector interests could of course be engaged in an operational capacity on completion of the scheme).

Proposed Delivery Model

5.2.4 The proposed delivery model is for the Council to take the lead as the developer for diversification of retail (parts i) and ii)) directly appointing design teams and construction partners for the delivery of the schemes. The Garden Square element of the project will be delivered in partnership with developer Mace, as part of the SG1 scheme.

Rationale for Proposed Delivery Model

5.2.5 These arrangements have a number of advantages. For Garden Square, outline planning permission has already been approved for the totality of the SG1 scheme, and experts in development management and design are already on board preparing for the delivery of Plot A. For the Diversification of Retail aspect of the project, the Council has significant experience in

directly appointing design teams and construction partners to complete schemes. The Council needs to be the initiator and owner of the project because of the need to:

- a) Take advantage of its position as landowner and thereby control over the assets involved.
- b) Provide an important building block for the regeneration of the town centre.
- c) Use its expertise and funding need to be deployed to stimulate leveraged investment and transformation.

5.2.6 For these reasons, the Council is best placed to initiate and deliver the scheme and fund a major part of the cost.

Existing Commercial Strategy

5.2.7 Stevenage Borough Council has a strong track record of delivering projects and are working collaboratively with construction partners to increase momentum to regenerate the town centre.

Evidence of Market to Deliver the Project

5.2.8 Stevenage Borough Council has a strong track record of delivering projects and are working collaboratively with partners to increase momentum to regenerate the town centre. Examples of such partners with whom the Council has previously worked are:

- In particular, in March 2019, the Council entered into a development agreement with the urban developer Mace to bring forward two of the Major Opportunity Areas (MOAs) of the Framework - Southgate Park and the Central Core – as well as acting as a catalyst to deliver major place shaping changes to the town centre.
- As stated in the Town Investment Plan, Reef are an urban regeneration specialist with a £4bn regeneration portfolio and expertise in enhancing communities and environments, providing design expertise and end-to-end management including programming, cost analysis, procurement, construction and leasing. In Stevenage, Reef have acquired the former M&S site in in partnership with SBC are delivering a £20m+ mixed-use regeneration scheme of 107 apartments, diversified leisure, retail and restaurant uses, and new commercial space. The scheme is on site now and nearing completion. . Reef are keen to do more in Stevenage particularly involving the life science sector.

Key Contractual Arrangements

5.2.9 There will be a need to tender for and enter into a building contract for the design and build and related of the Garden Square upgrade and retail core gateway and for the procurement of temporary infrastructure for the disused bus station.

Delivery Arrangements

5.2.10 Therefore separate agreements will be needed will be set up for design and construction of the enhanced Garden Square, infrastructure for the diversification of the vacant bus station apron and the adaptation of the retail core. The responsibility for initiating and managing these agreements will lie with the SBC Regeneration Team.

Risks

5.2.11 The identified risks are assessed as follows.

Risks	Likelihood	Mitigation
Renewed risk of Covid-19 outbreak and possible introduction of lockdown measures.	High	Scenario planning to assess the impact of the closedown and reduced output levels and advise clients accordingly to ensure timely completion. Bring in additional temporary labour. Review planning conditions and seek changes where possible to enable sites to operate in shifts over longer working hours. Manage cashflow.
Labour shortages in construction, freight transport and supply industries delay construction progress.	High	Include in development agreement the commitment to bring in additional temporary labour and stocks of materials to ensure projects are completed on time.
Climate changes and weather conditions retarding progress of the construction programme	Medium to High	Build in sufficient slack in the programme to cover for unforeseen eventualities such as weather.
The construction cost exceeds the limit for the project or other issues arising during the design & development phase.	Medium	A cost consultant will be involved from an early stage of the project to ensure contractor's proposals are realistic and within budget.
Dissatisfaction of local residents with proposed content and/or design of the public realm and retail diversification proposals.	Low to Medium	Market Research and focus groups to provide ample evidence of what the public expect from the upgraded public realm, animation of the discussed bus station apron and new gateway to the retail core. Extend process to enable preliminary designs to be market tested with the public.

5.3 Procurement Strategy

Projects that will need to be Procured

5.3.1 There are three projects that needs to be procured:

- the design and build of the Garden Square upgrade.
- the design and build of the new gateway to the retail core.
- the procurement and installation of the temporary planting, street trader and performance infrastructure on the disused bus station apron.

Procurement Process, Milestones, Assurance and Approvals

5.3.2 Stevenage Borough Council follows public procurement procedures and complies with public procurement law. Information regarding this can be viewed on our website. This also outlines the corporate procurement strategy. Stevenage Borough Council will perform the procurements of construction contractors.

Proposed Policies on Social Value, Sustainability, and Innovation

5.3.3 As part of this there have been recent improves to the procurement strategy of the council to ensure that maximise impact for social value, sustainability and innovation is embedded within tendering and contractor management processes. For these projects, this approach will be continued and monitored through the monitoring and evaluation process which can be viewed in the Management Case of this business case.

MANAGEMENT CASE

6. MANAGEMENT CASE

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 This section sets out the approach and experience of SBC in delivering similar projects and sets out the proposed arrangements for Project Organisation and Governance. The approaches to oversight and approvals and to assurance and the assurance plan are then described.
- 6.1.2 The scope of the project and its key elements are then described along with the approach to specifying and managing requirements, the interfaces with third parties and related management approach and the approach to solution development, confirmation management and acceptance.
- 6.1.3 The structure of the project programme and principal stages and workstreams and related timescales are then described, making reference to interdependencies with rest of TIP and non-TIP projects.
- 6.1.4 The key milestones and key decision points, assurance, consents, approvals are then summarised. Constraints and assumptions are then summarised and the most likely forecast completion date stated.
- 6.1.5 This section also elucidates on the approaches to risk and opportunities management, project management, stakeholder engagement and benefits, monitoring and evaluation.

Evidence of Application on Similar Projects

- 6.1.6 Stevenage Borough Council has a strong track record of delivering projects and are working collaboratively with partners to increase momentum to regenerate the town centre. In particular, in March 2019, the Council entered into a development agreement with the urban developer Mace to bring forward two of the six Major Opportunity Areas (MOAs) of the Framework - Southgate Park and the Central Core – as well as acting as a catalyst to deliver major place shaping changes to the town centre.
- 6.1.6 In the last five years, SBC's Regeneration team have completed:
- 4 Public realm schemes totally 45,520 sqft (£3 million)
 - Refurbishment of disused 18,000 sqft of office space end retail space (£6 million)
 - Relocation of the CCTV control room, decant and vacant possession of office building (£2.4 million; and
 - The construction of a £9.6 million Bus Interchange including highway interventions and public realm (due for completion in Q4)
- 6.1.7 The accumulative impact of these projects has resulted in the Council having secured 2 developers bringing private development investment of over £500 million. The Council has a dedicated regeneration directorate to deliver a programme of projects with a current capital value in excess of £30 million. This team maintains strong working relationships with HCC in

their growth, education, highways and development capacity and with the LEP, who have experience of programme management of major schemes.

6.2 Project Organisation and Governance

6.2.1 There is a very well established two- tier governance system which is already overseeing the delivery of the programme of projects delivery regeneration in the town centre. The Town Development Board has been recently established after drawing the previous Stevenage First board to a close. This board operates a strategic steering group, which sets the vision and direction for the Town Investment Plan funding. In terms of the project delivery, there is a two- tier governance structure in place at a programme and project level. Regeneration Steering Group, which monitors the overall performance of the programme. Working groups are established relating to the project with standardised governance and project management approach that escalates progress, risks and relating to budget, timescales and tolerance levels to the Regeneration Steering Group. Projects delivered to date under this supervision model include the public realm project s- Forum Square, Littlewoods Square, Market Place, Wayfinding and more recently North Block, Town Square and the vacant possession of Swingate House.

Key Participants, Accountabilities and Responsibilities

6.2.2 The key participants, accountabilities and responsibilities are summarised below.

Participants	To Whom Accountable	Accountabilities	Responsibilities
Stevenage Borough Council	Central Government	Successful completion of the enhanced Garden Square and proposed retail diversification measures.	Correct use of Town Fund award to deliver this project and associated regeneration outcomes and impacts within the town centre.
	Local Residents	Delivery of a high-quality public space attractive and accessible to local residents, workers and visitors to the town centre.	Adequate consultation.
		Creating the conditions for expanded provision of food and beverage outlets adjacent to the scheme and a vibrant town centre scene and atmosphere.	Supporting arrangements to ensure that live performances, festival activities, other and street trading deliver the level of animation are adequately devised and resourced. to assure the success of the new food and

Participants	To Whom Accountable	Accountabilities	Responsibilities
			beverage outlets.
		Minimisation of adverse impacts of the scheme.	Ensuring a comprehensive design scheme.
	Retail core tenants	Ensuring that the proposed new retail core gateway scheme delivers the increased footfall expected.	Adequate consultation.

Project Delivery Organisation

6.2.3 The project delivery organisation is summarised below.

Organisation	Functions	Key Roles	Capability	Competences and Resourcing
Stevenage Borough Council	Orchestration of regeneration strategy and projects.	Stakeholder consultation. Project scoping. Sourcing of funding. Initiation of delivery partnerships. Formalising approvals.	Well-developed stakeholder engagement strategy, organisation and processes. Devising high impact regeneration solutions. Delivery through partnership and contract.	Expert and experienced regeneration team. Town Fund award and match funding for key projects. Scope procurement framework. Delivery partnerships.

Governance Arrangements for Oversight and Approvals

6.2.4 The Town Development Board will continue to monitor the progress of the programme of Town Investment Plan projects. The Board includes a number of local leaders from key sectors and businesses, including:

- a) companies such as Airbus, MBDA, Wine Society and Groundwork East;
- b) all tiers of local government and Hertfordshire LEP;
- c) community sector;
- d) education sector including North Hertfordshire College (FE) and the University of Hertfordshire;
- e) others such as the local NHS Trust.

6.2.5 Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) will be the accountable body. The Council has a dedicated regeneration directorate to deliver a programme of projects with a current capital value in excess of £60m. SBC will be supported by both the County Council and the LEP. The LEP has considerable experience of major programme management (BEIS/MHCLG Getting Building

Fund, Growth Deal and Growing Places funding). The LEP approves and monitors its projects using an Assurance Framework and this will be utilised for administering Town Deal.

6.2.6 As mentioned, the Regeneration Steering Group will monitor the performance of the scheme.

6.3 Assurance

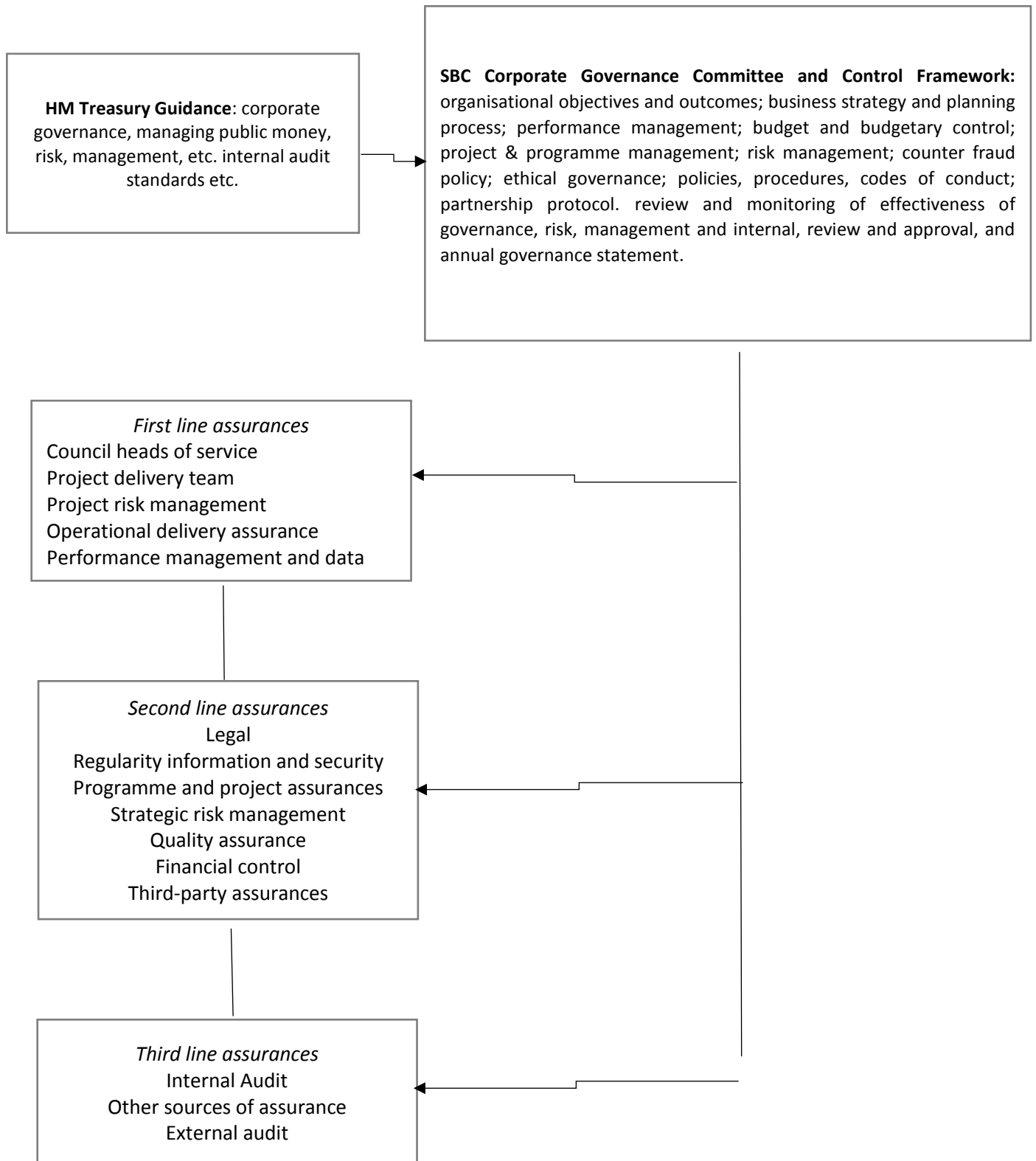
Approach to Assurance

6.3.1 All proposals and business cases will go through a transparent and robust application and scrutiny process, based on three simple principles:

- Robust interrogation to maximise value for money and ensure outputs and outcomes are deliverable and achievable.
- Streamlined and efficient process, utilising private sector partners, to ensure pace of delivery is maximised.
- Transparency and openness, with the process and framework published (without prejudice to commercial confidentiality).

Summary of Assurance Plans and Timing of Key Reviews and Links to Decision Points

6.3.2 The assurance process will proceed via the following framework.



Integrated Approvals and Assurance Plan

6.3.3 The approvals and assurance arrangements are illustrated in the table below.

Month		Project Delivery Team	Stevenage Development & Town Board		Independent Auditing
		Actions	Approvals	Oversight Actions	Investigations and assurances
Start	Complete				
		Enhancement of Garden Square and Retail Diversification			
1	1	Prepare brief for building design team.	Approval of building design brief.		
1	2	Tender and select building design team.	Approval of selected design team.	Review of design team budget and work programme.	
3	3	Appoint design team.	Approval of outline design proposals.		
3	7	Undertake site surveys and specialist reports. Prepare outline design to RIBA stage 2 and consult stakeholders.			
8	12	Design up to RIBA stage 3 detailed planning application including supporting documentation and formal consultation	Approval of detailed design proposals.	Review and commentary on risk profile and combined project risks, mitigation proposals and actions.	Submission of comments on project design proposals.
8	12	Pre-construction works.			
8	12	Business plan for town centre animation activities and programme.	Approval of expenditure.	Assurance that support arrangements are in place and will deliver impacts required.	
8	12	Procurement and fit out of temporary planting, street trader infrastructure and performance space on the bus station apron.	Approval of expenditure.	Assurance that items to be procured deliver what is intended.	
12	15	Launch town centre animation activities.			
12	16	Planning application period for retail core works.			
16	20	RIBA Stage 4 Technical design, discharge of planning conditions and construction information Retail Core Gateway.	Approval of technical design proposals.	Review and commentary on risk profile.	
22	24	Contractor shortlist and tender period for Garden Square and Retail Core Gateway Works	Approval of tender brief		
24	24	Review tenders and appoint contractor for Garden Square and Retail Core Gateway Works.	Approval of contractor appointment.		
25	36	RIBA Stage 5 for Garden Square and Retail Core Gateway Works.	Approval of construction programme.		
25	36	Commission monthly project reports: progress, achievements, risk mitigation actions and expenditure for Garden Square and Retail Core Gateway Works.	Approve stage gate construction completions.	Review monthly project reports. Stage gate assessments. Decisions and interventions in the event of serious	Interim project audit.

Month		Project Delivery Team	Stevenage Development & Town Board		Independent Auditing
		Actions	Approvals	Oversight Actions	Investigations and assurances
				delays or emerging major uncertainties. Commission interim project audit report. Directions in event of financial and other irregularities.	
36	36	Completion of Garden Square and Retail Core Gateway development works		Verification and signoff of development completion.	
36	42	Completed Garden Square and Retail Core Gateway opened to the public			

6.4 Scope Management

Summary of the Scope of the Project and its Key Elements

- 6.4.1 The scope of the project specification is driven by the Stevenage Central Framework produced in 2015, through which Stevenage Borough Council has set out to comprehensively regenerate the town centre through the transformation of its major opportunity areas.
- 6.4.2 In accordance with this objective, the scheme being supported by the Town Fund will involve the delivery and enhancement of Garden Square and the diversification of retail by activating core space on the vacated Bus Station and through the creation of a new gateway to the retail core. The project will take the high-level proposals for Garden Square and enhance the design further to create a core public space that will create the environment for vibrancy and activity of a key space within the SG1 regeneration scheme, enhance the square's features, increase quality of materials and look to include a water feature which will add to the place creation and playfulness of the space so as to create a focal point for social interaction with food and beverages spaces spreading from Plot B (SG1) in to the square. The Diversification of Retail of the project will a) activate and animate the disused Bus Station apron when the new Bus Interchange is opened to provide a key focal point with a for town centre visitors including a venue for night time activities as this space await developments and b) improve connectivity between to the town centre from the station to the retail core and town square, with the creation of a new entrance to the retail core of Queensway by transforming the service yard entrance of the Westgate shopping to a new thoroughfare and create more secure car parking.
- 6.4.3 The project will take place within the SG1 Central Core. This will involve:
- Outline and detailed design.
 - Securing planning approval.
 - Technical design.
 - Construction.

6.4.4 The project will help assure the success of the development of 172 and homes and 1330 sqm of food and beverage and other commercial space on Plot B immediately adjacent to vacate bus station and Garden Square.

Approach to Specifying, Approving and Managing Requirements

6.4.5 The Stevenage Central Framework also sets the parameters underlying the specification of requirements. This has set targets for the amounts of employment space and number of homes to be developed and jobs to be created. Sub-regional economic growth objectives, such as those set out in the Hertfordshire LEP strategic economic plan and Covid recovery plan have an influence on the scope of the project.

6.4.6 To achieve these aims and targets, the Council has specified the resources, processes and tools that need to come together in place to create the enhancement of Garden Square, activation and animation of the space on the vacated Bus Station and the creation of a new gateway to the retail core. Specifically:

- Identification of the land and property on which the scheme will take place.
- A costed project plan and programme for scheme.
- An agreed housing and commercial development scheme for Plot B.
- Measures to secure the necessary planning approvals.
- Putting in place other relevant enabling measures affecting the relevant sites.

6.4.7 The responsibility for initiating and managing these processes will lie with the SBC Regeneration team. Key management tasks the SBC Regeneration team will be concerned with are:

a) Site Specific:

- Detailed design.
- Consultation with relevant third parties.
- Securing planning approval.
- Selection and appointment of a building contractor.
- Assuring satisfactory construction and fit out.
- Sign off.

b) Marshalling Resources:

- Assembling the necessary funds and expertise to take the project forward.

c) Integration:

- Ensuring the timely completion of the proposed scheme.
- Early procurement and installation of temporary planting and infrastructure on the disused bus station apron.
- Configuration and arrangements to assure seamless connections between Plot B, the Garden Square and the retail core.
- Consultation with neighbouring uses.

d) Project development and assurance

- Mechanisms to ensure the project is delivered on time and to budget i.e., through a tight project plan and construction agreement.
- Identification and management of risks.
- Assuring the performance of the contractor in delivering the required built product within the agreed timescale through effective monitoring.
- Monitoring and evaluation to ensure that the targeted outputs and outcomes are delivered.
- A detailed project plan specifying how the above will be brought together and implemented.

e) Approvals

- Approval for the project plan, design proposals, tender brief, contractor appointment, construction programme, stage gate construction completions, staff training plan and fit out will be sought from the Town Development Board who will also sign off project completion.

Interfaces with Third Parties and Management Approach

6.4.8 A number of key interfaces need to be managed:

- Monitoring of the contractor's progress to ensure that what has been promised through the construction contract is actually delivered.
- Consultation with the general public to assure support for emerging and final designs.

Approach to Solution Development, Confirmation Management and Acceptance

6.4.9 The solution for the creation of the retail diversification and Garden Square has been extensively informed by Stevenage Central Framework. The solution development process beyond this will comprise the following stages.

- i) Objective setting.
- ii) Consultation with the prospective users and local residents.
- iii) Issues identification – examination of how key outcomes are to be realised.
- iv) Specification of requirements that will inform the design briefs.
- v) Identification, investment appraisal and evaluation of solution options.
- vi) Selection of optimum solution.
- vii) Specification of the project.
- viii) Verification that the specification will deliver what is required.
- ix) Interim development of value-improving proposals

- x) Interim checks on the project to ensure that the right product is being built.

Confirmation Management and Acceptance

6.4.10 The confirmation management and acceptance process will cover the reviews and decisions to address:

- the relevance and appropriateness of the objectives
- whether the requirement reflects the objectives and addresses the issues identified
- whether the project specification will meet the preferred solution
- whether the final project outcome has met what was required.

6.5 Programme/Schedule Management

Summary Structure of the Programme

6.5.1 Key elements of the programme are:

Garden Square Enhancement

- Redesign, new planting, a bold water feature and high quality paving and brickwork.

Re-activation of the disused bus station apron

- Provision of temporary infrastructure for street traders, a bandstand and performance space and moveable planting to create a venue for events and night visitors. These elements will be capable of being dismantled and transported to other parts of the square or adjacent parks after a period of three to four years.

New gateway to the retail core

- Physical adaption of the North facing service yard
- Create a new entrance to the shopping centre/car park

Summary Timescales

6.5.2 Main milestones are as summarised below.

Milestone	Timescale
Council Authority to proceed	Q1 2022/3
Procurement and installation of infrastructure for disused bus station apron	Q2 2022/3
Design of Garden Square and new retail core gateway up to RIBA stage 3	Q4 2022/3
Detailed Planning Approval	Q3 2023/4
Construction Start	Q1 2024/5
Completion	Q4 2024/5

Interdependencies with the Rest of TIP and non-TIP Projects

6.5.3 The interdependencies are as follows.

Dependencies for Success of this Project

TIP

- Completion of the Multi Storey Car Park & zero carbon support infrastructure

Non TIP

- Completion of the new Bus Interchange on time

Projects Dependent on the Success of this Project

TIP

- Marshgate Biotech Office project
- Town Enterprise Centre
- Heritage Museum and New Leisure Space

Non TIP

- Residential and Commercial Development Plot B
- Residential Development Plots A, F, G & K
- Development of future office sites

Decision Points, Assurances, Approvals and Critical Paths

6.5.4 These are summarised as follows.

Key Decision Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign off of final business case. • Sign off of project designs final costings and delivery plan for public realm works. • Sign off of risk mitigation measures. • Authorisation of project start. • Commissioning of interim and final audits. • Sign off of project completion summarised as follows.
Assurances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated review of project risks and strategic risks, mitigation proposals and actions. • Assurance that infrastructure procured will deliver what was intended. • Review of monitoring reports. • Stage gate assessments. • Decisions and interventions in the event of serious delays or emerging major uncertainties. • Interim project audit. • Directions in event of financial and other irregularities if required. • Interventions in event of non-delivery of development agreement. • Sign off of independent audits.
Consents & Approvals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval of final business case. • Approval of project designs, final costings and delivery plan for public realm works. • Approval of development agreement. • Approval for project start. • Local authority planning approval.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign off of project completion.
Critical Paths and Higher Risk Workstreams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interim arrangements for reallocated car parking capacity. • Completion of multi-storey car park. • Finalisation of land sale and development agreement.

Summary of Schedule Hierarchy

Summary of Constraints, Assumptions, and Basis for Programme Durations

6.5.5 These are summarised below:

Issue	(Possible) Constraints	Assumptions	Basis for Programme Durations
Planning	Public dissatisfaction with proposals	Approval expected	Delays would affect project start
Site development scheme	Difficulty in receiving tenders due to resource constraints	Tenders will come through	Delays would affect project start
Site development scheme	Consultation with neighbouring uses may throw up objections	No major issues expected as project expected to benefit neighbouring uses	6 months for design and approval and 21 months for construction

Forecast Completion Date (within stated range)

6.5.6 The forecast completion date is between February and April 2025, target date being March 2025.

6.6 Risk and Opportunities Management

Summary of Risk Management Strategy

6.6.1 The risk management strategy is focused around maximising the popularity of the scheme amongst local residents, and managing the risks of labour shortages and supply chain disruption which could potentially cause delays and bring about cost overruns. The aim will be to build on appropriate provisions to the construction contract to assuring timely delivery of the retail diversification and Garden Square.

Summary of Processes and Tools

6.6.2 The Town Development Board takes responsibility for the assessment of the project risks and the measures necessary to mitigate them, working with the project delivery team and other sources of assurance such as the auditors.

6.6.3 The board has adopted an assurance plan that provides for an integrated review of project risks and strategic risks, mitigation proposals and actions. As part of this process the board will seek comments on risk profile and combined project risks, mitigation proposals and actions from the SBC audit team. The board will initiate interventions in the event of serious project delays, emerging major uncertainties (e.g. a climate change disaster), non-contract compliance or financial irregularities.

Summary of Risk Themes and Key Risks and Mitigations

6.6.4 The main risk areas relate to:

- Potential delays, due to changing weather conditions, labour shortages or supply chain issues.
- The design of the new complex proving to be unpopular
- Poor delivery performance by the building contractor
- Potential cost overruns.

6.6.5 Key mitigation measures will include:

- Timely commencement of consultation activity in order to identify and address major issues.
- Use of the construction contract to secure a commitment to tight delivery standards, to ensure availability of spare labour and measures to address unforeseen eventualities such as weather and shortages of materials.
- Involvement of a cost consultant will be involved from an early stage of the project to ensure contractor's proposals are realistic and within budget.
- Contractual provisions to manage unforeseen site conditions e.g. physical obstructions or physical conditions.

Approach to Opportunities Management and Realisation

6.6.6 The Town Development Board is attuned to the concept of opportunities management, since its core function is to find ways to maximise the social, community and economic benefits from the resources available within the town. The generation of ideas is a process that is proactively managed by the Council and the Development Board and addressed through the following processes:

- Proactive stakeholder consultation as a means of capturing useful ideas.
- Acquiring new ideas through partnership working.
- Developing options in response to changing circumstances e.g. climate change, disruptive innovation etc.
- Seeking optimum uses of under-utilised resources, such as sites with scope for redevelopment.
- Examining opportunities as a response to identified risks.
- An up-to-date comprehensive vision of where Stevenage wants to be, providing a framework in which ideas can be generated and opportunities identified, evaluated, scoped out and where appropriate taken forward.

6.6.7 These processes are built into the remits, work programme, meeting agendas of the Development Board and relevant Council delivery teams.

Assessment of Opportunities to Gain from Industry Productivity Initiatives

6.6.8 This is an integral part of the process described above as well as being tied into the solutions for the development process. For example:

- The potential use of new construction techniques are constantly considered when specifying tendered contracts.
- Exploiting opportunities brought about by climate change. For example, the provision of charging infrastructure and facilitating the adoption of electric bikes and scooters as an alternative to car use.
- The on-going adoption of digital technologies in all aspects of urban development and operations.

6.6.9 Assessment of these types of opportunity are embedded into the agendas of the Council and Development Board.

6.7 Project Management

Proposed Project Management Approach

6.7.1 The project delivery team will be assembled from key officers within the Stevenage Borough Council Regeneration division. This team will take responsibility for day-to-day project management of the scheme. This will include

6.7.2 The detailed implementation of the project will be set out in a comprehensive delivery plan. This will schedule all activities from project inception, through design, costing, approvals, construction activity through to completion and handover. It will build in necessary ongoing stakeholder liaison processes. The governance structures in place ensure there is responsibility for overall control of the scope and progress the project and for putting in place the necessary assurances.

Key Processes for Controlling Scope, Programme, Cost, Risk and HSE Assurance and Reporting

6.7.3 The final scope, scheduling and budget for the project will be worked up by the project delivery team then presented to the Development Board for consideration. The Development Board will then ensure that the project scope is in line with predefined regeneration objectives and the TIP and that the proposed implementation programme is realistically deliverable.

6.7.4 The Development Board will also review all risks and mitigation measures taking into account any views of the council's internal audit team. It will provide directions to the project delivery team for any additional measures that need to be put in place to minimise risks identified.

6.7.5 A number of the controls will be brought about through the contractual process, in particular provision for addressing possible causes of delay, health and safety assurance, quality control and tight and regular reporting.

Processes for Managing Key Interfaces, Consents, and Compliance

6.7.6 The project delivery team will act as the key vehicle for liaising with the parties such as neighbouring uses, the site developer and contractor for the public realm works. As mentioned above the control mechanisms will be built into the contractual process for the developer and contractor and a regular process of monitoring will assure that contract compliance. And remedial actions where this is not achieved. The delivery team will also take responsibility for

regular liaison with statutory authorities for planning and other consents required throughout the development process. A further dimension is the initial consultation and ongoing liaison with neighbouring uses so that the public realm proposals and any issues that are likely to arise during the implementation phase are dealt with in a satisfactory and cooperative manner.

Approach to Information Management

6.7.7 A designated member of the project delivery team will take responsibility for information management so that all aspects of the project and its progress and related issues arising are comprehensively recorded and reported upon where necessary. Regular monitoring reports will be submitted to the Development Board and relevant service heads within the Council.

Details for Managing Change

6.7.8 The risk register has identified a number of areas where there might be a need for managing change. These could include severe weather conditions, unexpected problems with site conditions or delays caused by labour shortages affecting the development and construction process.

6.7.9 It will be the responsibility of the Development Board to decide on alternative structures, processes, organisational and governance arrangements that may need to be put in place to address major changes of circumstances.

Arrangements for Managing Professional Service Contracts and Third-party Agreements

6.7.10 As mentioned above the contractual process would be a key tool in controlling the performance of the developers and contractors and related outcomes. The responsibility for managing these other agreements with the project delivery team advised and supported by the Council’s legal services team.

6.8 Stakeholder Engagement

Key Stakeholders, Interests and Power to Influence Delivery

6.8.1 Key stakeholders and their role or interest in the project are listed below.

Project	Stakeholders	Comment
Retail Diversification and Garden Square	Council regeneration team.	Impact on the success of parallel town centre regeneration initiatives.
	Local residents’ groups.	Design proposals. Range of activities and facilities to be made accessible in the upgraded spaces.

Strategy to Engage through Development, Delivery

6.8.2 In a wider context, stakeholders views have been captured through the Stevenage engagement programme, encompassing a number of mechanisms.

Local Residents

- A wide range of digital engagement utilising social media other related platforms
- A dedicated Visitor Centre in Town Square open to the public, where people could view, engage with and discuss the regeneration of the town.
- A 'virtual visitor centre', which contains all of the content in a digital platform on our dedicated website; this has enabled the Council to continue to reach residents of all ages and abilities during the pandemic.
- Stevenage residents' survey

Currently engagement is focused on the consultation and promotion of the Council's priority projects.

Business

- Business networking events, a number of project based consultations, such as the Local Plan, SG1, and the Bus Interchange and a number of roadshow events.

Other Stakeholders

- Regular consultation with public sector bodies such as Hertfordshire County Council, the LEP and relevant statutory bodies.
- Project specific consultation as part of the planning process.

6.8.3 The key themes that have emerged from residents, business and community groups are:

- Create inclusive accessible transport.
- Create great spaces to live in and socialise.
- Create a vibrant town centre offer that is a destination for all.
- Create aspiring communities and opportunities that create a lasting legacy. Events through to a wide range of digital engagement utilising social media other related platforms.

Summary of Approach to Communications with Stakeholders Including the Public

6.8.4 The Council's stakeholder consultation and communication processes are well designed, extensive and far-reaching. Stakeholder's views have been captured more widely through the Stevenage engagement programme, encompassing a number of mechanisms. These processes will operate in parallel with the stakeholder consultation process specific to the project as described above in order to fully inform the course and outcomes of the project.

6.9 Benefits, Monitoring and Evaluation

Summary of Benefits Register

6.9.1 Key benefits from the project are summarised as follows.

Economic

- Improved visual quality and very high quality public realm in the heart of the town centre will encourage more people to visit the town centre.
- These effects will attract a wider range of new residents to the area, providing a good choice of high-quality workers to the advanced high value industries Stevenage is seeking to attract.
- This should and boost patronage of and investment in town centre retail and leisure businesses. The expanded demand will help assure long term commercial viability of the centre.
- The success of projects such as the Town Enterprise Centre and the new museum and cultural centre and acceleration of the redevelopment of key housing sites in the town centre will be assured.
- Improved town centre environment.
- Stronger perception of Stevenage as a place to invest.

Environmental

- Enhanced scope for living and working in the town centre, thereby reducing the need to travel.
- More walking in the town centre leading to more active and healthier lifestyles.

Social

- Meets anticipated demand from population growth.
- Broadens scope for engaging more people in cultural activities.

6.9.2 Quantified Outputs are as follows:

Jobs Created	65
Commercial Floorspace Developed sqm	1,331
Net Increase in Commercial Floorspace Sqm	1,331
Additional homes brought forward	172
Additional GVA Generated per Annum	£826,936

Approach to Developing a Benefits Realisation Plan and its Approval

6.9.3 The benefits realisation plan will focus primarily on assuring successful delivery of the following outcomes.

- i) Early installation of the temporary infrastructure and planting for the disused bus station apron to enable improved visual quality and to establish a strong animation scene.
- ii) Successful completion of the Garden Square upgrade and new gateway to the retail core.
- iii) Wide recognition of the quality of the scheme amongst local residents, prospective employers, investors and house buyers considering Stevenage.

6.9.4 The benefits realisation plan will define the mechanisms through which the benefits projected from these outcomes are fully met. Thus, the plan will demonstrate the positive impact it will have on establishing the viability of the food and beverage complex on Plot B and enhancing the image of Stevenage as a high-quality place to live and work and in which to invest. The plan will

show how the realisation of quantifiable outputs and non-quantifiable benefits will be tracked by way of interim and post project audits conducted with the centre operator and residential occupiers.

Arrangements for Tracking and Reporting Benefits Through Delivery

6.9.7 The tracking and reporting of benefits through delivery will be closely tied into the formative, interim and summative evaluation process described below. This will be based on defining what needs to be measured against each type of benefit and the method of doing so. Key mechanisms to be established in the regard will include:

- i) Recording additional jobs created as a result of the scheme.
- ii) Surveys and focus groups amongst users of the retail diversification and Garden Square.
- iii) Surveys amongst local residents.
- iv) Interviews with local commercial property agents and developers.

6.9.8 These activities will be built into the benefits realisation plan and scheduled accordingly. The plan will then be presented to the town development board for review and approval.

High Level Strategy for Monitoring and Evaluating Benefits Realisation

6.9.9 Internally the project will be subject to continual evaluation and monitoring through the governance structures and arrangements outlined above. It is intended that key milestones are built into the programme to monitor the tracking of projected outputs and outcomes (e.g. at planning consent, start on site, completion).

6.9.10 In parallel, the evaluation will seek to clarify whether the project achieved what it set out to do and what benefits accrued from it from the points of view of a range of stakeholders. Points to be clarified in evaluation to discussions with stakeholders would be:

The Council

- Did the Town Fund help accelerate the development and help meet defined targets?
- Was the money spent wisely and could better value for money had been achieved?
- Has the centre been a catalyst in forming or strengthening partnerships leading to measurably higher levels participation in cultural and entertainment activities locally?

General Public

- How satisfied have users become with the upgraded spaces and new retail core gateway?
- What use has been made of the new capacity and of new activities made accessible as part of the new scheme?
- What else did external visitors do in the town centre and how much was spent on food and beverages and other activities there.
- Case studies on experiences of individuals from marginalised groups
- Examples of home buying and investment decisions that were influenced by the project coming forward.

Community and Voluntary Sector

- How the project impacted on individual quality of life and wellbeing.

Stevenage Planning and Regeneration Team:

- To what extent has the project helped to build momentum for wider regeneration in the town centre and beyond?
- How have other developments or improvement projects been encouraged as a result of this project?
- To what extent has footfall within the town centre increased since the completion of the project?
- What lessons can be drawn from the policies for stimulating new or enhanced animation and vibrancy within the town centre.

Building contractors

- How well was the project programme planned and implemented?
- Was the site preparation implemented adequately?
- How could the implementation process overall have been improved?

6.9.11 The evaluation will determine whether the outputs and non-quantified benefits projected from the project have been delivered. This will partly be evaluated by quantitative measures, monitoring the impact of the project in terms of outputs i.e., the number of residential units, floorspace and jobs that are created. Both core and non-core outputs will be monitored and evaluated by SBC.