

Public Document Pack



EXECUTIVE

Date: Wednesday, 13 March 2024

Time: 3.00pm

Location: Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

Contact: Ian Gourlay (01438) 242703

committees@stevenage.gov.uk

Members: Councillors: R Henry (Chair), J. Thomas (Vice-Chair), S Barr, L Briscoe, J Hollywell, Mrs J Lloyd, L Rossati and S Speller.

AGENDA

PART I

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. MINUTES - 7 FEBRUARY 2024

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 7 February 2024 for signature by the Chair.

Pages 3 – 14

3. MINUTES OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND SELECT COMMITTEES

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

Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 23 January 2024

Environment & Economy Select Committee – 12 February 2024

Pages 15 – 24

4. REGENERATION PROGRAMME DELIVERY UPDATE

To consider an update on the projects within the Government's Towns Fund Programme being delivered by the Council and Stevenage Development Board.

Pages 25 – 56

5. HOUSING CONSUMER STANDARDS - SOCIAL HOUSING (REGULATION) ACT 2023

To consider the changes introduced by the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and the Council's proposed Action Plan in response to Act and new Consumer Standards introduced by the Housing Regulator.

Pages 57 – 78

6. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE - QUARTER 3 2023/24

To consider the Council's performance against its Corporate Plan priorities for Quarter 3 of 2023/24 (October to December 2023).
Pages 79 – 114

7. THIRD QUARTER REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING 2023/24 - GENERAL FUND AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

To consider the Third Quarter Revenue and Capital Budget monitoring report for 2023/24 for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account.
Pages 115 – 138

8. URGENT PART I BUSINESS

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

9. 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.

10. PART II MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 7 FEBRUARY 2024

To approve as a correct record the Part II Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 7 February 2024 for signature by the Chair.
Pages 139 - 140

11. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

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

NOTE: Links to Part I Background Documents are shown on the last page of the individual report, where this is not the case they may be viewed by using the following link to agendas for Executive meetings and then opening the agenda for Wednesday, 13 March 2024 – <http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/have-your-say/council-meetings/161153/>

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, 7 February 2024

Time: 2.00pm

Place: Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

Present: Councillors: Richard Henry (Chair), Jeannette Thomas (Vice-Chair), Sandra Barr, Lloyd Briscoe, Jackie Hollywell, Loraine Rossati and Simon Speller.

Start / End Start Time: 2.00pm
Time: End Time: 3.29pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair welcomed Adrian Hawkins OBE (Chair of the Stevenage Development Board) to the meeting. He stated that Adrian would be addressing the Executive in relation to Item 4 on the agenda – Stevenage Works Skills Framework: Unlocking Jobs, Skills and Opportunities for Local People.

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs Joan Lloyd.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES - 17 JANUARY 2024

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 17 January 2024 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

3 MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND SELECT COMMITTEES

In respect of Minute 3 of the minutes of the meeting of the Community Select Committee held on 8 January 2024, the Portfolio Holder for Housing & Housing Development confirmed that she would be responding to the recommendations of the Housing Repairs scrutiny review by the prescribed deadline.

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

Community Select Committee – 8 January 2024

Environment & Economy Select Committee – 16 January 2024

4 STEVENAGE WORKS SKILLS FRAMEWORK - UNLOCKING JOBS, SKILLS AND OPPORTUNITY FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

The Executive considered a report in respect of the consolidation of the ongoing work around skills development into a skills framework approach involving key sectors in the town, building several tangible actions to help further support the work that was underway, and co-ordinating key internal resources to further aid delivery.

The Leader introduced the report by stating that he was deeply committed to providing opportunities for the people of Stevenage. This included ensuring that young people could access the fantastic employment opportunities on their doorstep. These opportunities would also apply to disadvantaged and disabled groups.

The Leader advised that the Skills Framework had been developed jointly with Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. The Council had made great strides in putting skills at the heart of its regeneration programme. The Stevenage Works Programme had already made an excellent impact, engaging over 500 young people to explore construction careers, raising £50,000 for local community activities, helping 150 people into jobs in the sector, together with work with North Herts College and Job Centre Plus.

The Leader stated that Stevenage was home to the third largest Cell and gene cluster in the world and also to a strong and growing Space and Defence cluster. Stevenage was also home to vital public services, such as the NHS, Borough Council services, and the County Council HQ soon to be based in the town.

The Leader explained that so far SBC had attracted £2.7Million funding to help the community access skills and jobs, including the exciting Mission 44 project. SBC had also been asked to pilot a project to help support 150 people with disabilities to develop new skills or access work or to be supported to remain in work.

The Leader commented that the Framework was a draft document, and the Environment & Economy Select Committee would be considering it in more detail. The views of the Stevenage Development Board was also be sought on the document.

The Portfolio Holder for Co-operative Council and Neighbourhood Communities advised that she was deeply invested in the journey towards enhancing the lives of residents, which was exactly what the Framework was about. It was her mission was to ensure that work reached those who needed it the most. Stevenage offered careers for individuals to become rocket scientists, defence specialists, doctors, nurses, genetics scientists, engineers and much more.

The Portfolio Holder for Co-operative Council and Neighbourhood Communities stated that it was important that residents were equipped to make the most of these diverse and high value roles. She had seen some of the work undertaken so far, and she had attended the Mission 44 launch event at Airbus. Seeing young people so committed to developing their future was encouraging. The joint work with partners on the Framework, and highlighted Stevenage as an exemplar not only

throughout Hertfordshire, but regionally and nationally.

The Leader invited Adrian Hawkins (Chair of Stevenage Development Board) to address the Executive. Adrian advised that the skills agenda was very close to his heart, having been a school governor and involved in various organisations responsible for skills. He was delighted that the Town Investment Fund provided a narrative for developing the skills agenda in Stevenage, in order to match the needs of local businesses with the skills required by local people to fulfil those needs.

Adrian stated that 8 years ago the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership supported the development of the Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst and thereafter the Cell and Gene Catapult. Both of those organisations had led to international businesses wishing to set up within Stevenage. This presented a huge opportunity for the town, as 7,500 to 10,000 jobs would be arriving over the next 3 to 4 years, and the skills agenda had to be developed and prepared to support this opportunity.

Adrian commented that the engagement between business and the education sector was a crucial aspect in identifying the skills required for different types of employment. The Stevenage Development Board had brought a number of local employers together and they had re-iterated that they wanted to employ more local people to work in their businesses. Additionally, North Herts College had commenced development of SITEC (Stevenage Innovation & Technology Centre), with Phase 1 focussing on Life Sciences, and subsequent phases including areas such as engineering, electronics and sustainability.

Adrian stated that he was delighted to work with an organisation such as SBC who were so keen to progress the regeneration of Stevenage work, not just in buildings, but in the people who occupy them and contribute to the economy of the town.

The Co-operative Neighbourhoods Programme Manager gave a short presentation on the Stevenage Works Skills Framework, highlighting the opportunities, ambitions and challenges, together with the response of stakeholders in building on the once in a generation regeneration activities to establish Stevenage as a centre of excellence in skills.

The Executive was supportive of the Stevenage Works Skills Framework, and thanked the Portfolio Holder for Co-operative Council & Neighbourhood Communities, officers and Adrian Hawkins for driving forward the Skills agenda for the Council and the town.

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the proposed 'Stevenage Works Skills Framework' be approved for implementation and publication.
2. That delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director (TP), having consulted with the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods, Communities, Co-operative Councils & Young People and the Leader of the Council, to make any final changes to the Skills Framework and to oversee the continued development of the associated 'Stevenage Works Skills Framework Action

Plan’.

3. That delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director (TP), having consulted with the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods, Communities, Co-operative Councils & Young People and the Leader of the Council, to make any structural or other organisational changes which may be necessary to support the implementation of the ‘Stevenage Works Skills Framework’.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

5 FINAL GENERAL FUND AND COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2024/25

The Executive considered a report in respect of the Council’s final General Fund, Council Tax Support Scheme and final proposals for the 2024/25 Council Tax.

In the absence of the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Transformation, the Deputy Leader advised that the 2024/25 budget should be viewed against the backdrop of Government grant cuts which totalled £5.3Million since 2010, and the need for the Council to have found savings of £14Million in this period when inflationary costs were also taken into consideration.

The Deputy Leader stated that, at the time of writing the report, the Government’s final finance settlement had not been published. The report included an assumption about the increase in the funding guarantee grant to the Council, estimated to be an additional £100,000. The report to Council would be adjusted when the settlement was finally published.

The Deputy Leader commented that the General Fund budget also now included the projections for business rates which were completed by the 31 January 2024. The Council had £569,000 additional income relating to 2023/4 and was projecting an additional £1Million business rates income in 2024/25. The draft budget had already accounted for £200,000 of this income. However, experience demonstrated that business rates income fluctuated significantly. This was highlighted within the report and, given the risk profile, the as yet unrealised gains had been transferred to the business rates reserve to support the resilience of the General Fund and delivery of the Council’s priorities, as set out in report.

The Deputy Leader explained that, as a result of the changes set out in the report, there was not expected to be a draw on balances for 2024/25. However, despite a £1Million savings target for 2025/26, officers were forecasting the need to use £638,000 of General Fund balances to achieve a balanced budget. The report commented that, if business rates income remained relatively stable, a proportion of this could be used to reduce the use of balances in 2025/26.

The Executive noted that the savings and growth package remained unchanged from that included in the January draft budget report, and the Deputy Leader welcomed the comment from Overview and Scrutiny in support of the HVO fuel which would reduce the Council’s fleet carbon omissions considerably. She was also pleased to be able to confirm that the savings package for 2024/25 was

predominately funded from the Council's Transformation and commercial activity without the need to make service cuts.

The Deputy Leader concluded by stating that the increase in Council Tax remained unchanged at 2.99%, with the caveat that SBC only retained 11% of the overall Council Tax raised.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following proposals be recommended to Council on 21 February 2024:

- 1 That the 2023/24 revised net expenditure on the General Fund of £13,571,480 be approved, as set out in Paragraph 4.10.1 of the report.
- 2 That the draft General Fund Budget for 2024/25 of £12,762,310 be approved, with no contribution from balances and a Band D Council Tax of £239.26 (assuming a 2.99% Council Tax increase), and as summarised in Appendix G to the report.
- 3 That the updated position on the General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), as summarised in Section 4.12 of the report, be noted.
- 4 That the minimum level of General Fund reserves of £3,537,794, in line with the 2024/25 risk assessment of balances, as shown at Appendix C to the report, be approved.
- 5 That the contingency sum of £400,000 within which the Executive can approve supplementary estimates, be approved for 2024/25 (reflecting the level of balances available above the minimum amount).
- 6 That the 2024/25 Balancing the Budget options, as set out in Section 4.7 and Appendix A to the report, totalling £1,223,852 and £95,063 for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) respectively, be approved.
- 7 That the events options, as set out in Paragraph 4.7.4 of the report, be approved for 2024/25.
- 8 That the Growth options included in Section 4.8 of the report be approved for inclusion in the 2024/25 General Fund (£167,120) and HRA (£47,265) budgets.
- 9 That the pressures identified in Sections 4.2 and 4.9 of the report be noted.
- 10 That the use of £200,000 of Business Rates in the base budget be approved, and any gains above that be used only once realised, and be ring fenced for use to maintain the Council's financial resilience.
- 11 That the use of 'pooling gains' of £220,000, as set out in Paragraph 4.4.9 of the report, be approved.
- 12 That the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out in Section 4.16 of the report, be noted.

- 13 That the Equalities Impact Assessment appended to the report at Appendix D be noted.
- 14 That key partners and other stakeholders be consulted and their views considered as part of the 2024/25 budget setting process.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

6 FINAL CAPITAL STRATEGY 2023/24 - 2028/29

The Executive considered a report in respect of the final Capital Strategy for 2023/24 – 2028/29.

In the absence of the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Transformation, the Deputy Leader advised the General Fund capital proposals were unchanged from the January 2024 report, as were the funding challenges faced by the Council. The Capital programme, other than those elements funded from third parties, remained very much “fix on fail”. However, the October 2023 capital report to the Executive outlined a strategy for future proofing the Council’s assets, assets which officers were now striving to implement.

The Executive noted that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee had considered the report in January 2024 and commentary from the committee had been included in the report.

The Deputy Leader stated that the Housing Revenue Account Capital programme also remained unchanged, and the spending plans were included in the Final Budget and Rent Setting 2024/25 report that was approved at the Council meeting on 24 January 2024.

It was **RESOLVED** that the following proposals be recommended to Council on 21 February 2024:

1. That the Revised General Fund Capital Budget for 2024/25 of £33.6Million, as set out in Appendix B to the report, be approved.
2. That the Draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Budget for 2024/25 of £54.9Million, as set out in Appendix C to the report, be approved.
3. That the updated forecast of resources 2024/25 be approved (set out in the report at Section 4.4 – General Fund, and Section 4.10 – HRA).
4. That the General Fund capital budget re-profiling of £2.6Million from 2023/24 to future years be approved (as set out in Paragraph 4.1.4 of the report).
5. That the General Fund capital budget savings (as set out in Paragraphs 4.1.3 and 4.1.5 of the report) be approved.

6. That the approach to resourcing the General Fund capital programme, as outlined in the report (Paragraph 4.4), be approved.
7. That the General Fund growth bids identified for inclusion in the Capital Strategy (as set out in Paragraph 4.2 and in Appendix A to the report) be approved.
8. That the HRA budget increases identified for inclusion in the Capital Strategy (as set out in Section 4.9 and Appendix C to the report) be approved.
9. That the approach to resourcing the HRA capital programme, as outlined in the report (Paragraph 4.10), be approved.
10. That HRA capital budget re-profiling of £1.45Million from 2023/24 to future years be approved (as set out in Paragraph 4.9.3 of the report).
11. That the HRA growth bid (IT £21,000) identified for inclusion in the Capital Strategy (as set out in Paragraph 4.9.4 of the report) be approved.
12. That the 2024/25 de-minimis expenditure limit (set out in Section 4.11 of the report) be increased from £7,500 to £9,999.
13. That up to £500,000 of any revenue surplus in any year can be allocated to the capital reserve to support capital expenditure be approved.
14. That the comments from Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out in Paragraph 4.13.4 of the report, be noted.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

7 ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY INCLUDING PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2024/25

The Executive considered a report in respect of the Annual Treasury Management Strategy, including Prudential Code Indicators for 2024/25, for onward recommendation to Council.

In the absence of the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Transformation, the Deputy Leader advised that there had been no breaches of the Treasury Management Strategy so far in 2023/24, and the report highlighted the Council's investments and borrowing and how they were managed.

The Deputy Leader stated that the returns achievable on the Council's investments were based on the current Bank of England base rate and the risk appetite of the Treasury Management Strategy, which was compliant with the advice from the Council's treasury advisors, Link Asset Management.

The Deputy Leader commented that there were no changes recommended for counter party limits, as the existing limits had allowed the Council to remain flexible

with respect to volatile cash balances (held by the Council on a short-term basis).

In considering the Council's level of cash balances, the Deputy Leader asked Members to note that the General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Strategy had a planned use of resources over a minimum of 5 years and the HRA Business Plan (HRA BP) had a planned use of resources over a 30-year period, which meant that, whilst not all of the funds were committed in the current year, they would be required in future years.

The Executive noted that the Treasury Management Strategy was in line with the latest CIPFA Treasury Management and Prudential Codes issued in December 2021.

The Strategic Director (CF) referred to two corrections to the report, as follows:

- Paragraph 4.1.1 - the sentence should read that the returns on investments had averaged 5%, not 3.48%, and the total interest earned was £1.9Million and not £1.29Million; and
- The table in Paragraph 4.15.1 should read that the total Housing Revenue Account (HRA) loans equalled £233.231Million and not £234.231Million, and the total Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) debt at 31 December 2023 equalled £234.987Million and not £224.987Million.

It was **RESOLVED** that the 2024/25 Treasury Management Strategy be recommended to Council for approval.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

8 STEVENAGE CYCLE HIRE SCHEME - REPORT AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

The Executive considered a report providing an overview of the work undertaken, including public consultation, to develop a Stevenage Cycle Hire Scheme.

The Portfolio Holder for Economy & Transport advised that the proposed Scheme built on a Feasibility Study for such a scheme carried out in 2019. This Feasibility Study was based on the methodology used for similar schemes in Guildford, Watford, Derby and Manchester. The Feasibility Study was updated in 2023.

The Portfolio Holder for Economy & Transport stated that the Scheme contained a range of policy objectives which aligned with the Local Plan, Stevenage Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan, Stevenage Cycling Strategy, Stevenage Mobility Strategy and National Active Transport policy direction. The Scheme had to satisfy the following 4 points:

- Reducing greenhouse and local pollutant emission in Stevenage to help tackle Climate Change and improve air quality;
- To improve quality, accessibility and affordability of clean modes of active

- transport within Stevenage, and offer people an efficient way of connecting with public transport as an alternative to using their car;
- Improving journey times and connectivity in and around Stevenage; and
 - To encourage a modal shift from cars to bicycles.

The Portfolio Holder for Economy & Transport explained that the Council's Climate Change Strategy was an important aspect that drove the Scheme, with that Strategy setting a target that Stevenage had net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

The Portfolio Holder for Economy & Transport commented that a Cycle Hire Scheme for Stevenage could offer many economic benefits, such as increased tourism (where cyclists were more likely to stop and shop, thereby creating revenue for local businesses). The Scheme could also create jobs in maintenance, customer service and administration. The Scheme also offered the opportunity to enhance mobility within Stevenage to improve access to affordable and convenient transportation options.

The Portfolio Holder for Economy & Transport advised that the Scheme embraced National Planning Policy for active travel and was consistent with Hertfordshire County Council's Transport Vision 2025. A business and community engagement event was held in September 2023 to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to understand what a Stevenage Scheme could look like, involving case studies from around the UK. At the event participants were able to meet and greet cycle hire operators, demonstrate a variety of cycles, give their views on a proposed Stevenage Scheme and complete a consultation survey.

The Portfolio Holder for Economy & Transport reported that a total of 1,137 public responses were received to the formal consultation on the Scheme, along with representations from key stakeholders.

In reply to a series of Member questions, officers commented:

- Discussions would be ongoing with the operator regarding the programme/timescales for Phases 1A and 1B of the Scheme, with the intention of both phases being implemented as soon as practicably possible; and
- Officers were requested to liaise with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) officers with a view to HCC providing a financial contribution to support the Scheme through use of Section 106/Community Infrastructure Levy funds.

A discussion ensued regarding the locations of the bike storage units and electrical charging points, and it was agreed that Ward Members should be consulted about these before any works commenced. It was suggested that it might be appropriate for an event to be held after the May 2024 Elections, in order that the views of newly-elected Members could be taken into account. This could take the form of an all-Member overview meeting, followed by individual area/ward meetings (similar to the Policing Priority meetings).

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the progress made in the Stevenage Cycle Hire Scheme and work undertaken by officers up to September 2023 (as set out in Appendices A, B, C, D, E and F of the report) be noted.
2. That the ongoing strategic direction and final steps for the Cycle Hire Scheme, to further develop the proposal for a scheme in Stevenage, be approved.
3. That it be noted that the comments of the Environment & Economy Select Committee have been sought and considered on the content of the report.
4. That it be noted that engagement with key stakeholders will continue, ahead of incorporating the Cycle Hire Scheme.

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

9 URGENT PART I BUSINESS

None.

10 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was **RESOLVED**:

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 the reasons for the following reports being in Part II were accepted, and that the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

11 PART II MINUTES - EXECUTIVE - 17 JANUARY 2024

It was **RESOLVED** that the Part II Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 17 January 2024 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

12 STEVENAGE CYCLE HIRE SCHEME - REPORT AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

The Executive considered a Part II report in respect of the procurement process undertaken and recommended chosen supplier to implement a cycle hire scheme in Stevenage; and seeking agreement to the progression of the contract award for the Scheme.

Members asked a number of questions, which were responded to by officers.

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

Reason for Decision: As contained in report.

Other Options considered: As contained in report.

13. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.

CHAIR

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STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Tuesday, 23 January 2024

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

Present: Councillors: Lin Martin-Haugh (Chair), Philip Bibby CC (Vice Chair), Stephen Booth, Rob Broom, Jim Brown, Forhad Chowdhury, Michael Downing, Bret Facey, Conor McGrath, Sarah Mead, Margaret Notley, Robin Parker CC, Carolina Veres and Anne Wells

Start / End Time: Start Time: 6.00pm
End Time: 7.05pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no apologies for absence and no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 19 December 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 PART I DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE

2. Minutes

Noted.

3. Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees

Noted.

4. Stevenage Borough Council – Corporate Plan – Making Stevenage Even Better (2024 – 2027)

The Committee was advised that at the Executive meeting a question had been raised regarding the relatively low level of public response to the consultation on the draft document. The Strategic Director (RP) advised that the original consultation via the Residents Survey, the Tenants Survey and the Co-operative Neighbourhoods Resident Proptech Survey had produced over 3,000 responses. The additional 72 responses were as a result of the additional 6 week period of consultation which had taken place between 23 October and 4 December 2023, at the request of the Executive. The

additional consultation had been done via the Chronicle, Social Media outlets as well as meetings with the voluntary sector and other partners.

Officers agreed to find out if local schools had been included in the consultation.

5. Final Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Setting and Rent Report 2024/25

Officers advised that the Executive had considered a report in respect of the final Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget and Rent Setting for 2024/25.

Officers gave the following answers/comments to a number of questions raised by Members:

- The proposed 7.7% increase to rents was a flat rate across all housing stock but was a combined increase of rent plus service charges;
- In comparison to the private sector, council rents were considerably lower. There was no available comparable information for Housing Association rent levels but it was noted that as Registered Providers, they were also governed by the same regulations as Councils;
- Affordable rents were calculated as a maximum of 80% of market rent;
- It was noted that the Office of National Statistics (ONS) gave a figure of 6.2% as an increase in private rents nationally.

6. Draft General Fund and Council Tax Settings 2024/2025

Officers advised that the Executive had considered a report in respect of the Council's draft General Fund, Council Tax Support Scheme and draft proposals for the 2024/25 Council Tax.

Members noted that officers were of the view that the provisional funding settlement was slightly better than what was expected. 2025/26 inflation figures would still be a pressure, however.

Officers gave the following answers/comments to a number of questions raised by Members:

- Although there was a cost for the engagement of a celebrity for Christmas events, last year's Christmas light switch on had been extremely popular;
- Within the Executive report, a full explanation had been given as to the 3% cap by the Government and the make-up of the proposed 2.99% increase;
- Members were pleased to note the changes to the fuel used by Council vehicles but requested that Officers consider the origins of the fuel as well as the type used;
- All options considered by the Council's Financial Security Group had been included in the report which detailed those options and the scoring levels achieved.

7. Draft Capital Strategy 2023/24 – 2028/2029

Officers advised that the Executive had considered a report in respect of the draft Capital Strategy for 2023/24 – 2028/29.

Officers gave the following answers/comments to a number of questions raised by Members:

- Officers reminded Members of the scoring rationale applied to budgets from zero – ‘do not support’ to 3 – high priority support.
- In relation to the North Road development, the remaining budget would be returned part to the HRA and part to the General Fund budget.

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

None.

5 **URGENT PART I BUSINESS**

None.

6 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That, under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1 to 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by SI 2006 No. 88.

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

7 **PART II DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE**

10. **Part II Minutes – Executive – 13 December 2023**

Noted.

11. **Activity Proposals for Fairlands Valley Park Sailing Centre and Main Lake**

The Culture, Leisure and Wellbeing Manager answered a number of Members’ questions in respect of the report.

8 **URGENT PART II DECISIONS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

None.

9 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Monday, 12 February 2024

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

Present: Councillors: Rob Broom (Chair), Adam Mitchell CC (Vice-Chair), Jim Brown, Bret Facey, Conor McGrath, Sarah Mead, Claire Parris, Ellie Plater, Graham Snell and Baroness Dr Sharon Taylor of Stevenage, OBE.

Start / End Time: Start Time: 6.00pm
End Time: 6.45pm

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

There were no apologies for absence received nor declarations of interest made at the meeting.

2 **MINUTES - 16 JANUARY 2024**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee held on 16 January 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 **DRAFT E&E SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2024-25**

The Chair introduced the item and explained that items suggested for inclusion in the work programme could be matters that would be suitable for a main review, a one-off update on past reviews or a one-off performance review at an individual meeting. In addition to this, the Committee would be invited to undertake a number of pre-scrutiny policy development items ahead of their consideration at the Executive.

The Chair reviewed the suggestions that Members had provided prior to the meeting and were detailed in the report at paragraph 5 and those made verbally at the meeting as follows:

Town Centre Regeneration

The Committee discussed ways that the Committee might approach such a large issue and it was agreed that it would be best to invite officers to provide an overarching presentation on the current position with the Town Centre Regeneration project and for the Committee to then settle on a thematic approach for an aspect of the project. Members suggested the following thematic options:

- Links to the skills agenda, job creation and apprenticeships in retail, hospitality and the night-time economy and construction.
- Place making
- Use of public space in the town centre

The Chair stated that he would steer away from matters that were the domain of the Planning and Development Committee.

A Member suggested that as part of the overview presentation by Regeneration Officers, that a view of what the town might look like in 10 years' time would be useful.

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

Members suggested that as the LEP was being subsumed into the County Council a representative from HCC LEP should be invited to attend to brief Members on what impact this might have on the relationship between SBC and the LEP. It was noted that Mark Doran was the new director at HCC with responsibility for the LEP.

Climate Change/Climate Emergency

It was agreed that this would remain on the Committee's work programme as a standing item. The Chair suggested that like way this issue had been covered in 2023-24, the item should be brought to the Committee on two occasions. Once in October/November, when the Annual Scrutiny report is considered at the Executive and Council and then again in March to specifically drill down to issues of interest to Members.

The Chair stated that he would be looking for Environment and Economy Select Committee Members to lead on specific issues regarding the Climate Emergency e.g., Biodiversity, biofuels of the Council's vehicle fleet, decarbonisation of the estate and Housing Stock etc.

Tree Management

Several Members spoke in favour of scrutinising Tree Management. Members stated that the Council had not communicated this policy well to residents. The Council need to explain this better to the public to make it clear that it has little ability to be proactive given the limited resources at its disposal, but any potential review should look at what support could be given to residents who have problems with tree management. A Member suggested that a review of tree management could also look at the planning policy of 3 for 1 trees, which is an SBC policy and needs to be included in the next iteration of the emerging local plan planning policy document.

Parking enforcement

It was noted that it is hard to recruit to this position given the current salary and the difficult nature of the role, which was not a popular area to work in. Members were interested in the level of parking enforcement that was being undertaken. The perception was that very few fixed penalty notices were being issued.

Recycling

A Member strongly encouraged the Committee to add Recycling to the Committee's work programme as they had been undertaking their own informal research with residents and relevant staff regarding this issue. The Member stated that residents are very confused regarding what they should be recycling and into what receptacle items should be placed. In addition, the Refuse and Recycling operatives are finding it increasingly frustrating that recycling is often contaminated when it is collected. The Council encourages people to look at the web site for advice, but anecdotally, it is thought that by and large residents don't look at it. The Members stated that Recycling is currently confusing, and consistency was needed. The Council is currently reviewing its services in light of the Governments 'Simpler Recycling' announcements, and it is expected that an update will be brought to this meeting in due course.

Indoor Market

A Member requested that the Indoor Market be added to the work programme for a brief update at a future meeting. There was a perception amongst the market traders that the footfall had been affected since the bus station was relocated.

Fly-tipping Enforcement

A Member asked what happens around enforcement for fly-tipping? What can the Council do to deter and stop reoffenders? The Member reported that it was often the same people in same area of their ward that were repeat offenders.

Revisit the cost-of-living review.

A Member asked that the Committee revisit the cost-of-living crisis review as the pressure on household budgets had not gone away and they didn't want the Council to lose sight of this important issue. It was agreed that there should be a one-off item on the cost of living.

In response to a question on the new Planning requirement for Biodiversity net gain, the Assistant Director, Planning Policy stated that the new policy had just come into force in February 2024 so time would be needed to see what impact this has had.

A Member stated that it would be important for the Committee to be flexible and to build in some space into the work programme to be able to react to events or to a change in Government if new priorities and requirements were given to local government.

With regard to the Committee's pre-scrutiny policy development item on updates to the Council's Biodiversity Action Plan on 27 February 2024, a Member made a special request that the importance of chalk streams to the region and local area be addressed. 85% of the World's Chalk Streams, which offer unique biodiversity, are in South and East of England. It is very important that their unique status is explained to Members and to the wider public and why they are so important to biodiversity.

and the climate.

The Chair stated that with regard to the work programme he was prepared to give way on his desire to have an update new station gateway as it was not possible for the Committee to do everything on the list.

The Chair stated that he was not keen for the Committee to look at Residential Parking as a scrutiny topic, as there was no satisfactory solution open to the Council that would alleviate the need for more provision across the town which was not possible to achieve within the geography of the area or with the budgets that are available and would only lead to further raising of expectations and then disappointment for residents.

A Member suggested that it would be helpful for newly elected Members to be given an induction training session either just ahead or at the first meeting of the new Municipal Year to explain how scrutiny is undertaken in Select Committees.

It was **RESOLVED**

1. that the Scrutiny Members' feedback on ideas for improving Scrutiny be noted;
2. (i) that having considered the ideas put forward by individual Scrutiny Members, the Committee determines the matters to be added to a work programme of potential Scrutiny review items for 2024-25 as follows:
 - Town Centre Regeneration – Initially an overarching Officer presentation to be provided and then a more focused thematic approach around the local skills agenda, access to work opportunities, placemaking, night-time economy etc.
 - Offer a training session on or before the first meeting in the new Municipal Year to orientate newly elected Members regarding how scrutiny is conducted.
 - Ongoing watching brief on the Climate Emergency – continue with 2 sessions during the year in Oct/Nov to coincide with the Annual Climate Change update to Council and in March to drill down on some specific measures.
 - Invite the HCC to provide a briefing on what the impact might be to the workings of the LEP now it is being brought into the County Council.
 - Tree Management. Officers to provide a one-off performance review session on how the Tree Management Policy is explained to the public to counter the general misconceptions of what is possible within the Councils current resources.
 - Provide a one-off performance review session on Parking Enforcement with some details on the service and the number of fines administered.
 - Receive an update on the current Refuse and Recycling service and look at possible policy changes once Government Guidance is issued in this area.
 - Provide a one-off review update on the Indoor Market following up on

actions from the 2017 Scrutiny review.

- Provide a one-off review update on the current position with the Cost-of-living review.
- Biodiversity Net Gain – The Committee is considering the Biodiversity Action Plan as a piece of pre-scrutiny policy development work in February 2024 and may look to bring back future updates, if Committee time allows, including further sessions on the Tree Management Strategy and the Green Space Strategy.

(ii) that the Chair will consider the above suggestions made by the Committee and devise a draft work programme schedule that will be shared with the Committee when it meets in the new Municipal Year in June 2024, comprising a main scrutiny review item(s), one-off focused meetings or individual committee item updates.

3. that the process to carry out pre-scrutiny policy development work be noted.

4 **URGENT PART I BUSINESS**

None.

5 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Not required.

6 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR

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Meeting Executive
Portfolio Area Regeneration
Date 13 March 2024



REGENERATION PROGRAMME DELIVERY UPDATE

AUTHORS DAVE WELLS, LUCY KING

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report aims to provide an update on to the projects within the Government’s Towns Fund programme being delivered by Stevenage Borough Council and Stevenage Development Board partners.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

That Executive:

- 2.1 Notes the progress of the ‘Transforming the Town Centre’ regeneration programme, specifically the progress of projects which are being delivered using grant funded Towns Fund allocations provided by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).
- 2.2 Authorises the progression of the Cycling and Pedestrian Connectivity (inc. Arts and Heritage Trail) project, approves the high-level budgets attributed to the three workstreams and acknowledges the future collaboration with

Environment and Economy and the Community Select Committees to support the delivery of these interventions.

- 2.3 Approves the reprofiling of the Towns Fund expenditure profile as shown in the 3rd Quarter capital update report to this Executive, following endorsement from the Stevenage Development Board.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Future Town Future Council (FTFC) Programme identifies the regeneration of the Town Centre as the top priority for Stevenage Borough Council. This will have long lasting benefits for residents, businesses, and visitors.
- 3.2 The Stevenage Central Framework sets out a clear vision and the scale of opportunity within a regenerated town centre that *'Stevenage was, and should be again, a destination town centre with a combined retail, leisure and residential offer that will meet the needs of our population and attract visitors well into the future. We need to recognise the huge changes that are underway in terms of retailing and what people are seeking in their leisure time. We also need to build on the traditional role our town centre has played in being a meeting place and central hub for our community'*. This mixed-use regeneration will create a lasting sustainable legacy in the town, where people can live, work, and socialise within a high-quality built environment fit for the 21st century.
- 3.3 To support this priority, the Stevenage Town Investment Plan was developed following invitation from the Government in 2019, and Stevenage was successfully awarded £37.5 million of funding through the Department of Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities Towns Fund programme.
- 3.1 As identified above, Stevenage is in a period of significant transformation, with a range of schemes – both public and private - in the pipeline to create a 21st century new town. This reflects the vision set out by the Stevenage Development Board, and reflected in the Town Investment Plan which is intended to help develop proposals to provide local opportunity and reinvigorate the town. This Town Investment Plan was based around five key themes:
- Reflecting and reinterpreting our New Town Heritage
 - Embracing sustainable travel
 - Transforming the town centre as a place of opportunity
 - Upskilling and providing opportunities
 - Supercharging the growth of businesses
- 3.2 Each of the 9 projects included in this programme required Green Book Business Cases to be developed which were successfully approved by the Executive, following endorsement from the Stevenage Development Board, in 2021/22. This report seeks to provide an update on the delivery of Towns

Fund and subsequently highlight some of the successes which have dovetailed from this investment.

3.3 The regeneration programme is now well underway, with a number of projects underway or completed. This includes:

- **Enhancement of spaces in the town centre:** The improvement of Market Place, including seating areas and a play trail, the upgrade of Littlewoods Square on Queensway, and the refurbishment of Town Square.
- **Celebrating heritage, creativity and culture:** Creating the new 'Event Island Stevenage' in the heart of the town centre.
- **Investment to create a thriving town:** The purchase of 2 – 29 Town Square, the redevelopment of the northern part of Town Square and the creation of the Co Space facility which now is home to up to 300 jobs.
- **The regeneration of Queensway:** Partnership with Reef Group and Aviva to regenerate the former M&S store and parts of northern Queensway to create 110 apartments, 7 office spaces and attract new retailers.
- **Creation of a new Bus Interchange:** A brand-new, high-quality facility with capacity for additional services.
- **Enabling development:** Through the acquisition of sites required for the SG1 programme, planning and preparation works, and partnering with Mace to design a high-impact, multi-year SG1 programme to help transform the town centre.
- **Creating capacity for new jobs:** This includes enabling the delivery of a new European facility for Autolus, the private sector-led redevelopment of the Sycamore House building into a life sciences centre (100,000 square feet), approval of planning application for a mixed life science and commercial regeneration project in the Forum, generating c1,800 new jobs; and planning application for the land to the north of the GSK site, with potential for the creation of over 4,000 new jobs.

Developing opportunities and new employment

3.4 Stevenage is situated centrally within the UK Innovation Corridor (UKIC), part of a dynamic cluster connecting London to Cambridge which supports an economy worth £189 billion, 2.8 million jobs, out-performs the Oxford to Cambridge Arc and is now Britain's Fastest Growing Region. Stevenage is already home to a world-leading life science cluster, including more than 40 life science companies and the Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult. Following the recent move of Autolus into the town centre, supported by the Towns Fund programme, other major bioscience companies have come forward with requirements for space in locations within Stevenage town centre and employment area.

- 3.5 In response, two private sector led schemes have come forward to create a significant supply of life sciences laboratory space in the town centre and on an adjacent fringe location, where over half a million square feet of laboratory space is now to be developed. One is The Forum, a significant mixed-use development on the Forum buildings and car park which will deliver over 400,000 sqft of laboratory and research office facilities, over 60,000 square feet of retail space. Outline planning permission was issued in June 2023 and the scheme is being promoted by UBS Asset Management and Reef.
- 3.6 In addition, UBS Asset Management and Reef have announced development of a major new campus for life science firms in Stevenage and provide up to 1.4 million square feet of lab and office facilities, space for up to 5,000 new jobs, alongside GSK’s existing Global R&D centre and the Stevenage Bioscience Catalyst, the leading location for advanced therapeutics in the UK.
- 3.7 The level of investment that in being seen in Stevenage continues to highlight the need to provide opportunities for our residents to acquire new skills and benefit from the growing sectors and opportunities in the town. Skills and enterprise remain a key theme of the Towns Fund programme, with two projects directly providing this initiative.
- 3.8 A core aspiration of the Town Investment Plan were the three interventions:



3.9 Faced with pockets of deprivation across the town, lower levels of attainment and lower levels of qualifications than neighbouring areas and the national average, and with resident earnings being on average lower than that of in-commuters, some residents are not being afforded the opportunity to benefit from the opportunities which are likely to become available. This can be viewed in the table below.

Earnings – median annual earnings			
	Stevenage	Herts	
Residents	£29,100	£35,450	
In-commuters	£35,500	£32,730	

Pupil attainment			
	Stevenage	Herts	England
KS1	75.9%	78.3%	75.6%
KS2	58.2%	67.1%	64.9%
KS4	44.2%	51.5%	46.6%

- 3.10 As it stands, this change to the labour market poses a challenge. To address this challenge and to extend opportunity for the local community, the Council has adopted the new ‘Stevenage Works’ Skills Framework.
- 3.11 In February 2024, Executive approved this enhanced approach to skills, jobs and opportunity, working together with partners to help ensure Stevenage is an exemplar in securing outstanding opportunities for local people. A summary of the Framework is provided below:

 The Opportunity	 The Ambition	 The Challenge	 The Response
<p>A 20 year, £1bn regeneration programme to 2035, designed to maximise the Town's potential and deliver significant transformation.</p> <p>Including the Stevenage Town Investment Plan (STIP) £37.5m of Government Funding.</p> <p>The STIP places significant emphasis on delivering opportunities for local people, particularly in relation to enhance skills and training.</p>	<p>An approach that delivers for all those with barriers to employment.</p> <p>Young people are provided the tools and knowledge to make the most of opportunities available to them.</p> <p>Those in work are given opportunities for career progress and retraining.</p> <p>Ensure targeted work in areas of greatest deprivation to break down barriers to employment.</p> <p>Ensuring that interventions are designed and delivered at a local level.</p>	<p>High levels of deprivation (particularly in the central parts of the town).</p> <p>Lower levels of attainment and lower levels of qualifications than neighbourhood areas in Hertfordshire.</p> <p>Resident earnings lower than Stevenage workforce.</p> <p>Challenges for residents to identify the opportunity available in the town.</p>	<p>A joint effort to open doors to Stevenage's outstanding opportunities.</p> <p>Collaboration between the public, private and third sectors.</p> <p>Establishing Stevenage as a Skills Centre of Excellence</p> <p>Ensure the once in a generation regeneration activities achieve a great result for this and the next generation.</p>

- 3.12 This is a unique opportunity to deliver on the strategy to create opportunities for Stevenage residents. There is a significant skills shortage in Hertfordshire for engineering sector, emerging green skills required for transport and construction sector. Engineering and technology roles are predicted to grow in all UK regions between now and 2030 and beyond, faster than other occupations.

Towns Fund Project Progress Report and Community Engagement

- 3.13 The delivery of the regeneration programme has continued during 2023/24 making progress to achieve the outcomes set out in the Town Investment

Plan. A recent report by the National Audit Office (November 2023) highlighted of the total £10.6bn Government Levelling Up funding packages, £0.9bn has been spent by local partners and made a series of recommendations to enhance oversight of the funds and impact of the funds. The report noted that *'projects are happening at a time when there is pressure on public finances because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the energy and cost of living crisis and sudden interest rate rises'*.

- 3.14 In Stevenage, work to deliver against the Stevenage Town Investment Plan is well underway, preparation to ensure full delivery of allocated funding and impact. The Towns Fund programme was established through the engagement with residents, community groups, businesses and key stakeholders.
- 3.15 This year the programme has completed three extensive community engagement activities, which are discussed in further detail below. Regular and meaningful engagement with the community around projects is central to the programme, and the council is committed to a town centre that communities, businesses and visitors can continue to be proud of. The town centre is an asset for everyone to enjoy and it is critical that this is shaped in collaboration between all stakeholders, recognised the assets that make the town special.
- 3.16 A full summary of project delivery from across the Regeneration Programme and Towns Fund and beyond can be found in **Appendix A**.

Cycling & Pedestrian Connectivity (incl. Arts & Heritage Trail)

- 3.17 In August 2023 three new pieces of artwork on the walls of the underpass located at the Broadhall Way roundabout were unveiled. The installations were designed to encourage active travel and utilise the 45km of cycleway that Stevenage offers. The project was funded through the Towns Fund allocation to Cycling and Pedestrian Connectivity (Arts and Heritage trail) and was delivered in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council to create this colourful welcoming pathway to key areas within the town.
- 3.18 Most recently, engagement has commenced with community groups in relation to the next set of underpass artworks for the town, the community were asked to choose the next three themes to be art worked. At the time of writing the survey is still underway and due to close on Friday 8 March although over 400 responses have already been received. Further engagement on future artworks is planned and we look forward to working with the community on designs for these.

Diversification of Retail

- 3.19 Event Island Stevenage is a new green space that offers a multi-purpose and informal play area with a variety of activities. The impact of the space has been well received, growing the Town Centre event schedule through joined up work planning across departments. A number of exciting events have already taken place on Event Island since it launched. These include Children's Playday, Halloween activities, Barrio Fiesta and the well-attended Christmas lights switch on 2023.

- 3.20 Officers are considering options for the remainder of this funding allocation, utilising principles set out in the Grimsey Review, and the Stevenage Central Framework. Aligned with the project aim of facilitating the diversification of the town centre, to use leisure, culture, experience, food and beverage and events programme to create a vibrant resident and visitor experience.

New Towns Heritage Centre

- 3.21 Arts and culture, and the heritage of the town, is celebrated at Stevenage Museum. It is a valued community space, and through the Towns Fund programme funding has been secured to expand the offer as part of a new community and public service Hub, to celebrate the rich history of the town and New Town Heritage more broadly.
- 3.22 In Summer 2023 a survey was opened up to the local community around the relocation of the museum as part of longer-term transformation proposals within the town. Almost 300 people completed the survey, providing important feedback as the team looks to further celebrate and expand the museum so that the rich history of the town can continue to be told.
- 3.23 Unsurprisingly, the museum is well loved by the community and is friendly and welcoming with informative and educational displays. However, some comments reflect that the venue is small and dark, and hard to find. This engagement has highlighted a range of aspirations from those who responded, and positive support for options to see the museum relocated to a more central location with different opening hours, and improved facilities including a café and better toilet facilities, including accessible toilets. Work continues on the museum relocation project, alongside plans to bring forward the community and public service Hub.

Sports and Leisure Hub

- 3.24 In October 2023, Executive authorised the Sports and Leisure Hub project to appoint Morgan Sindall to progress the designs for the new facility. The proposed new facility will bring sports, swimming, leisure and well-being provisions all together under one roof.
- 3.25 The project team are continuing to work though feasibility options and viability work with Morgan Sindall and anticipate entering the contract with Morgan Sindall in Quarter 1 2024/5.
- 3.26 Whilst the project team continues mobilise and prepare to enter the contract. It is vital that the new facilities are designed to meet the needs of the town and its communities, and the approach has been to commence with an early-stage survey for residents in November 2023. The council asked communities to share what they would like to see in the new facility, bringing together all under one roof the sports and swimming facilities, currently provided at Stevenage Arts & Leisure Centre, and Stevenage Swimming Centre. Over 400 responses were received. Key feedback included respondents commenting that they would like to see a modern building in an accessible location, with adequate parking including blue badge spaces, and bicycle parking. There were requests for a café, space for lane swimming and wellbeing as a key focus. This is a facility for the local community and the survey is the start of an extensive period of co-production to work together on a building with something for everyone.

- 3.27 Stevenage has a history of celebrating arts and culture and we are proud of the theatre and what it offers, and the council is committed to retaining a theatre within Stevenage Town Centre. Reflecting upon the feedback from residents, the theatre will not be moving to the new facility, and it will continue to operate as normal during the development and after the delivery of the new Sports & Leisure Hub.
- 3.28 Officers continue to engage with Morgan Sindall and HCC to explore the different delivery scenarios which encompass the ethos of the project but embed the resident feedback, whilst ensuring that there is a continuity of youth service provided at Bowes Lyon.
- 3.29 Further detail on the results from the resident feedback survey can be viewed in **Appendix B**.

Gunnels Wood Road

- 3.30 The purpose of the Gunnels Wood Road Infrastructure Improvements project is to support the unlocking of development land and carry out preparatory works in the undertaking of transport improvements to the current gyratory. Partnership engagement and close working continues with Reef Group regarding the development of this scheme to coincide and enhance the expansion of the GSK site.

Station Gateway Enabling works

- 3.31 In October 2023, Executive gave delegated authority to explore the procurement of design services via a framework for the Station Gateway and Central Core West Major Opportunity Areas (MOA). This has been successfully carried out with a Design Services Management Agreement (DSMA) being signed in January 2024 with Muse Places, A workplan has been agreed which looks to provide a robust masterplan of the MOAs in the next 12 months.

SITEC

- 3.32 Science Innovation and Technology Centre (SITEC) project is continuing and explore options for delivery as part of the Towns Fund programme. The SITEC project was allocated £5 million with the summary business case endorsed by Development Board and approved by Executive in March 2022, noting this project was at an earlier stage of development than other schemes but with potential to achieve a significant benefit related to skills provision.
- 3.33 The SITEC project concept has been created in partnership with North Herts College, Stevenage Borough Council, and Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. The partnership aims to make the most of Stevenage's position in the Golden Triangle of Research and Development between Oxford, Cambridge and London, providing a space for local people to access and learn the skills and knowledge needed for success in the many STEM business in the area.
- 3.34 The first phase of this partnership has been complete at the college (SITEC Phase 1) and opening in March 2023, offering a range of new T level and Apprenticeship qualification across science, engineering, Digital and

Sustainable technology subjects, and based at North Herts College's Stevenage campus.

- 3.35 At this stage, Officers are working closely with North Hertfordshire College and Stevenage Development Board to develop the next phase of this project. The aspiration remains to create a highly visible, standalone skills centre that could provide a wide variety of courses. The outline business case approved by Executive (March 2022) agreed to explore two different scenarios, investment into North Hertfordshire College's current campus, and a facility in the town centre.
- 3.36 Stevenage Borough Council and North Hertfordshire College are developing the business case for this new facility which will return to Stevenage Development Board and Executive in Quarter 1 2024/25.

Enterprise Centre

- 3.37 The Enterprise Centre project was allocated £4 million from the Towns Fund delivery programme, with a summary business case endorsed by Development Board and approved by Executive in March 2023.
- 3.38 The Enterprise Centre situated in the heart of the town centre to aspires to provide employment space, reactivating underutilised spaces and boosting footfall in the town centre.
- 3.39 Stevenage Development Board requested that Officers continue to explore options regarding delivery of the facility. As this project remains at the conceptual stage, a further report will be provided to Executive to provide a business case and delivery for the project within Quarter 1 2024/25.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

- 4.1 In March 2020, the Stevenage Development Board was established to oversee the development of a Town Deal for Stevenage. The Board's role is to provide strategic leadership and to set out a Town Investment Plan with a clear vision, strategy and delivery proposals in place, which reflect the ambitions of local people. The Board consists of key stakeholders from public sector organisations, private businesses, and not-for-profit organisation, to ensure a diverse range of views are represented.
- 4.2 Monitoring and evaluation are a key aspect to ensure all Towns Fund progress is captured as projects come forward into the delivery phase, ensuring accountability for public funding. Clear guidance has been set by DLUHC which follows mandatory outputs and outcomes set during the Business Case phase via a Monitoring & Evaluation Framework. The programme management team report of these elements bi-yearly, a December return which analyses April-September and a June report for October-March (with an emphasis on the year in its entirety). Each reporting return encompasses expenditure, risk management, outputs/outcomes, programme management and third-party funding. Prior to submission, the expenditure is capital assured by the Council's capital team and when finalised the return is reviewed by the Stevenage Development board.

- 4.3 As the financial year draws to a close there has been a significant amount of enabling work completed which will position the programme in a positive position to continue the work of the Towns Fund programme.
- 4.4 To continue to progress these projects the Development Board have endorsed a package of decisions relating to three of the key projects.

Cycling and Pedestrian Connectivity (inc. Arts and Heritage trail)

- 4.5 Cycling and Pedestrian Connectivity (inc. Arts and Heritage trail) project was listed as an outline business case in 2021 when the Towns Fund allocation was confirmed. It was indicated that this project would encompass a range of projects within this allocation, but all which aligned with the business case parameters and definition.
- 4.6 The project was allocated a total of £3.5 million. Currently circa £430k has already been delivered through the delivery of the Cycle Storage at the new Multi Storey car park, underpass improvements and a small amount of spend relating to further development of the project.
- 4.7 The project focusses on two core element elements; the first is to deliver a heritage and arts trail that creates a quality visitor attraction showcasing the incredible heritage assets and public art across the town, coupled with the installation of new art features to complete the trail. The second element is the delivery of enhanced pedestrian and cycling infrastructure that will link between new developments in the town centre and other growth schemes across with the network, whilst providing a cultural offer as well as an exciting cycling experience through enhancing place pride and identity through art, heritage, community activity and incorporating refreshed activation of key routes. This will achieve a multitude of aims – increasing accessibility and connectivity between places so that mobility is not a barrier to accessing opportunity, increasing levels of health and wellbeing through increased cycling and walking, improving the perception and experience of places across the town centre, and contributing towards climate change. This in turn will unlock direct and indirect local economic benefits.
- 4.8 This project builds on the work that current transport and regeneration schemes have been delivering with the aim of deliver the next phase of cycling and pedestrian improvements alongside these. As per the Stevenage Town Investment Plan submission, the project covers the core central. The summary business case for this project was approved by Executive in March 2022 and can be viewed on the council’s website under Council and Democracy.
- 4.9 Some infrastructure outputs linked to this project include:
- Underpasses improved: 22
 - Length of cycleway improved: 5km
 - Length of pedestrian footpaths: 5km
 - Cultural assets within a heritage trail: 1
- 4.10 The Regeneration Team have appraised a number of project options that align with this business case objective. This included strategic benefit, deliverability, risk, impact, and costs estimates.

4.11 Following an extensive amount of investigation work, research case studies and engagement with key stakeholders and community groups, the project has been defined into the below work streams for delivery with cost envelopes attributed.

Public Realm Connections Budget: £1million	Cycling Improvements and Infrastructure Budget: £1.15m	Arts and Heritage Trail Budget: £1.35m
Pedestrian and Cycling improvements	Cycle Storage at the new MSCP	New Art Installations
Old Town New Town connection	Cycle Hire Scheme	Heritage Trail
New crossing – employment to leisure access	Underpass improvements	

4.12 Through soft market engagement on these early-stage concepts, high level cost envelopes have been attributed to each workstream and project. Contingency has been built into the programme to ensure that as the projects develop, if these costings increase then there is capacity within the funding to mitigate any cost pressures.

4.13 Under the workstream Cycling Improvements and Infrastructure is a key project the Cycle Hire Scheme.

4.14 The Planning Policy team has been working on developing a Cycle Hire Scheme initiative since 2019, commissioning a Feasibility Study to assess the benefits and risks associated with a potential Cycle Hire scheme in Stevenage. This has included, engagement with from Councillors, public engagement events, public consultation and assessment of potential suppliers to deliver a Cycle Hire scheme in the town.

4.15 On 7 February 2024, the Executive noted the progress made regarding the Stevenage Cycle Hire Scheme and work undertaken by officers since May 2023 and approved the next steps for the Cycle Hire Scheme to further develop the proposal for a scheme in Stevenage for a period of 4 years.

4.16 On 29th February Stevenage Development Board were presented with the high-level cost envelopes allocated against the three workstreams and an update on project progress. Stevenage Development Board endorsed the approach to the Cycling and Pedestrian (inc. Arts and Heritage Trail) and the allocation against each workstream.

4.17 The recommendation for Executive is to approve the high-level cost envelopes attributed to each workstream and continue to progress the individual project details in collaboration with Environment and Economy Select Committee in relation to connectivity related projects, and the Community Select Committee in relation to the Arts and Heritage Trail.

5 IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 5.1 The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) introduced a delegated Project Adjustment Request (PAR) process for some of its Levelling Up programmes in July 2023. DLUHC have updated the Towns Fund PAR guidance and republished some general principles and criteria for places making changes to their projects, the full guidance was provided to the Executive in the October 2023 Towns Fund progress report.
- 5.2 This guidance includes:
- What constitutes a Project Adjustment Request (PAR)?
 - What is out of scope for a PAR?
 - What criteria PARs need to meet?
 - How are PARs assessed?
 - How to Submit PARs
- 5.3 The Council are looking to utilise the power to move project funding across years for 2023/24 (new profile below with changes highlighted, 5.7). The proposal is to shift the funding for New Towns Heritage Centre, Sports & Leisure Hub and Cycling & Pedestrian Connectivity (inc. Arts & Heritage) to 25/26 to maximise the delivery timescales.
- 5.4 The reasons for the changes for the profile are listed above in relation to these projects.
- 5.5 The reason being these projects are on the cusp of being finalised with our committed partners and having the funds available in a later financial year will place the Council in the best position possible to be delivered.
- 5.6 There is no longer the requirement to take this decision through a PAR process, however for transparency, the Stevenage Development Board have fully endorsed the decision (February 2024 Board meeting) and asking the Executive to note the change as the Accountable Body.

5.7

Project	22/23 £10,300,000	23/24 £1,900,000	24/25 £15,150,000	25/26 £10,150,000
Stevenage Enterprise Centre	£0	£0	£4,000,000	£0
Gunnels Wood Road Infrastructure	£0	£1,000,000	£0	£0
Station Gateway	£6,000,000	£0	£500,000	£0

Marshgate	£1,750,000	£0	£0	£0
SITEC	£0	£0	£4,000,000	£1,000,000
New Towns Heritage Centre & Museum	£500,000	£0	£1,000,000	£500,000
Stevenage Sports & Leisure Hub	£400,000	£150,000	£2,000,000	£7,450,000
Cycling & Pedestrian Connectivity	£400,000	£700,000	£1,200,000	£1,200,000
Diversification of Retail	£1,250,000	£50,000	£2,400,000	£0

Legal Implications

- 5.8 The approval process previously set out at Executive and Council (“Transforming our Town Centre progress update and Towns Fund decision making”) has been followed for all Towns Fund business cases. There will be further decision-making gateways required as projects continue to mobilise. There are some projects in which our partners will be directly delivering and the Council solely acting as the accountable body. In preparation for this, Accountable Body Agreements have been drafted and following Legal Services review they will be issued ahead of any funds being transferred.

Risk Implications

- 5.9 Full details of risks relating to each of the Towns Fund projects can be found in their individual business cases. As projects mobilise and enter into delivery, full risk registers are updated.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.10 Tackling Climate Change remains a key focus of the Transforming our Town Programme, and ultimately the Towns Fund projects. As part of the Towns Fund process, all projects acknowledged the need to address climate change emergency and sought to embed sustainable approaches in to project delivery; ranging from implementing green technology into a scheme, or reusing or recycling of waste materials.
- 5.11 There are key projects where working with sustainability consultants and construction experts at an early stage within the project will not only reduce the environmental impact, but also future proof facilities.

Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.12 Equality and Diversity implications are monitored and evaluated as projects are commissioned. For the Towns Fund Programme an programme EqIA was produced and is updated in line with the 6 monthly submissions to central government. EqIA is available upon request.

APPENDICES

- A Regeneration Programme Summary document (January 2024)
- B Sports and Leisure Hub engagement summary

STEVENAGE EVEN BETTER: THE STORY OF REGENERATION

This document provides an overview for Members on the regeneration of Stevenage Town Centre. This looks at the need for change, the projects that have happened, and what is still to come.

Further information on the projects can be found on our website and social media channels:

[Home - Stevenage Even Better : Stevenage Even Better \(stevenage-even-better.com\)](https://www.stevenage-even-better.com)

Instagram: @stevenagebetter

Twitter: @StevenageBetter

Regeneration: the need for change

Town centres across the country are changing, and Stevenage is no exception. Although exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, before this hit the council realised that there was a need to evolve the town centre, creating a 21st Century New Town. Our strategy is based on creating a thriving town centre comprising a mix of retail, leisure activities and town centre living.

Traditional retail is in decline, largely driven by a shift towards online shopping and people not using the physical retail available to them. Across the country, town centres and high streets have visibly changed as large retailers such as Debenhams closed their stores. There is a need to attract visitors in different ways, so we can support existing businesses and attract new occupiers. Today's consumers are looking for more food, drink and leisure experiences in addition to retail.

Our programme is based on research such as The Grimsey Review which calls for town centres to evolve with more focus on health, culture, housing, leisure, and residential, whilst retaining some shops. The review recommends less reliance on cars and introducing more green spaces in town. We are ensuring there are accessible services, creating spaces for culture and community interaction, with places to relax and unwind. We have already introduced improved transport facilities and modern new spaces for businesses and will further increase these alongside introducing new homes available for everyone.

Stevenage is the UK's first New Town, a pioneer of its time and a utopia for people leaving London after the Second World War. Yet it is not without its challenges, including ageing buildings in a distinctive post-war style, a fragmented town centre bounded by major roads, and surface level car parking. We are working hard to address these challenges whilst recognising the heritage of the town and the importance of staying true to the town's motto: *The heart of a town lies in its people.*

Partnership working sits at the heart of the programme. Transformation of the town is being delivered alongside a number of partners from both the public and private sector, including The Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Hertfordshire County Council, Reef Group and funder UBS, and Guinness Partnership. The council works hard on these relationships to deliver the best in both buildings and opportunities for our communities, who remain central to everything that we do. We know that the programme is divisive, and through an outreach and engagement programme, endeavour to take our residents on a journey with us as we create a place that continues to be exceptional to live, work and play.

Funding the programme

In March 2021, Stevenage was awarded £37.5m from national government's Towns Fund following the submission of the Stevenage Town Investment Plan, created in collaboration with the Stevenage Development Board. The second highest award in the country, this funding is being used for nine projects across the town, some of which have been delivered and others which are at their early stages.

The Stevenage Development Board is chaired by businessperson Adrian Hawkins OBE, the Independent Chair. The Board brings together voluntary key stakeholders from public sector organisations, private businesses, not-for-profit organisations and Heritage organisations, to ensure a diverse range of views are represented. The Board has been working in collaboration on a Town Investment Plan with a clear vision, strategy and delivery proposals, that supports local residents and businesses and has extended its vision to a Gunnels Wood Road improvement scheme and the vital Station Gateway project.

In totality, Stevenage has secured circa £70m of public funding through partnership working and our strong, engaging need for change. We have successfully leveraged this to secure over £600m of private sector investment, a figure that continues to climb with recent planning determinations such as the expansion of the GSK site. We have received support from the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership through local Growth Deal funding secured for Stevenage regeneration, alongside OPE funding for other projects.

What has happened: the story so far

Over the past years, there has been visible change in the town centre. The below provides an overview of projects that have been delivered to date.

1. Market Place

In 2018 public realm improvements to Market Place were completed, installing new play areas for children of all ages, inviting street furniture and vibrant greenery to a previously tired street, improving accessibility, and boosting footfall.

This has transformed the area into a well-used play area with all units now occupied.



Image: Market Place

2. Queensway North

Stevenage Borough Council, mixed-use developer Reef Group and Aviva Investors worked together to deliver a £50m upgrade to the Queensway North. The former site of Marks & Spencer and the adjoining buildings have been redeveloped to introduce new retail, residential and commercial facilities including a 24-hour gym and office space along with 110 new homes and flexible working facilities.

Like our other schemes, Queensway North is based on 'mixed-use' principles and is designed to increase the number of people living and working in Stevenage Town Centre, thereby adding to the demand for services and businesses based here. A number of new commercial tenants have already invested in the premises including PureGym.



Images: improvements to Queensway North

3. Town Square and North Block

In 2021 Stevenage Town Square one of the town's most iconic and well-known areas received a major upgrade. Working with developer Mace and lead contractor, Ashe, new granite paving, bespoke, retro lighting, new drainage facilities, seating and more were installed. The area provides a vibrant and ambient area for people to sit and enjoy.

The development of the adjacent North Block has provided new retail, commercial and flexible office and events space. The heritage building frontages have been based upon Stevenage's initial architectural heritage. As well as celebrating the visual heritage, this space has provided a rare example of modernising post World War 2 architecture in a sustainable way.

One of the largest tenants is Co-Space. Opened in August 2021, the space is the first of its kind in Stevenage offering flexible workspace, 24/7 access and two roof terrace areas, all created by award winning interior designers. The partnership working between the council and the occupier has received acclaim, winning the Innovation Award 2023 at the Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire Constructing Excellence Awards, and shortlisted as a finalist at the 2023 APSE Awards in the category of best Best Public / Private Partnership Working Initiative.

The Town Square is a site for listed artworks, and in 2022 three brass plaques were installed in the paving recognising the town's heritage by commemorating this artwork.



Image: North Block and the interior of Co-Space

4. Event Island Stevenage

Located adjacent to the Town Square on the site of the old bus station, Event Island Stevenage is a community space that offers a multi-purpose and informal play area with a variety of activities for informal play, featuring 11 new trees and planting. Our vision was to deliver a temporary space to generate activity for local communities to use and enjoy, a place to dwell and contribute positively to urban life. It was designed to play a key role in activating the vacant station site and adjacent retail frontages, enhancing the pedestrian movements across the space, attracting footfall and encouraging spend to support local businesses.

A number of exciting, inclusive and informative events have already taken place on Event Island since it launched in October 2022. These include Childrens Playday, Halloween activities, International Day, Cycle Hire event, Older Peoples event (Stevenage Older People's Network) and the extremely well attended Christmas lights 2023 switch on and Barrio Fiesta. A programme of future events is already lined up ready for next year.

The space will remain in situ before becoming the Garden Square as part of the SGI masterplan.



Images: people enjoying Event Island Stevenage

5. Bus Interchange

The award-winning Bus Interchange opened in June 2022 and provides a greatly improved modern facility for current and future bus users.

Facilities provided in the new Bus Interchange include:

- Covered heated /climate-controlled waiting area with seating;
- A shop and café;
- Toilets including accessible disabled facilities;
- CCTV;
- Live passenger information boards, including live train times;
- New Coach Stop.

The Interchange utilises sustainable drainage which funnels rainwater into the ground, allowing bus users to enjoy new green landscaped areas, planted trees and wildflower meadow areas to increase local biodiversity.

The Bus Interchange forms part of a sustainable travel hub for the town, improving the towns travel and connectivity links with the Railway Station, the Railway North new multi-storey car park and the town centre, aided by the addition of a surface level pedestrian crossing over Lytton Way.



Images: The Stevenage Bus Interchange

6. Railway North multi-storey car park

Construction on this facility – one of the projects funded through the Towns Fund and Local Growth funding - began in May 2022 and the car park opened a year later in May 2023. The car park enhances the user experience and avoids columns to aid driving throughout the floors.

The new facility includes:

- Secure cycle storage facility for 80 cycles, run by bespoke operator Spokesafe;
- 622 spaces, almost double the capacity of the former level surface car park;
- 30 blue badge spaces split across different levels;
- 30 EV Charging points with the capacity to increase charging facilities significantly as demand increases;
- Solar panels to increase sustainability and help with charging bays.

The external metal facades incorporate images highlighting the achievements of Stevenage in the fields of science and technology and celebrating our communities.

The car park is the first in Hertfordshire to receive the Park Mark Plus award, (demonstrating the highest quality of today's modern car parks in services, operations, design and build), and was jointly awarded 'Best Car Park in a Town or City' at this year's British parking Awards.



Images: Railway North car park. Credit to Chris Winter Photography and Huber

7. Underpass Murals

In August 2023 three new pieces of artwork on the walls of the underpass located by Stevenage FC and Wickes at the Broadhall Way roundabout were unveiled.

The artworks on the walls of the underpass are themed to represent the town's achievements in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), the town's green spaces and active travel routes, and our much loved Stevenage Football Club (Stevenage F.C). The three designs reflect the areas to and from the underpasses.

Designed to encourage active travel and utilise the 45km of cycle way that Stevenage offers, there are plans for more of this urban artwork throughout the town. Unveiled artworks have received a great reception, fostering a sense of community spirit and encouraging pride in everything the town offers.

The project has been funded by the Stevenage Development Board through the Towns Fund. Part of the funding is allocated to improving cycling and pedestrian connectivity, and artworks to the underpasses and cycleways throughout the town are a key part of this, creating some stunning visuals in areas close to key parts of Stevenage. Stevenage Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council (as Highways Authority) have worked in partnership to improve the underpasses, creating a colourful, welcoming pathway to key areas within the town.



Images: STEM and Stevenage FC themed murals

8. Autolus Therapeutics HQ (Former Marshgate car park)

The new £65m biopharmaceutical manufacturing European Headquarters for Autolus Therapeutics within the Town Centre is now operational. Construction work commenced November 2022 and the development from Reef and UBS Asset Management joint venture was delivered at rapid speed, along with construction partner Merit Health.

The site has brought new jobs to the town as well as increasing footfall and adding to the town centre economy. The associated new public realm works and some re-provision of some public parking is nearing its final stage of completion.

Stevenage is world-renowned for its Life Sciences industry, but the introduction of this cutting edge sector to a town centre environment is a fairly new one. Through partnership working, schemes are able to be delivered quickly, which was particularly critical for a scheme such as Autolus that delivers life-extending cancer treatments. This is the key reason that Stevenage was chosen for these new headquarters for Autolus over Maryland USA, due to access to skills and a proactive and driven local authority who were able to manage the planning process at speed.

The scheme was highlighted in The Harrington Review of Foreign Direct Investment, with a focus on delivering inward investment through a proactive planning approach in Stevenage and providing growth for the local area, the local cluster, and the national Life Sciences Strategy.

The paper can be viewed: [231123_Harrington-Review-Report-FINAL-2_HH_Global_.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#).



Image: The new Autolus building

9. Stevenage Innovation and Technology Centre (SITEC)

In March this year Phase 1 of SITEC was officially opened at the North Hertfordshire College Stevenage campus. SITEC is a new venture created in partnership with the College, Stevenage Borough Council, and Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (Hertfordshire LEP). It aims to make the most of Stevenage's position in the Golden Triangle of Research and Development between Oxford, Cambridge, and London, providing a space for local people to the skills and knowledge needed for success in the many STEM businesses in the area.



Image: SITEC

What is happening: Projects on the ground and in development

There are a number of projects that are either delivering on the ground or have been publicly spoken about whilst remaining in their early stages of development. These are outlined below.

1. The Guinness Partnership (former Matalan site)

Construction is underway on the former Matalan site. The Guinness Partnership is delivering 526 one and two-bedroomed apartments along with 779 sq m of flexible commercial space at street level which aims to create active street frontages.

Lovell Partnerships, appointed by The Guinness Partnership, began work earlier this year on the first phase of the scheme. This is delivering 143 new homes which will all be affordable and provide a valuable source of low-cost homes located in the heart of Stevenage. This is expected to be completed in early 2025, with further phases set to follow this.

The council will get nomination rights from our housing list for all units.

Although not a council scheme, officers have worked closely with the housing provider to ensure that great quality, affordable housing is provided in the heart of the town.

Further information on The Guinness Partnership can be found on their website: [The Guinness Partnership](#).



Images: work underway on site, and an artist's impression of the development

2. New Sports & Leisure Centre

The proposed new Sports & Leisure Centre for Stevenage will consolidate the sports and swimming facilities currently provided at Stevenage Arts & Leisure Centre and Stevenage Swimming Centre, bringing them together under one roof.

They will be re-provided in a new state of the art building with a wide range of innovative and exciting services and activities, promoting healthy living and wellbeing for residents.

It is proposed that the facility will encompass swimming, studios and gym space with flexible sports and leisure facilities, with early ideas including the inclusion of a café with access from the Town Centre Gardens.

The design of the new Sports & Leisure Centre is in its very early stages and the council is working with the local community on a facility that will provide something for everyone. This co-production commenced in November when the council asked residents, businesses and visitors to complete a short survey to help us understand what is important to them.



Image: an artist's impression of the new centre

3. SG1 (Mace)

SG1 is a partnership between Stevenage Borough Council and Mace to deliver new investment into the heart of Stevenage Town Centre. SG1 forms a large part of the transformation of the town and will deliver new homes, commercial activity and public spaces for all to enjoy.

The masterplan area runs north to south from Swingate House, down Danestrete, and includes land along Southgate and between Southgate and Six Hills Way. The scheme will deliver new residential-led mixed-use development, new homes for sale and rent, ground floor retail and commercial space, alongside new public open space including Garden Square, currently home to Event Island Stevenage, and a Public Services Hub.

SG1 will directly create 579 construction jobs, 121 non-construction jobs and £38.6 million in new consumer spending power per annum from new residents.

Enabling works have been taking place over the past two years on the site of the former Swingate House, including its demolition and associated power supply works. The council is working with Mace to start work on the first phase of the masterplan at Swingate, with work expected to start on 261 homes early this year.

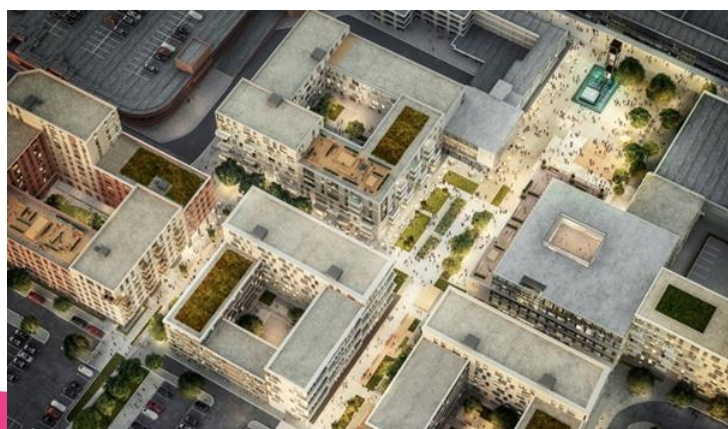


Image: artist's impression of SG1

4. Public Services Hub

The proposed new hub offers a one-stop location for public services, overlooking a new Garden Square in the heart of town and is currently in the early stages of design.

The shared public services hub is in line with government policy and is looking to include the museum, library, health, voluntary, council and charity services all under one roof, to improve the user-experience for residents accessing services and providing further sites for developing homes in the future.

It is likely that the new building will house Stevenage Museum. Currently located in the undercroft of St George and St Andrew, Stevenage Museum is a key feature of Stevenage town centre. Showcasing the history of the town, along with a programme of events for all the family, the museum is a much-loved community space that celebrates the arts, culture and history of the UK's first New Town. It deserves to be celebrated and expanded so that the rich history of the town can continue to be told.

Earlier this year, we asked the community to share their views on what they would expect from a relocated museum. Almost 300 people responded. The community would like to see the museum relocated to a more central location with different opening hours, and improved facilities including a café and better toilet facilities, including accessible toilets. This important feedback will be considered as design works on the facility progress.



Images: an early sketch image of the Public Services Hub, and museum survey results

5. Cycling & Pedestrian connectivity (inc. Arts and Heritage Trail)

Stevenage has a unique cycling and pedestrian infrastructure and this project provides an opportunity to improve key parts of to support sustainable active travel options and create a more welcoming user experience for residents and visitors who use the network and improve connectivity to key facilities in the town centre. Stevenage has a rich history of arts and culture, and we have some unique artworks which are much loved throughout the borough. The creation of an Arts & Heritage Trail will allow these to be further celebrated and enjoyed for generations to come.

Work within this area also looks at identifying public realm improvements on key routes in and around the town centre.



Image: artworks around the town

The growth of Life Sciences

Stevenage is world renowned for its Life Sciences industry. It is home to Europe's largest cluster of Cell and Gene Therapy companies, the CGT Catapult, GSK, Bioscience Catalyst and an ecosystem of global Life Science, Aerospace & Technology companies.

Reef Group and funder UBS are bringing forward much of the new development focused on this industry. Below is an outline of their key schemes, which follow on from the completion of the Autolus HQ building earlier this year.

Further information can be found: [Spotlight on Stevenage — Forge_Kn | Stevenage | Oxford | Cambridge | London \(forgekn.io\)](#).

1. The Assembly (Phase 2)

Phase 1 of The Assembly was completed earlier this year with the opening of the Autolus HQ building, on the site of the former Marshgate car park. Phase 2 encompasses the site currently home to The Forum. Spanning 450,000 sqft, four new laboratory buildings have been designed to provide cutting-edge GMP advanced manufacturing capabilities. These purpose-built lab facilities will also include a collaboration and skills building, providing an environment that fosters

innovation, collaboration and skill development for the life sciences industry. A multi-storey car park will be provided to replace the existing surface level parking.

The development bolsters the ongoing revitalisation of Stevenage town centre, with restaurant, retail and collaboration spaces at the ground floor level fronting onto a new public square. The introduction of commercial life science space will support existing and future business in the town, bringing footfall and expenditure through the addition of an estimated 1,850 high-value jobs.



Image: Artist's impression of The Assembly, Phase 2. Credit: Reef Group

2. Elevate Quarter

A resolution to grant planning permission has been secured for an additional 1.6 million sq ft of Research & Development (R&D) and Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) facilities at the GSK campus.

The new and expanded campus will provide a world-class landscaped setting with a range of amenities and facilities.

Health, well-being and inclusivity are at the heart of our design philosophy, alongside our efforts to minimise the impact we have on the planet.

Elevate Quarter will combine work alongside exercise and socialising with amenity provisions including cafes, bars, a nursery and e-bikes all within a close proximity to the town centre.



Image: Credit Reef Group

Unlocking opportunities for local communities

There are a number of benefits to this transformation programme, including stimulating the local economy with increased footfall, providing upgraded facilities to local communities, and evolving the town so that it continues to be an exceptional place to live, work and play.

A core part of this transformation programme is centred on opening up opportunities for local people and providing skills training. We work closely with our development partners to provide opportunities for people to gain the skills and qualifications needed to be successful in obtaining jobs and careers in construction and STEM industries, such as through the provision of SITEC.

We are driving private sector investment and ensuring that our town has the space to support small business development, skills and jobs, including the opportunity for our residents to gain experience in the construction industry. Stevenage Works, a job and training hub managed by Stevenage Borough Council and comprising of a vast range of partners, is well established. The organisation raises awareness of the local jobs available in local businesses for local people, and provides a free recruitment service, provision of training courses and apprenticeships to local people and residents of all ages and experience levels.

We encourage all partners to place local employment and skills training as a key element throughout their project lifecycles, not only opening up construction jobs and apprenticeships, but training people to learn new skills.

Reef Group have produced a series of videos speaking to local people about how they have acquired jobs within the Life Sciences sector: [Spotlight on Stevenage — Forge_Kn | Stevenage | Oxford | Cambridge | London \(forgekn.io\)](#).

The Hertfordshire Opportunities Portal details how local people can access information about Life Science careers: [Life Sciences | Sectors in Hertfordshire | HOP \(hopinto.co.uk\)](#).

As part of the council's programme of community outreach, we engage with local schools and speak to the next future generation about the jobs open to them. This includes working with our partners to deliver site tours to inspire young children.

A new Sports & Leisure Centre for Stevenage: Your Feedback

Stevenage Borough Council recently asked local communities to share their views on a proposed new Sports & Leisure Centre for Stevenage. The proposed new facility will bring together all under one roof the sports and swimming facilities, currently provided at Stevenage Arts & Leisure Centre, and Stevenage Swimming Centre.

We asked residents, businesses and visitors to complete a short survey to help us better understand what's important. Over 400 responses were received and this feedback, of which the headlines can be found below, will help us to begin to shape a new state of the art building for Stevenage, promoting healthy living and wellbeing for residents.

Most of you told us that a modern building with sports, wellbeing and swimming under one roof would encourage you to use the facilities, which you would like to see in an accessible location with safe access for pedestrians. There needs to be adequate parking, including blue badge spaces, alongside cycle parking and cycle storage.

There should be improved changing facilities and a café provided. Spaces for groups and classes is a must, as is the need for spaces for indoor sports and leisure. There needs to be a schedule of events and activities for people of all ages and abilities.

The swimming pool should allow space for lane swimming alongside lessons and swimming clubs. The water should be deep with provision for interactive water play and a spectator area for the pool. Wellbeing is a key focus of this proposed upgraded offering for the town, and some of you asked for a spa alongside provision for mental health and mindfulness activities.

Many of you have further questions around the facility. This is a facility for the local community and this survey is the start of a process to work together on a building with something for everyone. We will now work with a design team on the next stages and will share further information in due course, including around the future opportunities for the community to comment.

Cllr Richard Henry, Leader of Stevenage Borough Council, commented: “My thanks go to everyone who completed our recent survey. Feedback is invaluable as we work with our communities on this proposed new facility and continue to deliver the best for Stevenage. We know how well-used the current facilities are and this new building will increase the user experience, future proofing these services for increased usage and modern living. Our teams are working hard to meet as many of your needs as possible, and we look forward to providing an update in due course”.

The project will be partially funded through the Government’s Towns Fund. The Stevenage Development Board secured £37.5m in March 2021, and a proportion of this will be used for this new facility.

Adrian Hawkins OBE, Chair of the Stevenage Development Board, commented: “We have been delighted that more than 400 people have taken the time and the trouble to take part in our recent survey which centred on providing a new Sports and Leisure Centre for Stevenage.

“The insight gained has of course proved invaluable, but just as importantly it has shown that the people of this town view our regeneration scheme as a key part not just of their futures but that of their children’s as well.

“The remarkable technology sector and our advances in STEM can only come to fruition if we are also able to underpin and develop our sporting heritage. Stevenage has become world famous for sporting men and women who have triumphed on the biggest stages and our commitment to a new Sports and Leisure facility shows that we take seriously all aspects of this development.”

Cllr Loraine Rossati, Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Information Technology, said: “We have a vision for this new facility for the town, and we are committed to working with our communities to realise this. Collaboration is key, both with our residents and project partners, and I would also like to thank Everyone Active and Morgan Sindall as we work together to provide the best in class. We won’t be able to deliver everything, but by understanding what is most important to you, we can further explore the art of the possible and sharing the next stages of this proposal. There will be further opportunities to comment and we encourage everyone to have their say at the next available opportunity.”

Allan Prescott, Everyone Active contract manager, said: "We're thrilled to see such positive feedback from the local community regarding the proposed new Sports & Leisure Centre for Stevenage. These headline findings reflect a clear desire for modern, accessible facilities that cater to the diverse needs of our residents. We're excited about the potential of this state-of-the-art building to promote healthy living and wellbeing for all, and we look forward to working closely with Stevenage Borough Council to bring this vision to life."

We asked you to share your views on a proposed new Sports & Leisure Centre for Stevenage. Below is a snapshot of what you told us you would like to see.



Modern building in an accessible location



Accessible for all with a wide range of facilities



Family friendly with activities for all ages



Wellbeing



A bigger pool and interactive water play



Space for classes and indoor sports



A café



Safe pedestrian access



Parking: vehicles, blue badge spaces and bikes

NOTES TO EDITORS

For more information please contact the Communications Team on 01438 242168.

More information on the wider £1bn Stevenage town regeneration plans can be found at: <http://www.stevenage-even-better.com>.

THE TOWNS FUND

The Towns Fund is a priority for the government and central to the levelling up agenda. Through working directly with places and putting power in the hands of local businesses and communities, it is unleashing the economic potential of towns and high streets across England. The government wants to see vibrant towns that are more attractive places to live, work and visit; and to level up opportunity across the country so that everyone (wherever they live) can contribute to and benefit from economic growth.

Meeting EXECUTIVE
Portfolio Area Housing and Housing Development
Date 13 March 2024



HOUSING CONSUMER STANDARDS - THE SOCIAL HOUSING (REGULATION) ACT 2023

KEY DECISION

AUTHOR: MATTHEW GOUGH, HOUSING SPECIAL PROJECTS LEAD

LEAD OFFICER: RICHARD PROTHEROE; STRATEGIC DIRECTOR, EXT 2938

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 introduces wide ranging changes to the provision and management of social housing.
- 1.2 Stevenage Borough Council as a Registered Social Landlord is subject to these changes and the report outlines the changes introduced by the Act, along with details of the response and preparation for the introduction of the legislation and the new Consumer Standards by the Regulator of Housing, in April 2024.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the work being undertaken by the Council to prepare for the adoption of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, and its implementation through the Regulator of Social Housing and the new Consumer Standards and the Housing Ombudsmen be noted.
- 2.2 That the Executive approve the Housing Consumer Standards Action Plan, as seen in Appendix 1.
- 2.3 That a new Member led Executive Housing Working Group be established, to oversee the delivery of the Housing Consumer Standards Action Plan.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Following the tragedy of the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017, the Government published the Social Housing Green Paper - 'New Deal for Social Housing' and the Social Housing White Paper. This signalled an increased government focus on social housing, in particular in respects to building safety and ensuring greater transparency for residents, enabling them to scrutinise performance and have a voice in how their homes are managed.
- 3.2 The Social Housing (Regulation) Act (BD1) received royal assent on 20 July 2023 and lays foundations for changes to how social housing is managed. The legislation is driving some of the largest and far-reaching changes in the provision of social housing and is part of wider change and development in the sector.
- 3.3 It includes increased regulation of social landlords and new rules for protecting tenants from serious hazards in their homes. The Act brings forward a stronger and more proactive regulatory regime to improve standards in the sector and hold landlords to account for the service they provide to their tenants.
- 3.4 The new Act is both stringent and proactive and the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) has been clear that their approach will be resident, and outcome focused, with enhanced powers to issue unlimited fines and order performance improvement plans.
- 3.5 During the course of the Bill additional amendments were tabled notably Awaab's Law, which was introduced following the tragic death of a young boy who lived in social housing with damp and mould issues, which the Coroner determined contributed to his death. As a result, landlords in future are likely to be required to fix reported health hazards within specified timeframes, subject to secondary legislation being passed.
- 3.6 Further developments have included the Building Safety Act 2022 and the Fire Safety Act 2021, which require buildings, particularly high-rise blocks over 18m to be safe and fit for purpose and introduces the Building Safety Regulator, which for housing will be the Health & Safety Executive.
- 3.7 Whilst the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) has also seen its role develop, following the introduction of new statutory provisions, as outlined within the new Housing Complaint Handling Code.

3.8 SOCIAL HOUSING (REGULATION) ACT 2023

3.9 Key changes introduced by the Act include: -

- Proactive Regulation, with the power to impose unlimited fines for non-compliance
- New Consumer Standards
- New Decent Homes Standard
- New Tenant Satisfaction Measures
- New professional qualification requirements
- Enhanced Powers for the Housing Ombudsmen

3.10 The RSH and the HOS are working closely together, in a complimentary manner to ensure that landlords meet expected levels of service delivery to tenants.

3.11 Proactive Regulation with the power to impose unlimited fines for non-compliance

3.12 The RSH is an independent body, responsible for setting standards that all registered providers of social housing must meet and holds landlords to account for compliance with these standards. Its remit covers both local authorities and Registered Providers (RPs, housing associations).

3.13 The RSH is moving to a much more proactive approach. Currently, they can usually only intervene on a consumer issue where a 'serious detriment' test is passed. This restricts investigations to those landlords who are believed to be in breach of the standards. The new Act removes this test and the RSH will be able to intervene in more resident complaint cases.

3.14 Under the new approach the RSH will inspect every large social landlord, including local authorities against the new consumer standards on a rolling four-year basis and will have the power to issue unlimited fines to social landlords who do not comply with the Consumer Standards. The Regulator will take a risk-based approach in prioritising inspections.

3.15 From 2024, the RSH will use new prescribed Tenant Satisfaction Measures along with evidence from tenants, previous monitoring data, and information from the HOS to help inform inspections for each landlord and identify areas of potential concern. Inspections may also take place on a reactive basis if the need arises.

3.16 The Act will enable the RSH to set standards relating to information and transparency, including requiring social landlords to provide residents with information on how they can make a complaint against them.

3.17 The RSH will also issue social landlords with performance improvement plan notices in the following instances:

- If they fail to meet a regulatory standard (or there is a risk it will fail to do so if no action is taken)

- If they fail to comply with directions around the Tenant Satisfaction Measures
 - If the interests of tenants of social housing require protection
- 3.18 The RSH will have powers to set strict time limits (yet to be set) for social landlords to address Awaab's Law – requiring social landlords to respond to and investigate hazards that present a risk to the health of occupants such as damp, mould and unsafe homes, as well as temporarily decant and/or rehouse tenants to safe alternative accommodation within those time limits. The RSH will have the power to order emergency repairs and access homes at 48 hours' notice.
- 3.19 All social housing providers, including private registered providers and local authority landlords, will need to pay for regulation costs. This will cover expenses related to the new consumer standards and inspections.
- 3.20 New Consumer Standards**
- 3.21 The RSH published a consultation on the proposed new consumer standards in 2023 and the new standards are due to be finalised in early 2024 and will be in place from April 2024.
- 3.22 The newly proposed standards set out increased expectations of landlords, with a particular focus on safety and transparency. The proposed standards are summarised below, and full details can be seen in BD2:
- *Safety and Quality Standard* – provide safe and good quality homes and services to tenants
 - *Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard* – to be open with tenants, treat tenants fairly and ensure tenants can access services, make complaints and influence decision making
 - *Neighbourhood and Community Standard* – to ensure tenants can live in safe and well-maintained neighbourhoods
 - *Tenancy Standard* – requires fair allocation and management of homes and tenancies
- 3.23 New Decent Homes Standard**
- 3.24 A relaunched review of the existing Decent Homes Standard began in June 2023. The review looked at:
- An updated list of items which must be kept in a reasonable state of repair for homes to be considered 'decent'.
 - An updated list of services and facilities that every property must have to better reflect modern expectations for a 'decent' home.
 - Whether the current Decent Homes Standard sets the right standard on damp and mould to keep residents safe.
 - Updates to how the condition of building components, such as roofs and walls, are measured - to make sure that buildings which are not fit for use cannot pass the standard.

- The introduction of a Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard for the social rented sector.
- 3.25 A consultation on the new Decent Homes Standard, reflecting the outcome of the review is expected although currently there is no confirmed timeline for this or the subsequent introduction of Decent Homes Standard 2. Meeting the Decent Homes Standard is specifically referenced as part of the revised Consumer Standards and is therefore required in order to be compliant.

3.26 New Tenant Satisfaction Measures

- 3.27 The RSH requires social landlords to collect information about their performance against new Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs).
- 3.28 From April 2023, landlords have been responsible for collecting feedback on performance from tenants and to publish their TSMs annually. The aim is to improve transparency in the sector. Please see background document BD3.
- 3.29 There are 12 tenant perception measures which need to be collected via surveys and ten management information measures which also need to be reported. Surveys are underway to collect the 12 perception measures in line with the new Regulations whilst details of the 10 management information measures are now included as part of the Corporate Performance Reporting Framework.
- 3.30 The results will be compiled and reported jointly in June 2024.

3.31 New Professional Qualification Requirements

- 3.32 The Act will set qualification requirements for social housing managers to bring social housing more closely into line with other front-line services, including social work, teaching and, health and care services.
- 3.33 The implementation of the new legislation mandates that all senior housing executives and senior social housing managers must have, or be working towards, an appropriate level housing management qualification regulated by Ofqual equivalent to:
- a Level 4 Certificate or Diploma in Housing for senior social housing managers
 - a Level 5 Certificate or Diploma in Housing or a foundation degree from the Chartered Institute of Housing for senior housing executives.
- 3.34 This requirement covers existing employees who are senior housing and property managers and those who have responsibility for the day-to-day management of the provision of services connected with the management of social housing. The government has now published its consultation on this area, which will be reviewed and will inform the approach to be taken and ensure that the relevant requirements are met. The transition period as proposed is only 2 years and it is expected that some of those needing the qualification are enrolled within 6 months of commencement of this requirement

3.35 Enhanced Powers for the Housing Ombudsman

- 3.36 The HOS investigates complaints and resolve disputes involving tenants and leaseholders of social landlords (housing associations and local authorities).
- 3.37 The HOS investigates complaints that it receives by requesting evidence from the resident and landlord then determining what is fair in all the circumstances of the case.
- 3.38 The Act provides the HOS with powers to publish statutory best practice guidance to landlords following investigations into tenant complaints and require a landlord to self-assess against HOS concerns. The HOS plans to engage with landlords and produce good practice guidance in 2024.
- 3.39 The HOS will have the power to issue a new type of order if shortcomings give rise to further complaints. Some remedies which had previously been recommendations will now become orders, with landlords required to provide evidence of compliance.
- 3.40 The Complaint Handling Code is now on a statutory footing and introduces a new legal duty on landlords to comply with the Code. The new code can be seen as a background document (BD4).

3.41 Housing Supply, Management and Maintenance 2023/24

- 3.42 In response to the emerging social housing regulatory regime and the wider housing need the Council has already been progressing a number of projects and programmes, in advance of the most recent developments. Details of achievements against these key areas is set out below.
- 3.43 The Council has provided 394 new affordable homes since 2014 with an accumulative target of 397 in place for Quarter 3.
- 3.44 Continued investment as part of the HRA Business Plan has seen the number of homes that meet the national Decent Homes Standard continues to increase and was reported in quarter 2 at over 84% and is planned to continue to rise.
- 3.45 A key priority within the Council's Climate Change Strategy action plan is the planning policy for zero carbon homes, exploring opportunities for renewable technologies across council buildings, and provision of energy efficient housing (including retrofitting of current council housing stock). In Quarter 2, 55% of Housing Stock had an EPC rating of C or above. Delivery of the EPC rating C programme will cost on average £5,000 per property to fund and these costs have been included in the recent Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 30-year Business Plan review.
- 3.46 The safety of the homes that the Council manages is also a high priority with continued investment in this key area. The most recent data set out in the table below shows that for performance continues to be at 100% in all areas, although as standards development there is a need for continued work to ensure performance remains at these high levels.

Corporate Performance Indicator	Actual - Quarter 2 2023/24 YTD	Target Quarter 2 2023/4 YTD
RSH BS01: Percentage of dwellings with a valid gas certificate	100%	100%
RSH BS02: Percentage of dwellings with a valid Fire Risk Assessment	100%	100%
RSH BS03: Percentage of properties that require an annual asbestos inspection / survey	100%	100%
RSH BS04: Percentage of sites with valid legionella inspections certificate	100%	100%
RSH BS05: Percentage of domestic passenger lifts with an in date LOLER inspection	100%	100%

Source: Corporate Performance Report 2023/24 Quarter 2

- 3.47 Both the improved performance against Decent Homes and improved energy efficiency with homes is being supported by the continuing wider investment in improving the existing housing stock through the Major Refurbishment Contract, which is delivering improvements to more than 500 blocks with an extensive programme including roofing, doors and windows, emergency lighting and fire safety works.
- 3.48 Work with the Housing Repairs Improvement projects is also progressing, with a detailed improvement plan in place following both internal review and scrutiny of services. This will deliver improved performance and ensure value for value in future service delivery.
- 3.49 The Council adopted a new Housing Allocations in October 2023, the new policy reflects current legislation, good practice and guidance, work is now underway to implement the new policy, which will also meet the new Regulatory requirements.
- 3.50 Improvements have also been made to way in the Council as a landlord provides support and assistance for residents. In many cases the vulnerability of those households moving into social housing is increasing whilst the needs of existing tenants are often complex and diverse.
- 3.51 Enhancements and an increasing person-centred approach supported by pre-tenancy assessments, tailored support packages, and ongoing tenancy audits, combined with the location of the ASB teams within the housing management teams is supporting this approach. This work is building upon the high performing sheltered and supported housing services, which continue to develop with individual support plans, targeted supported for those hoarding and the need to sustain households in tenancies.
- 3.52 Work also continues in the approach to the collection of rental income and advice for tenants, with dedicated Welfare, Benefits and Debt advisors, who

provide targeted support to maximise household incomes and maintain high levels of rent collection.

3.53 The delivery of these programmes and projects has served to improve the Council position in advance of the new Regulatory regime

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

- 4.1 As a Registered Social Landlord Stevenage Borough Council is required to comply with the relevant requirements of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, along with the requirements of the RSH and the HOS. This section of the report identifies a number of workstreams and programmes, each of these give consideration to relevant options and considerations.
- 4.2 Key to meeting the new regulatory framework are the new Consumer Standards and although these remain proposed at the current time, the final standards are expected to closely mirror those that were consulted on by the Regulator.
- 4.3 Details of the Building Safety framework are in place and confirmed, whilst the Housing Ombudsmen Service's new Complaint Handling Code were published on 8 February 2024.
- 4.4 The process adopted by officers and Members has been to assess against the new and proposed standards and develop an action plan, which will be subject to on-going monitoring and review.
- 4.5 The initial stage has seen the completion of a 302-point self-assessment of current service provision arrangements against the new Consumer Standards using the Housing Quality Network's best practice toolkit.
- 4.6 From the self-assessment a number of actions have been identified relating to the following five standards: -
- Safety and Quality
 - Transparency, influence and accountability
 - Neighbourhoods and Community
 - Tenancy
 - Competence and Conduct
- 4.7 The High Level Action Plan as seen in Appendix 1, sets out details of the main actions to be taken under each of the standards and the proposed associated timescales.
- 4.8 A summary of the work being undertaken to ensure future compliance is set out below.
- 4.9 **Strategic Context and Oversight**
- 4.10 There is an expectation from the RSH that key Councillors and senior management will have a clear understanding of key issues within the service.

There also needs to be effective communication and integration across services with “single version of the truth”, which is set out within a clear strategic and policy framework.

- 4.11 It is recommended that an Executive Housing Working Group (EHWG) be established, which will include key Executive Members, the Strategic Director along with relevant Assistant Directors and Heads of Service. Initially the EHWG will not have decision making powers but members of the group do have their existing delegated powers that can be used when required. The focus of the group is to ensure Members are informed, advised and consulted on key housing issues and can receive assurance on compliance with legal and regulatory obligations. Terms of reference for the group can be seen in Appendix 2.
- 4.12 The EHWG will help develop the HRA Business Plan and housing policy framework, receive context and information reports on key services, whilst monitoring progress against the agreed action plan. It will also receive updates on other key workstreams and priority areas such as building safety, service transformation and performance.
- 4.13 In order to help provide transparency and consistency, work is underway to review, update and expand the current suite of housing policies, to ensure that they comply with legislative and regulatory requirements.
- 4.14 **Resident Engagement**
- 4.15 The Consumer Standard require social landlords to develop a culture of on-going and integrated customer involvement, which is wider than small groups which may have had a limited focus in the past.
- 4.16 In response a new Resident Engagement Strategy and Framework is being developed, which will be brought forward in consultation with residents. This will set out the way in which the Council involves residents which is accessible and suited to the needs and preferences of residents.
- 4.17 In order to ensure that the approach is fully compliant and reflects good practice the Council has engaged the services of TPAS, which is a nationally recognised specialist in this area, to support the development of the framework which will be presented to the Executive later in the year. This will ensure that residents have the best possible opportunity to scrutinise, monitor performance and service delivery, across those areas of the service which are most important to them.
- 4.18 Work is also underway on a High Rise Building Resident Engagement Strategy, as required under the Building Safety Act, which will set out how the Council will engage, consult and inform residents that live within the blocks around these issues.
- 4.19 **Complaint Handling**
- 4.20 Resident satisfaction with the delivery of services, and the way complaints are handled are a key focus area for the RSH and HOS. The new Act places the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code on a statutory basis from

April 2024, along with giving them the ability to intervene in delivery, with Annual reports to be published on landlords' performance.

- 4.21 In response to the changes a Corporate Task and Finish Group on Complaint Handling, which is chaired by the Assistant Director Corporate Digital and Transformation has been established. This group is updating the Councils Complaints Policy and reviewing the Corporate Complaint Handling ICT system, along with considering options for improvement, in order to meet the new requirements.
- 4.22 This group will also progress work to update procedures and will complete the Housing Ombudsman Self-Assessment against the Code, which will be reported to Members and published prior to 30 June 2024. Additional work is also underway to review or develop wider associated policies including those on equalities, reasonable adjustments, compensation and managing unacceptable behaviour.
- 4.23 Within the Housing Service the operational delivery of complaint handling is now subject to increased oversight, review and monitoring. This has been achieved in part by establishing a fortnightly Housing Complaints Handling Clinic with representation across the service and Chaired by the Strategic Director. This group has now reviewed all stage 2 and Housing Ombudsmen cases and in some cases has identified additional learning or interventions, it is also able to monitor trends, advise on interventions and maintain oversight.
- 4.24 Monitoring in line with the HOS's requirements is impacted by the limitations of the current Corporate Complaints System and so alternative provision has been put into place as an interim measure, until new software is identified and implemented.
- 4.25 An ongoing government focus on complaints in social housing, is expected to result in a future increase in cases. The area which is seeing the largest number of complaints is associated with repairs. A repairs improvement project is being delivered as part of the Corporate Transformation Programme in order to address the root causes of many of these issues and has been informed by the Community Select Committee's recently completed scrutiny review of the repairs service.
- 4.26 **Housing Stock – Safety and Quality**
- 4.27 Whilst forming part of the RSH Consumer Standards the quality and safety of the housing stock is also central to current and emerging building safety legislation, which is also expected to be reflected within the new Decent Homes Standard.
- 4.28 The Council has in place a comprehensive approach to ensure the safety of the housing stock, although developing and changing standards, regulation and guidance mean that services and approaches will continue to be adapted as required.
- 4.29 **Building Safety Compliance** - Work has been underway to improve services, data and operating procedures, as a result the most recent performance data which was reported as part of the Corporate Performance Scorecard in line with the RSH requirements, was that the percentage of gas certification, valid

Fire Risk Assessments and asbestos, legionella and lift inspections were all at 100%.

- 4.20 **Management of voids** – This is now part of the Housing Transformation Programme; this means that on-going work will be overseen by the Transformation Portfolio Board and the EHWG. A review of the Council’s Voids Service has been completed and a business case for the future delivery model is to be presented to the Executive for approval during June 2024. Improvements will result in improved customer satisfaction, improved housing quality, value for money and reduced turnaround times.
- 4.21 **Responsive Repairs** – This project is part of the Housing Transformation Programme for Housing and will also be managed through the same process as the voids improvement programme. A review of the Repairs Service has been completed and an improvement programme has been developed with the aim to deliver a more effective and efficient repairs service. This includes enhancing the Council’s inhouse Repairs Service and the implementation of a new contractor supply chain. The procurement of the new contractor framework will commence in March 2024 and the outcome will be reported to the Executive to enable contracts to be awarded in June/July 2024.
- 4.22 **Damp, Mould and Condensation** – This programme also falls under the Housing Transformation Programme and work continues to improve the detection, remedy and prevention of damp and mould. Awaab’s Law will impose specific timescales and processes in relation to reporting specified issues and may form part of the new Decent Homes Standard. This is being reflected within the Council’s improvement plan rather than waiting for secondary legislation to be passed.
- 4.23 Another area that forms part of the Housing Transformation Programme is **Housing ICT**, this area is of particular importance to the Council as housing software systems underpin all areas of service delivery. It is therefore essential that systems are utilised effectively and efficiently. This project will closely link not only with other transformation programmes but other areas of delivery and improvement, which in turn will contribute to on-going compliance with the RSH Consumer Standards.
- 4.24 **Service Standards**
- 4.25 As a registered social landlord the Council is required to clearly set out the type, level and extent of the services, support and assistance that it will provide to residents. In order to help provide this clarity, work is underway to develop service specific standards, which are to be developed in conjunction with residents and will need to be published.
- 4.26 The standards will set out what residents can expect along with details of how services can be accessed, feedback provided and how performance against these standards will be measured. The standards are being developed with the relevant managers across the housing service and will be presented to the Executive Housing Working Group in due course.
- 4.27 **Council Preparedness**
- 4.28 The new legislation and associated framework are introducing a new format and approach to regulation, as outlined within the report in a number of cases

the regulations are still emerging and will continue to do so over coming years. It is therefore essential that the strategic and performance structure of the service is set up in a way that will respond and develop as the framework develops. Building on the performance and outcome focused requirements whilst listening and responding to the needs and aspirations of residents.

- 4.28 Whilst good progress is being made by the Council there continues to be challenges and opportunities for the housing service to develop. As work progresses further updates and reports will be presented to the Executive not only on the overall approach but on individual workstreams and projects.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

- 5.1.1 Financial provision (where known) has been made within the HRA Budget for 2024/25 and resources allocated through the HRA Business Plan over the medium to longer term in response to the new legislation including the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and Fire and Building Safety regulations.
- 5.1.2 Any additional resourcing requirements arising from emerging regulations and supporting guidance will be reported through future Quarterly Budget Monitoring reports or via specific reports to the Executive and/or Council.

5.2 Legal Implications

- 5.2.1 This report sets out the requirements of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and the steps the Council is taking to meet those requirements. Relevant individual decisions will be considered on a project or programme basis and appropriate legal advice will be obtained at that time.

5.3 Risk Implications

- 5.3.1 This report sets out the requirements of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and the steps the Council is taking to meet those requirements. Relevant individual decisions on risk will be taken as part of the normal risk management process, it should be noted that relevant areas are currently monitored and updated through this process.

5.4 Policy Implications

- 5.4.1 As outlined within the report there are a number of areas where there is a need to review, update or develop policies. Where this is necessary the policies will be brought forward as part of the agreed policy framework for consideration.

5.5 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

- 5.5.1 The quality of the home and the requirement to have informed asset investment plans is a key feature of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023. Although this has been a requirement under previous legislation, the more vigorous enforcement of these requirements will promote the delivery of measures to make homes more thermally efficient and prepare for the Government's decarbonisation agenda. Further updates will be provided to Members once the specific requirements of the enhanced Decent Homes

Standard are known.

5.6 Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.6.1 The new Consumer Standards set out specific expectations for landlords on knowing their customers and how services should be delivered to them, based on their protected characteristics and any other identified need.
- 5.6.2 Compliance with the requirement of the Act will deliver improved services to all protected groups. Whilst this report is for information as service specific requirements are identified they will be developed in consultation with residents and in line with the relevant legislation and guidance.

5.7 Community Safety Implications

- 5.7.1 The report sets out the requirements of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and the steps the Council is taking to meet those requirements which include the approach to ASB, Hate Crime and Domestic Abuse. As outlined, there are a number of areas where there is a need to review, update or develop policies and service delivery. Where this is necessary the work will be developed as part of the agreed process for consideration.

5.8 Information Technology Implications

- 5.8.1 The report sets out the requirements of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and the steps the Council is taking to meet those requirements which include the use of data, systems and associated IT which support and enable delivery of the service. As outlined, there are a number of areas where there is a need to review, update or develop operational systems and future requirements will be captured within a Housing Systems Roadmap. Resources have been allocated within the HRA Budget 2024/25 to support the delivery of new systems and to further development existing software.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTATION

All documents that have been used in compiling this report, which may be available to the public are listed here:

- BD1 The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- BD2 Regulator of Social Housing proposed Consumer Standards
- BD3 Regulator of Social Housing TSM Tenant Survey Requirements
- BD4 Housing Ombudsmen Complaint Handling Code 2024
- BD5 HRA Business Plan 2024/25

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Draft Consumer Standards Action Plan

Appendix 2 - Executive Housing Working Group – Terms of Reference

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Appendix 1 - Proposed High-Level Action Plan Summary Table for Preparation for Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards

Standard and Element	PROPOSED TIME SCALES FOR COMPLETION
SAFETY & QUALITY STANDARD	
Stock Quality <i>Customer Outcome: An evidence-based understanding of the condition of homes that reliably informs the provision of good quality, well-maintained and safe homes for residents.</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update and revise the gathering of stock condition data and information to effectively inform investment decisions and operation delivery. 	Spring 2025
Decency <i>Customer Outcome: Residents' homes meet the standards set out in the Government's Decent Homes Standards</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise and update the Asset Management Strategy and HRA Business Plan to reflect the proposed new Decent Homes Standard 	Spring 2025 (Dependant upon the publication of the New Standard)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop new policies and procedures in response to Awaab's Law to reflect new investigation and remedy requirements. 	Autumn 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise and update the system for the gathering and monitoring of energy efficiency within the stock to reflect changes to the Governments Assessments process. 	Autumn 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a clear plan to achieve the Decarbonisation of Housing. 	Autumn 2024
Health & Safety <i>Customer Outcome: To ensure the health and safety of tenants in their homes and the communal areas.</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise and update Housing related Health and Safety Policies to reflect good practice and changing regulatory requirements to ensure assurance. 	Autumn 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt a High-Rise Resident Engagement Safety Strategy in line with changing standards. 	Summer 2024

Standard and Element	PROPOSED TIME SCALES FOR COMPLETION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update the arrangements for the oversight of Health and Safety Risk Management along with enhanced training and tracking in line with revised standards. 	Summer 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update and review high rise blocks condition assessments in-line with regulatory requirements. 	Spring 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update ICT systems and revised standards to ensure compliance and data quality. This will be delivered as part of the Corporate Transformation 	Spring 2025
Resident Engagement <i>Customer Outcome: To provide opportunities for residents to engage with and provide feedback on the safety of their homes and the services they receive from their landlord.</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update resident satisfaction surveys and feedback for repair and maintenance works. 	Summer 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a fast-track building safety reporting process in line with revised regulations 	Spring 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the opportunities for residents to be involved and scrutinise the repairs and maintenance services. Increase the involvement of residents 	Autumn 2024
Repairs, Maintenance and Planned Improvements <i>Customer Outcome: The provision of an effective, efficient and timely repairs, maintenance and planned improvements service.</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the current Repairs Improvement Project as part of the Corporate Transformation Programme 	Spring 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the information available to residents on their properties, including when and how works will be planned and undertaken. 	Spring 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the current Voids Improvement Project as part of the Corporate Transformation Programme 	Spring 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and revise property related policies and procedures to ensure compliance and good practice. 	Spring 2025
Customer Service <i>Customer Outcome: Improved understanding of the services that are provided and how the Council as a landlord is performing in providing these services.</i>	

Standard and Element	PROPOSED TIME SCALES FOR COMPLETION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and revise Customer Service Standard for key repairs and property related services with an agreed performance framework for each area. 	Summer 2024
<p>Damp, Mould and Condensation <i>Customer Outcome: To improve the identification, reporting and remedying of damp and mould that may occur within resident's homes.</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update policies and procedures for the reporting, monitoring and resolution of damp and mould cases to reflect developing good practice. 	Summer 2024
<p>Adaptations <i>Customer Outcome: To improve the assistance and support for residents requiring housing adaptations.</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise and update the policy and process to improve outcomes for residents. 	Autumn 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the arrangements for the allocation of adapted properties to reflect the new Allocations Policy and emerging good practice. 	Autumn 2024
<p>Taking the Lead (Oversight) <i>Customer Outcome: Improved oversight, understanding and awareness of the landlords role in delivering services</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the oversight and Governance of services meet the new standards including the development of a new framework for the internal management and oversight of services. 	Summer 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an enhanced management information and insight capability for Building quality and safety. 	Autumn 2024
<p>TRANSPARENCY, INFLUENCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARD</p>	
<p>Fairness and Respect <i>Customer Outcome: Increasing the opportunities and ways that residents can contact us. Where we engage with them to ensure we listen to them and treat them with fairly and with respect.</i></p>	

Standard and Element	PROPOSED TIME SCALES FOR COMPLETION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update the approach to Resident Engagement learning from good practice to develop a new Strategy and framework. 	Spring 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the new strategy and approach with improved opportunities for resident engagement, scrutiny, and involvement. 	Summer 2024
Diversity <i>Customer Outcome: Fair access to and equitable outcomes of housing services for residents.</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update the options for residents to contact and engage with services, having regard to the revised requirements and which that reflect the diverse needs and aspirations of residents. This Fair Access Initiative will be delivered through the Corporate Transformation Programme. 	Spring 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update training requirements for staff across housing services to raise awareness of and improve the understanding of the residents' diverse needs and situations that we work with to reflect good practice. 	Winter 2024
Engagement with Tenants <i>Customer Outcome: To improve the way that residents' views are taken into account in decision making about how services are delivered, and to provide them with information so they are clear as what to expect from services and to hold their landlord to account</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the management arrangements for the implementation of the new Resident Engagement Strategy, to ensure opportunities and engagement is made best use of. 	Summer 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the quality and range of information that is available to residents to allow them to make informed decisions and contributions to the management and development of services. 	Winter 2024
Performance Information <i>Customer Outcome: Improve availability of information and data to support the effective scrutiny by residents of their landlord's performance in delivering services.</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reflect and ensure compliance review and enhance the performance monitoring regime for services. 	Winter 2024

Standard and Element	PROPOSED TIME SCALES FOR COMPLETION
Complaints <i>Customer Outcome: An approach to complaints that ensures they are addressed fairly, effectively and promptly.</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To revise and update the Complaints and associated policies and procedures to reflect the New Code and Guidance. 	Spring 2024
NEIGHBOURHOODS AND COMMUNITY STANDARD	
Safer Neighbourhoods <i>Customer Outcome: To provide clarity on the responsibilities, approach, support and assistance available in deterring and tackling ASB, and domestic abuse for residents in social housing and how this is to be achieved with other agencies and organisations.</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review, revise and update policies and procedures that deal with ASB, Hate Crime and Domestic Abuse to reflect current guidance and regulations. Update training for relevant staff on the latest approaches. 	Winter 2025
TENANCY STANDARD	
Allocations and Lettings <i>Customer Outcome: Ensuring that social housing is allocated and let in a fair and transparent way that takes the needs of residents and prospective residents into account.</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the new Allocations Policy, along with updated service standards and performance regime. 	Summer 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an approach to under occupation, overcrowding and fraud prevention to support the new approach. 	Autumn 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and revise the Councils Tenancy Strategy and policy to reflect the revised standards, legislation, and regulations, including supporting processes. 	Spring 2025
Tenancy Sustainment	

Standard and Element	PROPOSED TIME SCALES FOR COMPLETION
<p>Customer Outcome: Supporting residents to maintain their tenancies, and if these are to end to clearly set out the reasons, support and assistance that may be offered, and the process to be followed. To ensure a consistent approach in the management of services, that is clearly set out and structured.</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update the approach to helping residents to sustain their tenancies and so prevent evictions. 	Summer 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update housing management policies and procedures to reflect good practice. 	Autumn 2024
<p>Tenure</p> <p>Customer Outcome: To set out the details of tenancies or terms of occupation which are compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, the needs of the household, and which meet the relevant standards</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update the Councils tenancy and other occupation agreements to ensure compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements. 	Spring 2025
<p>COMPETENCE AND CONDUCT</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure compliance with emerging standards and requirements review training and other requirements and develop programme of training and development to meet service needs and requirements. 	Autumn 2024 Subject to confirmation by the Government
<p><i>This plan is a high-level resume of the detailed Action Plan which has been developed following a gap analysis of the 302 elements within the Regulator of Social Housing's new Consumer Standards. The plan has been prepared having consideration to the published proposed standards, the Final Standards are yet to be published. Other regulations and guidance being introduced are still developing and so the plan will remain under review and is subject to change.</i></p>	

Executive Housing Working Group (EHWG)

Terms of Reference

February 2024

Strategic Context

The Council has set out its ambitions within the current 5 year plan which include:-

- **Co-operative Neighbourhood Management** to work with our communities to improve our neighbourhoods
- **Excellent Council Homes** to provide high quality homes to our tenants and leaseholders.
- **Connected to our Customers** to improve the accessibility of our services and the customer experience.

To support the achievement of these ambitions this Group will support a number of key services and initiatives that relate to the management, repair and maintenance of the council owned and managed homes and associated estate.

Aims and Purpose of the Group: -

- To provide strategic oversight of Council Housing Management Services and Roles.
- To support the ongoing improvement and delivery of services to residents.
- To review, monitor and scrutinise on a regular basis:-
 - Housing Service Performance data including (Tenant Satisfaction Measures)
 - Complaint Handling
 - Regulatory Compliance
 - Housing Risk Management
 - Health and Safety across all housing services
 - Resident Engagement
 - HRA Business Planning
- To consider and review relevant strategies, policies and processes to help deliver clarity and structure to improve service delivery.
- To consider and respond to feedback from residents as part of the Councils emerging Resident Engagement Strategy
- To undertake detailed reviews of key services, considering performance, service standards, feedback, learning and improvements.
- To provide challenge, drive learning and improvement, ensure the voice of residents is heard and acted upon and to ensure that regulatory and Statutory standards are understood and achieved.

Meetings

Meeting to be held every 4 weeks with dates arranged by Strategic Director's PA, and diarised for 2hrs. It is the responsibility of named attendees to ensure attendance or in cases of absence to nominate a deputy to attend.

Membership

- Cllr Thomas, Deputy Leader of the Council, (Housing & Housing Development) (Chair)
- Cllr Henry, Leader of the Council (Regeneration, Communities and Strategic Partnerships)
- Cllr Speller, (Environment and Performance)
- Richard Protheroe, Strategic Director
- Denise Lewis, Assistant Director
- Kerry Clifford, Assistant Director
- Karen Long, Head of Housing
- Andrew Garside, Head of Housing Asset Management
- Paul Connolly, Head of Repairs and Maintenance
- Sarah Pateman, Community Safety Manager
- Matthew Gough, Special Projects Lead Officer (Housing)

Standing Monthly Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Actions from last Meeting
3. Review of last months PI summary
4. Monthly Complaint summary
5. Housing Health and Safety
6. Service review, dive report or update
7. Any other Business

Standing Quarterly Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Actions from last Meeting
3. Quarterly PI report
4. Quarterly Complaint report
5. Quarterly Health and Safety report
6. Housing Improvement Plan update
7. Regulatory update
8. Any other Business

Accountability

- All clinic members are accountable for all actions assigned to them at the meeting and must ensure that action updates are reported back to the clinic by the agreed timeframe.
- The nominated leads for reports and or updates will be responsible for the timely completion of these reports which will then be provided to the Strategic Director's PA for circulation in advance of the meeting.
- Monthly and quarterly reports will be prepared which will summarise activities throughout the previous period.
- Where the Group considers that an issue or matter should be escalated or considered by the Executive, Audit Committee, Corporate Risk Group it will make a recommendation that this takes place.
- Annual Report will be prepared jointly by the Assistant Directors and submitted to group in June of each year. The report will highlight the actions agreed and completed, a summary of outcomes of the group to demonstrate the Groups achievements. The report will be shared with the Senior Leadership Team and our residents for their scrutiny and consideration.

Meeting Executive
Portfolio Area All
Date 13 March 2024



CORPORATE PERFORMANCE QUARTER THREE 2023/24

KEY DECISION

Authors Chloe Pullen
Sally Norman
Suzanne Brightwell

Contributor Strategic Leadership Team

Lead Officers Matt Partridge | 2456
Richard Protheroe | 2938

Contact Officer Richard Protheroe | 2938

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To highlight the Council's performance across key priorities and projects for Quarter 3 2023/24 and provide an update on progress against the suite of Community Measures, Cost-of-Living support for residents and current strategic risks.
- 1.2 For Members information, a presentation will be provided at the Executive meeting which will cover updates in relation to delivery against Corporate Plan Priorities and the key themes emerging from the Quarter 3 performance data.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the service performance against 35 corporate performance measures and delivery of key milestones in Quarter 3 2023/24 through the Future Town Future Council Programme (Appendix A) be noted.

- 2.2 That the Council’s performance as demonstrated through the 13 Community Measures (Appendix B) be noted.
- 2.3 That the performance challenges in relation to voids (section 4.4.2) be noted, and the planned measures to improve performance be endorsed.
- 2.4 That the strategic risk updates (section 4.8) be noted.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In July 2023, the Executive agreed to the continuation of the strategic priorities of the Future Town Future Council (FTFC) Corporate Plan for another year. To ensure that the Council’s approach to performance management in 2023/24 remains representative of existing and future programmes of work, the corporate performance suite was also updated to reflect resident priorities and new regulatory and legislative housing requirements. Members will be aware that the new Making Stevenage Even Better Corporate Plan was approved for implementation at Council on the 21st February 2024. Reporting against the new Corporate Plan will commence from quarter one 2024/25.
- 3.2 The Council’s approach to performance management indicates a clear link between performance and the strategic objectives in the FTFC Corporate Plan. By aligning performance measures and milestones under the 5 strategic priorities a ‘golden thread’ linking what the Council delivers, to the fulfilment of its strategic outcomes can be clearly seen. By taking this approach, the Council is seeking to simplify and streamline how performance monitoring and progress is communicated to Members and residents.
- 3.3 In addition, to ensure that the Council’s continued planned significant investment (£24.6 million) in its social housing stock in 2023/24 is appropriately highlighted, in July 2023 the Executive agreed to amend the FTFC priority of ‘More Social and Affordable Housing’ to include a focus on the provision of good quality homes. Therefore, the strategic priority of ‘More Social and Affordable Housing’ has been amended to include ‘Good Quality’ (see Figure 1).



Fig 1.

- 3.4 The Council is committed to the delivery of its priorities and its local services, to the benefit of local residents and businesses. This is challenging in a very competitive, employee-driven market and there is a risk that not being able to retain, attract and recruit the right people and skills at all levels could continue to impact on the Council’s capacity to deliver all of its priorities as well as provide core services and implement new government legislation. The Council is

continually reviewing its recruitment and retention approaches to strive to ensure it maintains the right capacity, skills, values and experience amongst staff at all levels.

- 3.5 The new Corporate Performance Suite for 2023/24 contains 35 measures which are aligned with the 5 FTFC strategic priorities. The 35 measures are complemented by 64 statutory and local measures which will be managed internally and overseen by the Strategic Leadership Team.
- 3.6 The Council's streamlined approach to performance management and monitoring allows the organisation to proactively identify issues and challenges and ensure prompt management intervention. The fluid nature of the framework enables the Senior Leadership Team to proactively adapt service delivery models, where necessary, and support and drive forward additional improvements in services when required.
- 3.7 There are 17 baseline measures within the corporate performance suite. The majority of these reflect the increased regulation and focus on housing compliance in 2023/24. These measures will provide a starting point from which to assess and compare performance in future. The remaining 18 measures are relevant to the Council's focus on what matters to residents and progress against the FTFC objectives.
- 3.8 Within the suite of measures, there are 13 'Community Measures', which focus specifically on 4 themes: climate change; anti-social behaviour; provision and maintenance of homes; and delivery of good local services. The 4 themes have been identified in response to analysis of resident engagement and tenants' surveys between 2021 and 2023 and seek to highlight what really matters to residents. The survey analysis is presented alongside the Quarter 3 performance in Appendix B. Progress against the Community Measure themes will be shared with residents through the delivery of engaging social media campaigns throughout the year.
- 3.9 It is important that where targets are reprofiled mid-year the changes and the rationale are set out. The 'RP01a: Percentage of homes maintained as decent against national minimum Decent Homes standard' has been revised to reflect the latest profile of the planned programme of decent homes works for Qtr 3 (84.77%). This reprofiling does not reduce the Council's overall decent homes target for 23/24 and it is anticipated that the full year figure will be exceeded in Qtr 4. Performance against this measure will be monitored closely in Qtr 4 and further work will be undertaken with services as part of the annual performance cycle review to establish the targets for 24/25.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED ACTIONS AND OTHER OPTIONS

4.1 QUARTER THREE CORPORATE PERFORMANCE

- 4.1.1 As outlined in section 3, the corporate performance suite has been aligned with the five FTFC priorities set out in Figure 1. In addition, during 2023/24 progress against performance measures has been presented alongside key programme milestones. By taking this mixed-method approach, the Council has presented a holistic overview of its performance activity. This helps demonstrate to residents that the Council is on track to deliver key projects, programmes and

service improvements associated with FTFC, as well as highlighting performance against key service delivery targets.

4.1.2 Key highlights from the FTFC programmes are summarised in section 4.2. For further information on the aims and objectives of the FTFC programme in 2023/24 please refer to FTFC Plan on a Page, which was presented to the Executive in July 2023 as Appendix B of the Quarter Four Corporate Performance Executive report: [Future Town Future Council Summary \(stevenage.gov.uk\)](https://www.stevenage.gov.uk).

4.1.3 The total number of measures by Red, Amber & Green (RAG) rating is shown in Figure 2 below. For the purposes of this report only commentary for Red Status measures is provided. The full set of current corporate performance measures results and FTFC milestones are attached at Appendix A.

FTFC Programme	Baseline measure for 2023-24	Meeting or exceeding target	Amber Status (Within a manageable tolerance)	Red Status (Urgent improvement action required)	Unavailable Data	Milestones Reported Qtr. 3
More Social Affordable and Good Quality Homes (19 measures)	8	10	0	1	0	8
Transforming Our Town (0 measures)	The primary focus of this strategic priority is FTFC programme delivery. Performance is monitored through delivery of project milestones. Please see section 4.2.					17
Co-operative Neighbourhoods (3 measures)	3	-	-	-	0	4
A Clean, Green, Safe and Thriving Town (7 measures)	5	1	0	0	1	17
Balancing the Budget (6 measures)	1	4	1	0	0	13
TOTAL (35)	17	14	1	1	1	59

Fig 2.

4.1.4 At the time of writing this report only one indicator (household waste) cannot be reported in Quarter 3. This is because this measure is calculated via an external source and can only be reported once the outturn figures are received. The data for Quarter 2 is now available and was green.

4.1.5 The Performance Team are now reviewing the Corporate Performance suite in preparation for the new financial year alongside Assistant Directors, Service

Managers and the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Performance. The results of this work are expected to be presented to the Executive in July 2024.

4.2 FTFC PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

4.2.1 All programmes have made progress on the projects agreed at the Executive in July 2023, with highlights including:

- Public consultation was held for the Oval which generated over 7,000 responses in total. A planning application has now been submitted, which included plans to build 250 dwellings and improve the public realm amongst other commercial units.
- Both the Helston House and Kenilworth Close developments were handed over and completed. Helston House comprises of 29 two and three bed apartments, whilst Kenilworth Close includes 31 houses, 57 flats, 88 independent living homes, 7 shops and a new indoor community space.
- In November an event was held in partnership with Stevenage FC, Samaritans and Everyone Active at The Lamex stadium on a matchday. This launched the 'Real People, Real Stories' project to highlight support available and promoting the seeking of support when needed. Following on from the event a legacy project called 'On Your Side', has been developed in partnership with Stevenage FC Foundation which will benefit from mental health support delivered by MIND.
- As part of the Stevenage Works Skills Framework, a first cohort of young people aged 16-18 has been engaged in a programme to inspire careers in Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) delivered through STEMPOINT EAST. Building on this, a second cohort of 13-15 year olds will support development of the model moving into Phase Two of the Pioneering Young STEM Futures (PYSF) programme. Progress on this programme has been shared with the Mission44 Youth Advisory Board.
- As a commitment to the actions set out in the Council's Climate Change Strategy (2020) it was agreed that the Council will switch the fuel for its fleet to HVO (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil) fuel during the next financial year (2024/25). In addition, a roadmap to replace the current fleet with low carbon vehicles was outlined with small cars and vans due to be replaced in 2025, light duty vehicles in 2027, and HGVs in 2028.
- Construction has started on the Gridserve Stevenage Charging Service Station. This is due for completion by the end of 2024. Once completed, 34 electric vehicles will be able to charge simultaneously.
- Two Community Climate Change Fund (formerly known as Dragon's Den) were approved this quarter – The Elliot Road community garden and the Peartree shops water butt and flowerbed.
- The Customer Service Centre (CSC) was relocated to the reception at Daneshill House. The aim of this change was to create a single access point to the building for residents and to better connect up the services that they need.

4.2.2 A pilot for telephony automation to help direct customers to online services for transactional enquiries has been introduced. Data indicates that 42% of Revs and Bens phone enquiries and 72% of customers enquiring about Waste and Environmental services have been successfully transferred, ensuring that

customers can efficiently access the information they need when they want it. Service performance highlights for Quarter 3 include:

- Over 91% of Council services non-housing complaints were responded to within deadline (target 75%)
- 91.6% of customers accessing the Customer Service Centre (CSC) were satisfied with the service (the highest satisfaction level since Quarter 3 2021/22)

4.2.3 Further details on the projects included in the FTFC programmes and corporate highlights can be found in Appendix A.

4.3 COMMUNITY MEASURE HIGHLIGHTS

4.3.1 As mentioned in section 3.7, in July 2023 the Executive agreed to a focus on resident priorities as expressed through 13 'Community Measures', specifically: anti-social behaviour; climate change; provision and maintenance of homes; and delivery of good local services. The Novoville/PropTech (2022/23), Resident Survey (2021) and Tenants Survey (2021) analysis has been provided alongside the Quarter 3 data to help provide context (see Appendix B).

4.3.2 The 'Key Facts' section of Appendix B is updated each quarter to provide Members and Residents with a clear oversight of performance in the areas that matter to them most. The intention is that these short statements will inform discussion and help drive improvement. Progress in these areas will then be shared more widely through engaging social media campaigns and promotion through the Council website and the Chronicle magazine.

4.3.3 Community Measure performance highlights for Quarter 3 include:

Anti-Social Behaviour

- **There has been a 22.9% decrease in ASB cases** when comparing Quarter 3 in 2023/24 with the same period last year. This decrease is in response to the strong joint working between the Council and partners through the SoSafe Partnership. This includes proactive policing evidenced through initiatives such as the 'Clear, Hold, Build' programme which will result in the development of locally led plans to tackle ASB.
- In Quarter 3, **77% of ASB cases resulted in successful resolution**, in comparison to 26% in Quarter 2. The increase in successful resolution in Quarter 3 is as an outcome of an internal review of enforcement processes and inclusion of preventative resolution methods. An example of prevention may be a conversation with a tenant prior to Notice being issued for breach of tenancy. This preventative approach is a key tool in the Council's approach to tackling ASB.

Provision and Maintenance of Homes

- The Council has provided **401 new homes since 2014 with an accumulative target of 485 in place for Quarter 4**. The Council's proactive approach to building new homes is underpinned by its ability to turnaround planning applications within statutory targets. In Qtr 3 the Council continues to demonstrate good performance in this area:

- **66.7% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks**
- **100% of minor applications determined within 8 weeks**
- **97.4% of other applications determined within 8 weeks.**

Good Local Services

- Under its new leisure contract management arrangement with Everyone Active, the Council is keen to see young people participating in outreach programmes. In Quarter 3, **15,141 children used Everyone Active facilities and participated in programmes.** Everyone Active delivered a range of projects and activities aimed at under 16 year olds in Quarter 3. These include:
 - 4217 swimming lessons
 - 3338 casual swim sessions
 - 900 martial art sessions
 - 900 dance fitness classes
- In 2022/23, 21.4% of residents indicated that access to Services (e.g., Council house maintenance, customer services, waste collection etc) was of importance. In Quarter 3 **99.67% of waste bins were emptied.**

4.4 PERFORMANCE MEASURES – AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

4.4.1 As highlighted in Figure 2, one voids measure has been identified for improvement. Figure 3 below outlines the actual performance and the target that was set for the performance measure. The paragraphs that follow set out the reasons why performance has been below expectation in Quarter 3 and the activities in place to seek to achieve target for Quarter 4.

<u>MEASURE NAME</u>	<u>BUSINESS UNIT</u>	Actual – Quarter 1 2023/24 YTD	Target – Quarter 1 2023/24 YTD	Actual – Quarter 2 2023/24 YTD	Target – Quarter 2 2023/24 YTD	Actual – Quarter 3 2023/24 YTD	Target – Quarter 3 2023/24 YTD	Target – Quarter 4 2023/24 YTD
More Social, Affordable and Good Quality Homes								
RV3: Number of Voids returned by contractor	Housing Property Services	104	150	110	150	77	195	173

Fig.3

RV3: Number of Voids returned by Contractor

4.4.2 To provide insight into voids backlog performance and keep track of progress, the Council monitors the number of voids provided to its Contractor and compares this to the number of voids returned. The Contractor started work on the voids programme at the end of January 2023. In Quarter 1 2023, the decision was taken to pause the voids programme for a period of time to allow the Council and its Contractor to review arrangements. The voids programme was remobilised in Quarter 2, with a commitment made by the Contractor to increase resourcing with an intention to expedite clearance of the voids backlog.

4.4.3 In Quarter 3, 63 new void properties were returned to the Council by tenants, of which, 58 were assigned to our Contractor, this is in addition to the 109 assigned in Quarter 2. Despite the Contractors best endeavours to put a supply chain in place, only 77 properties were returned (compared to 92 in Quarter 2). In order to seek to improve performance the following action has been taken:

- During the latter part of Quarter 3 the team started to trial the use of some alternative Contractors to test their capacity to deliver against the Council's void specification and timescales
- Based on outcomes from the trial the decision has been taken, in consultation with our existing Contractor, to move from a single main contractor to multiple Contractors
- All new voids will be allocated to the 4 new Contractors in order to reduce the number of Voids by Quarter 4
- The team are currently in the process of working with the existing Contractor with a view to completing the remaining backlog of 45 voids before the end of February 2024
- Internally the team have reviewed the way we manage the delivery of voids to ensure that there is full accountability and ownership by the team/individuals going forward – this has also included some additional staffing resource. This is now part of the Corporate Transformation Programme; and on-going work will be overseen by the Transformation Portfolio Board
- A review of the Council's Voids Service has been completed and a business case for the future delivery model will be presented to the Executive for approval early 2024/25. Improvements will result in improved customer satisfaction, improved housing quality, value for money and reduced turnaround times.

4.4.4 In addition to the review of the Council's Voids service, and following completion of the external Ridge review, an improvement programme has been developed with the aim of delivering a more effective and efficient repairs service. This includes enhancing the Council's inhouse Repairs Service and the implementation of a new contractor supply chain. The procurement of the new contractor framework will commence in March 2024 and the outcome will be reported to the Executive to enable contracts to be awarded in June/July 2024.

4.5 COST OF LIVING

4.5.1 Following approval of the Cost of Living (CoL) Action Plan in October 2022, a number of activities were mainstreamed into service delivery across the Council and with partners. This recognises there is a significant amount of "business as usual" activity for the Council and partners that is specifically targeted at supporting people facing financial, housing and other difficulties. This approach also recognises that the crisis will continue for some time, impacting people in different ways at different times.

4.5.2 One of the key mechanisms for supporting residents impacted by Cost of Living is through monitoring rent arrears and providing timely support to tenants, Case management is provided by the Income Officers, with tenants signposted to support provided by the Welfare Benefit and Debt Advice Team, and partners such as Citizens Advice. The team is also proactively supporting tenants to access the Alternative Payment Arrangement mechanism when required. To further enhance these services, the Council have recruited an Income Officer to

support households in Emergency and Temporary Accommodation. The dedicated support for tenants from this role will help ensure that more intense support and case management can be provided. The Council continues to promote its Council Tax Support Scheme to residents.

- 4.5.3 A vital component of CoL activities has been the co-ordination of Council and community services. Vineyard Foodshed run by the Vineyard Church, is the main foodbank for residents and the Council provide regular grants from the Household Support Fund and have previously provided them with emergency storage and transport of food. In addition, several initiatives have been set-up using Local Community Budgets (LCB), including an activity with Grace Community Church in Shephall and support for their partnership with Barnardo's children's centres.
- 4.5.4 The Council are also providing funding to Holy Trinity, St Hugh and St John Churches and the Salvation Army for their warm space cafés and craft clubs. Dedicated pages covering the Stevenage Warm Spaces Network (launched in November 2022) are regularly updated and information is also promoted via community noticeboards, direct mail, the Chronicle magazine and through Community Associations, recognising that not all residents have digital means to access information.

4.6 TENANCY SATISFACTION MEASURES

- 4.6.1 In addition to the 10 housing compliance measures introduced in response to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) requirements, the Council are also required to report against 12 Tenancy Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). The purpose of the TSM's is to understand tenants' satisfaction with the provision of Council services in relation to tenant engagement, home maintenance, repairs, ASB, complaint handling and communal spaces. An independent research company have been commissioned to undertake the survey and the findings will be presented to the Executive in Q1 2024/25.

4.7 OFFICE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT (OFLOG)

- 4.7.1 In July 2023, a new performance body, the Office for Local Government (OfLoG) was launched by the Government with the stated aim to increase understanding of local government performance; support improvements, highlight excellence and identify risks of failure. Alongside this a consultation on draft Best Value Duty (BV) guidance was launched. The statutory BV Duty is set out under section 26 of the Local Government Act (1999) and requires local authorities to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness".
- 4.7.2 A key component of the BV Guidance is the use of OfLoG metrics to help inform understanding of BV compliance and provide insight into Councils that might be at risk. The metrics cover adult social care; adult skills; waste and finance; roads; business and economic growth; waste management; corporate & finance; and planning. Of these, 18 metrics are applicable to the Council. Subject to approval, the intention is that all 18 OfLoG metrics will be included in the Council's corporate performance suite for 2024/25, this will be alongside existing regulatory and locally agreed Key Performance Indicators, and a report to the Executive will follow in June 2024

4.8 STRATEGIC RISK

- 4.8.1 The strategic risks were considered by Corporate Risk Group on 5 February 2024, and agreed by the Senior Leadership Team on 20 February 2024 and will be considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting on 26 March 2024.
- 4.8.2 The Audit Committee receives a detailed Strategic Risk Report each quarter. The report to Audit Committee considers the actions which have been identified to mitigate each of the identified risks and the progress of those actions identifying whether actions are on track. Changes to the way risk is managed at the Council are also highlighted and considered by the Audit Committee. Where the Committee raises specific concerns about the risks or the process for managing them, these are highlighted to Executive within this quarterly report.

HIGHLIGHTED RISKS

- 4.7.4 There were no changes to any risk scores this quarter. Work continues to progress the actions to mitigate high and very high risks. For further information on the mitigations in place please contact the Policy & Performance Team at policy@stevenage.gov.uk.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1.1 There are no direct financial implications from the recommendations contained in this report. However, officers responsible for delivering the priorities over the coming year and implementing any improvement activity set out within this report will need to identify and consider any resulting financial implications. Any financial impact of the under/over achievement of Corporate Performance Indicators will be reported as part of the Quarterly Monitoring report.

5.2 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.2.1 There are no direct legal implications from the recommendations contained in this report. However, officers responsible for delivering the priorities over the coming year and implementing any improvement activity set out within this report will need to identify and consider any resulting legal implications.

5.3 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.3.1 There are no direct equality, diversity and inclusion implications arising from this report. Where required, Equality Impact Assessments will be completed for programmes, projects, service changes and improvement activity identified.

5.4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.4.1 There are no direct significant risks to the Council in agreeing the recommendation(s). However, officers responsible for implementing any improvement activity set out within this report will need to consider any risk implications that arise.

5.4.2 The Council has an embedded approach to risk management that mitigates any adverse effect on delivery of the Council's objectives and internal control processes and provides good governance assurance.

5.5 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

5.5.1 The Council declared a climate change emergency in June 2019 with a resolution to work towards a target of achieving net zero emissions by 2030. There are no direct climate change implications arising from this report, except for those activities that seek to have a positive impact in this area, and the officers responsible for delivering the improvements will need to identify and address any climate change considerations in the implementation of activities.

5.6 OTHER CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

5.6.1 Implementing the priorities and improvement activity outlined in this report may impact on the development of future policy or procedure, which will be monitored through the formal policy/procedure sign-off process via the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

6 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- [Strategic Risk Register \(Part II Audit Committee Report\)](#)
- [FTFC Plan on a Page](#)

7 APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Compendium of Performance Results Quarter Three 2023/24
- Appendix B: Community Measures Quarter Three 2023/24

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Corporate Performance Report 2023/24

Quarter 3 (October, November, December)



Key to Performance Status Symbols

- Red** - Focus of Improvement
- Amber** - Initial Improvement Activity Identified
- Green** - Achieving Target
- Pink** - Baseline Measure

APPENDIX A

Key to Milestone Status Symbols

- Will slip more than 1 quarter
- Slipped but to be completed within next quarter
- On track
- Completed

More Social, Affordable and Good Quality Homes

	Actual - Quarter 3 2022/23 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2022/23 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2023/24 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2023/24 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2023/24 YTD	Target Quarter 3 2023/4 YTD	Target - Quarter 4 2023/24 YTD	Comments
BV213: Homelessness preventions	191.00	242.00	27.00	97.00	156.00	150.00	200.00	31/12/2023 Despite staffing issues, continued long term sickness and multiple staff leaving the team, we have been able to prevent 156 homeless cases in Qtr3. In addition, the team have continued to face poor availability of private rented sector units, and affordability issues due to the cost of living crisis, which has made preventative work challenging. To help improve this figure and support the team to tackle these challenges we are currently recruiting an apprentice to assist Housing Options. This will provide staff with more time to tackle complex case work and less administrative based tasks.
HDD1d: Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) by the Council (since 2014)	335.00	336.00	339.00	394.00	401.00	397.00	485.00	
HDD1e: Number of affordable homes delivered by the Council (current quarter)	5.00	1.00	3.00	55.00	5.00	3.00	88.00	
HDD1f: Number of private homes provided			0.00	33.00	35.00	33.00	50.00	

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More Social, Affordable and Good Quality Homes










	More Social, Affordable and Good Quality Homes							Comments
	Actual - Quarter 3 2022/23 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2022/23 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2023/24 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2023/24 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2023/24 YTD	Target Quarter 3 2023/4 YTD	Target - Quarter 4 2023/24 YTD	
Let1: Number of days to let a General Needs property from ready to let			24.00	22.00	29.00			31/12/2023 Novembers monthly lets included a number of hard to let properties that increased the average by considerable amounts. Q3 also saw another large amount of refusals (3 or 4 refusals per refused properties) each new applicant is required to send verification proofs which take 5 working days to be returned and then letting can be arranged. In Q3 we received 23 refusals (3 or 4 refusals per refused property) which impacted the number of days to let a general needs property. The refusal reason varied and not all were in response to condition, with some new builds also refused.
Let2: Number of days to let an Independent Living property from ready to let			56.50	147.00	100.00			31/12/2023 The Council have a number of IL properties that are very difficult to let and this has a significant impact on average performance. This includes 3 hard to let studios that are small and cannot be converted and 2 first floor unlifted one bedroom properties. 6 of the 44 properties let in Quarter 3 were a result of downsizing, this includes co-ordinating removals which adds addition time to turn these around. Meeting the Council's downsizing goals has a knock on effect but 1 x 4 bed, 3 x 3 bed and 2 x 2 bed properties were returned to general needs housing stock. As the properties have been empty for some time there is an inevitable increase in the time reported to let void sheltered properties. The team have a good awareness of these 'historical' sheltered properties and a number have been identified for conversion, for example using communal cupboard space or communal bathrooms to convert studios into 1 bed properties. As part of the bi-annual review of corporate measures, work is underway to address the impact that the inclusion of 'historical' voids has on understanding overall performance and any changes to how performance is monitored will be reported to the Executive in Qtr 4. In addition to the anomalies within the reporting methodology, it is also important to mention that those IL properties that are desirable will usually take longer to let compared to a general needs property due to the support 'handholding' and arranging of removals, that said where the team are able to identify prospective residents early in the void process they will and this helps speed up the turnaround.
RP01a: Percentage of homes maintained as decent against national minimum DH standard	80.07%	78.74%	82.44%	84.39%	84.77%	85.00%	83.47%	31/12/2023 Please refer to section 3.9 of the Q3 exec report
RSH BS01: Percentage of dwellings with a valid gas certificate	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	
RSH BS02: Percentage of dwellings with a valid Fire Risk Assessment	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	
RSH BS03: Percentage of properties that require an annual asbestos inspection / survey	n/r	n/r	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	



















More Social, Affordable and Good Quality Homes

	More Social, Affordable and Good Quality Homes							Comments
	Actual - Quarter 3 2022/23 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2022/23 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2023/24 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2023/24 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2023/24 YTD	Target Quarter 3 2023/4 YTD	Target - Quarter 4 2023/24 YTD	
RSH BS04: Percentage of sites with valid legionella inspections certificate	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	
RSH BS05: Percentage of domestic passenger lifts with an in date LOLER inspection	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	
RSH CH01 (part 2): Number of stage two complaints made by tenants			25	49	65			31/12/2023 CUMULATIVE MEASURE
RSH CH01 (part1): Number of stage one complaints made by tenants			300	550	739			31/12/2023 CUMULATIVE MEASURE
RSH CH02 (part1): Number of stage one complaints made by tenants and responded to within CH timescal			203	381	557			31/12/2023 CUMULATIVE MEASURE The proportion of stage 1 Repairs complaints handled on time has increased from Q2 to Q3. This has significantly improved the overall performance picture. This increase has been supported in part by loan of resource temporarily from the corporate team to Repairs.
RSH CH02 (part2): Number of stage two complaints made by tenants and responded to within the CH time			11	18	30			31/12/2023 CUMULATIVE MEASURE The number of stage 2 has reduced following the lower number of stage 1 complaints. The proportion of complaints going to stage 2 has remained consistent between 8-10% this year, meaning that stage 1 responses are successfully resolving customer concerns in 90% of cases. Delays to responding to stage 2 complaints are mainly in the Repairs service, with only around half being dealt with within 20 working days, albeit the quantities remain small.
RSH Rep1: Percentage of emergency responsive repairs completed within target timescale			88%	87%	84%			31/12/2023 In Quarter 3, data integrity checks to validate the data being reported have been undertaken. This shows that 333 of 393 emergency jobs were completed in target timescales. As a baseline measure, this revised data will be used to help shape performance targets for 2024/25.
RSH Rep2: Percentage of non-emergency (Routine and Urgent) responsive repairs completed within target			83%	86%	91%			31/12/2023 In Quarter 3, data integrity checks to validate the data being reported have been undertaken. This shows that 4106 of 4511 non emergency jobs were completed in target timescales. As a baseline measure, this revised data will be used to help shape performance targets for 2024/25.
RV3: Number of Voids returned by Contractor			104	110	77	195	173	31/12/2023 In Quarter 3, there were 63 new void properties returned to the Council by tenants, of which, 58 voids were assigned to our Contractor, this is in addition to the 109 assigned in Quarter 2. Despite the Contractors best endeavours to put a supply chain in place, only 75 properties were returned (compared to 92 in Quarter 2). Please see section 4.4.3 of the Executive Report for further information.

	Performance	Comments
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brent Court Garages - Start on site		31 Dec 2023 Alternate contract arrangements due to be in place shortly to enable works on site to begin.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cartref - Consultation and Planning Application		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cartref - Contractor Procurement		31 Dec 2023 Following the submission of Planning, procurement of a contractor is scheduled to take place over the course of Q4.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Helston House - Handover		31 Dec 2023 Scheme handed over and complete.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kenilworth Close - A1 Handover		31 Dec 2023 Scheme handed over and complete.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Authority Housing Fund Scheme - Delivery of 6-12 new homes under funding offer from DHLUC		31 Dec 2023 11 homes have completed and the final property is due for completion in February 2024
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Oval - Planning application submitted		31 Dec 2023 Planning application submitted on 22nd December.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Oval - Public Consultation		31 Dec 2023 Final consultations held over course of October.


Transforming Our Town




	Performance	Comments
 Arts & Heritage Trail - Consultation		31 Dec 2023 Four underpasses in close proximity to the town centre have been identified for improvement with HCC agreeing to murals there. Design development and community engagement will continue until the pre-election period starts. Progress has been made on the artist brief for new artwork commissions in collaboration with the culture team and Junction 7 Creatives.
 Arts & Heritage Trail - Finalise scope		31 Dec 2023 Design development and community engagement will continue until the pre-election period starts. Working with potential contractors to support the delivery. Finalisation of spec is anticipated for Q4.
 Arts & Heritage Trail - Procurement		31 Dec 2023 Shared legal services have been contacted to be able to determine where new pieces of public art could go. Procurement of the other elements within this project will likely be carried out by HCC via an accountable body agreement.
 Cycling Connectivity - Finalise scope		31 Dec 2023 Routes provided by Cycling UK Stevenage have been appraised and shared with relevant stakeholders.
 Garden Square - options appraisal		31 Dec 2023 Work continues with partners to finalise the scope of this project
 Museum - Business Plan		31 Dec 2023 Working closely with partners regarding the progression of the design of the facility to inform the business plan. Work on the Audience development plan/ consultation is ongoing.
 Public realm - Consultation		31 Dec 2023 A survey has been issued to indoor market traders along with illustrative images of the proposed scheme on Market Square. The results will be analysed and incorporated in to the designs which will then be shared with relevant internal stakeholders and Members.
 Public realm - Planning		31 Dec 2023 The scope has identified planning permission is no longer required.

	Performance	Comments
 SG1 - Plot A (Swingate House) Construction Legal & Executive decision		31 Dec 2023 Ongoing work relating to the Joint Venture with development partner Mace, looking to be on site within Q4.
 SITEC - Scope agreed and Options Appraisal		31 Dec 2023 Work continues with partners to finalise the scope of this project.
 Sport & Leisure Hub Design - Consultation		31 Dec 2023 The early stage consultation with the public was carried out in November. The team are working on analysing the results to be fed back via social media prior to pre-election period.
 Sport & Leisure Hub Design - Design begins		31 Dec 2023 Work on going with partners to prepare for design development to begin. Anticipated start is Q4
 Sport & Leisure Hub Funding options - Land Assembly strategy confirmed		31 Dec 2023 On going discussions with partners regarding land associated with the scheme.
 Station Gateway Masterplan - Defined specification		
 Station Gateway Masterplan - Procurement of technical experts		31 Dec 2023 Partnership being explored with English Cities Fund, made up of Muse, Homes England and Legal and General to deliver a masterplan for the Station Gateway major opportunity area.
 Stevenage Development Board - Agree workplan and governance format for 22/23 onwards		
 Towns Fund - April 23 - September 23 -December Submission to Central Government		31 Dec 2023 The monitoring and evaluation for April-September 23 was successfully submitted to Central Government on 4th December 23.

	Co-operative Neighbourhoods							Comments
	Actual - Quarter 3 2022/23 ytd	Actual - Quarter 4 2022/23 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2023/24 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2023/24 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2023-24 (YTD)	Target - Quarter 3 2023/24 YTD	Target - Quarter 4 2023/24 YTD	
CD1 Number of people engaged in Cooperative Neighbourhood 'Community & Place' initiatives			1,700	3,400	5,100		2,000	CUMULATIVE MEASURE Whilst this measure has not seen growth in previous quarters, we expect this to grow significantly by the end of the year and are still on track to hit the target of 4,000 by March 2025.
CWLS1: Everyone Active - Number of children (under 16) participating in facilities and outreach prog			22,139	19,804	15,141			Under its new leisure arrangement with Everyone Active, the Council are keen to see young people participating in outreach programmes. In Quarter 3 the footfall for under 16's using Everyone Active facilities and programmes was 15,141. Footfall included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4,127 swimming lessons • 3,338 casual swim sessions • 900 martial art sessions • 900 dance fitness classes The performance for this measure has declined since Quarter 1, the main contributing factor for this is seasonal variation. In Quarter 1 school swimming is high, this declines in Q2 due to summer holidays and then is impacted in Q3 by Christmas. Although casual swimming increases in the summer holidays it does not replace the amount of under 16's taking part in school swimming. In Quarter 1 Ridlins use is very high for under 16's, due to athletics events and sports days, these run partly into Quarter 2 whilst the weather allows. Overall there are always more events in Q1 and Q2, and these decline as the year goes on. We are keen to monitor this trend, and as a baseline measure this will provide insight into target setting for next year. It will also help us anticipate seasonal peaks and dips so that we can implement new initiatives and activities to help encourage usage when we know that demand for services will decrease.
CWLS2: Everyone Active - Number of BAME adults (unique users) participating in facilities and outre								In an effort to improve insight into unique visitor numbers and footfall, the Council are in talks with Everyone Active to ensure that an accurate picture of data can be presented. A review of available data will help provide a meaningful insight into participation in outreach and leisure activities and this will inform the Council's approach to performance monitoring in 2024/25.







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Performance	Comments
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CN Engagement Cycle - Delivery of face to face engagement events 	Majority of engagement events in the 23/24 calendar have now occurred following the pre-christmas period. This engagement data is being collated alongside digital engagement in order to continue to build on the yearly engagement cycle.



	Performance	Comments
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Consultation & Engagement Topic - GovDelivery topic creation		<p>Creation now underway with topic expected to go live ahead of the pre-election period in order to act as a delivery mechanism for this tranche of digital engagement. Delays to the delivery of this have not prevented us from starting digital engagement this year, but will have slightly delayed our ability to build a userbase.</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Co-operative Neighbourhoods Plans - First draft		<p>As above plans in this area are tied to neighbourhoods UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation, with 5 areas being used as a more specific trial of neighbourhood plans.</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PropTech Digital Engagement - Delivery of 23/24 engagement activities		<p>Engagement activities are underway, this includes testing alternative methods of data collection with support from communication colleagues. There has been an encouraging response to posts through SBC social media, with an aim to match the same 1,700 responses captured in the previous exercise. Unlike 22/23, analysis of data will be undertaken in house as a template and workflow now exist that should make the process more streamlined.</p>

A Clean, Green, Safe & Thriving Town

	A Clean, Green, Safe & Thriving Town							Comments
	Actual - Quarter 3 2022/23 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2022-23 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2023/24 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2023/24 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2023/23 YTD	Target - Quarter 3 2023/24 YTD	Target - Quarter 4 2023/24 YTD	
ASB6: Percentage of ASB cases resulting in successful resolution			16.00%	26.00%	77.00%			31/12/2023 The increase in successful enforcement in Qtr 3 is as an outcome of an internal review of enforcement processes and how performance in this area is recorded and reported. The team have worked with officers to clarify and set out what represents successful enforcement activity. This means that in addition to any cases which result in Acceptable Behaviour Agreement (ABA), Notice Seeking Possession Notice Warning (NSPW), Notice Seeking Possession (NSP), Community Protection Notice Warning (CPNW), Community Protection Notice (CPN), Absolute Possession Notice, Property Closure Order, Eviction, or Noise Abatement Notice, the team will now record as 'successful enforcement' all cases where there is a change in behaviour by the perpetrator i.e. resolution through prevention. An example of prevention may be a conversation with a tenant prior to Notice being issued for breach of tenancy. This preventative approach is a key part of the Council's approach to managing ASB and the team are keen to monitor as part of its approach to performance monitoring. Retrospective figures for previous quarters will be published in Qtr 4 and will reviewed in conjunction with the relevant Portfolio Holder in preparation for target setting in 2024/25.
CC1: Percentage of homes that have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of Band C or above			55.00%	55.00%	57.00%			
CS2: Number of fly-tipping cases reported in Stevenage			82.00	220.00	243.00			31/12/2023 CUMULATIVE MEASURE
ES1: Percentage of residential bins collected			99.45%	99.65%	99.67%	99.00%	99.00%	
NI192: Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	36.60%	32.00%	42.00%	42.70%		37.00%	35.00%	31/12/2023 This measure is reported in arrears from an external source. The actual figure for Q3 will not be available until the end of March 2024.
RSH NM01(part1): ASB cases associated with the Council's landlord function			22.00	54.00	70.00			31/12/2023 CUMULATIVE MEASURE
RSH NM01(part2) ASB hate incidents associated with the Council's landlord function			0.00	0.00	0.00			31/12/2023 CUMULATIVE MEASURE

	Performance	Comments
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biodiversity Action Plan - develop new plan		31 Dec 2023 Officers and Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust will deliver a presentation to the Environment & Economy Select Committee in February 2024, for the pre-scrutiny of the updated Biodiversity Action Plan.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bus Service Improvement Plan		31 Dec 2023 No new update as per comments in Q2 - Increased engagement with officers at HCC to progress Bus Service Improvement Plan. Member engagement to follow. Funding has been agreed with Department for Transport (DfT) and a workshop held in January 2023 to assess bus priority measures. A short list of preferred options will be provided in 2024.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corporate pathway to net zero – Vehicle & fuels		31 Dec 2023 Completed.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cycle Hire Scheme		31 Dec 2023 Following a tender process during Autumn 2023 and consultation in September 2023, work is progressing. All will be reported to Executive on the 7 Feb 2023 explaining next steps.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deliver 2 communication campaigns focussed on mental health & suicide prevention		31 Dec 2023 We recently held an event in partnership with Stevenage FC, Samaritans, and Everyone Active on 18th November at the Football stadium during halftime of and after Stevenage Football Club match. This event was the launch of the Real People Real Stories project, with the aim to highlight support available and promote the seeking of support when needed. During the event there was also promotion of the upcoming Mens' Club that will be delivered to by Everyone Active, designed to help Men to better their physical and Mental Health. Following on from the event, there will be a legacy project in partnership with Stevenage FC Foundation, called the On Your Side. The project will have a component of physical activity and mental health support delivered by Mind at each session.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivery of Place Based Health Inequalities Project with Healthy Hubs, Stevenage North & South PCNs.		31 Dec 2023 Due to low uptake on the Place Based Health Inequalities Young People Workshop, we have delay delivery to ensure that we are able to deliver the best provision for all involved. Delivery is now scheduled to start in mid-January, with the time in between utilised to build the number of participants through referrals. We are also working in the meantime to strengthen our current networks and build new connections with those within the different faith groups in the town. As an off-shot of the main workstream, we have our supplementary workstream that involves series of short films on the 5 ways to wellbeing that will be delivered to all schools in Stevenage over the course of Feel Good Week. This supplementary is being delivered in partnership with the Stevenage School Parliament.




	Performance	Comments
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Development of a Heritage Trail for all (pedestrians/cyclists/disabled users)		31 Dec 2023 With the assistance of consultees including Stevenage Cycling UK, the heritage trail for both cyclists and pedestrians has been drafted. This will enable a an exciting trail available for all users and encourage better connectivity in the town.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Electric Vehicle Charging / Service Station		31 Dec 2023 The Council bid for 12 new EV charging points within our Neighbourhood centres in early 2022. Bidding was successful, and funding received. Installation will start in Q3 23/24. Gridserve EV Charging Service Station approved December 2021; construction has commenced. New MSCP includes 25% EV charging stations and the potential to increase to 50% in the future.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enhance the status of the SADA Charity by promoting its launch at partnership events		31 Dec 2023 The charity has secured funding for 23/24 in excess of £40,000 to date and enhanced its profile through a launch ball in November and attending various partnership events. The charity continues to arrange fund raising events and has had success in growing its number of Board members.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Flat Block Recycling Pilot - Volunteer Recycling Champions		31 Dec 2023 Despite extensive engagement with tenants, no recycling champions have been identified. The service will consider alternative approaches to raising awareness of the subject.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meadow Grassland Sites - Cut and clear		31 Dec 2023 Works completed
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pioneering Young STEM Futures - STEM Strategy		31 Dec 2023 Scope of this has increased from just a focus on STEM Skills to being an overarching Skills Framework. Considerable engagement with local businesses and key stakeholders has taken place over the autumn and winter with several key employers being very keen to engage more going forwards. This was presented and approved at the February meeting of the Executive.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pioneering Young STEM Futures - Youth Engagement Vehicle		31 Dec 2023 A first cohort of young people aged 16-18 has been engaged with a programme delivered through STEMPOINT EAST. Building on this a second cohort of 13-15 year olds will continue to develop the model and provide greater continuity moving into Phase Two of the PYSF programme. Progress on this has been shared with the M44 Youth Advisory Board, as this is a key deliverable that SBC are taking a lead on.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shrub bed conversion - sites identified		31 Dec 2023 70% of shrub beds in Poplars reviewed and works identified
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Travel Town Implementation Plan		31 Dec 2023 Work is ongoing as per comments in Q2. A working group with Herts County Council is researching potential behaviour change in the town with specialist consultants. Once research has been conducted, the findings will be fed back to the Sustainable Travel Town group to help implement change.



Performance		Comments
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Walks for Wellbeing		31 Dec 2023 Hertfordshire health Walks has successfully trained two new walk leaders in Stevenage and two new walks have been set up in Stevenage, which is addition to our health walks on a Wednesday from Fairlands Valley Park.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Youth Evolve - Pilot		31 Dec 2023 Training has commenced with the team of No More Youth workers following the changes required to make the model more accessible for younger people. The pilot will be live from April 2024

	Balancing the Budget							
	Actual - Quarter 3 2022/23 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2022/23 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2023/24 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2023/24 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2023/24 YTD	Target - Quarter 3 2023/24 YTD	Target - Quarter 4 2023/24 YTD	Comments
Completion: % of council service customer complaints responded to within deadline	83.33%	94.00%	85.50%	81.10%	91.90%	75.00%	75.00%	31/12/2023 Continued strong performance in Q3. Performance was fairly even across General Fund services with no areas of particular concern
CSC Satisfaction: Customer satisfaction with CSC customer service	86.21	84.60	88.00	88.20	91.60	90.00	90.00	
Dig2: Number of online payments			28,973.00	58,347.00	87,259.00			31/12/2023 CUMULATIVE MEASURE The number of online payments dropped in Q3 from Q2 due to lower activity in December. This trend is also observed for automated telephone payments and Post Office payments, so it is likely a seasonal phenomenon related to the Christmas period. Looking forward to Q4, some drop may happen as Council Tax bills paid over 10 instalments are completed, and the shortness of February could impact the volume of bills paid weekly.
Finance BV10: Percentage of non-domestic rates due for the financial year received by the authority	89.98%	98.75%	39.70%	64.11%	91.07%	89.00%	98.75%	
Finance BV66a: Rent collection rate	96.83	97.15	92.40	95.14	95.95	96.39	98.00	31/12/2023 In Quarter 3 rent arrears are stable and 7.8% lower than last quarter. The main reason for the decrease is the debit free week on accounts in December, where any payments made go towards reducing the arrears. Case management is provided by the Income Officers, with each one being triaged and the tenant signposted to support provided by the Welfare Benefit and Debt Advice Team, and partners such as Citizens Advice. The team is also proactively supporting tenants to access the Alternative Payment Arrangement mechanism when required. To further enhance these services, the Council have recruited an Income Officer to support households in Emergency and Temporary Accommodation. The dedicated support for tenants from this role will help ensure that more intense support and case management can be provided. The Council continues to promote its Council Tax Support Scheme to residents. Despite these efforts the rent collection rate is below target.

	Balancing the Budget							Comments
	Actual - Quarter 3 2022/23 YTD	Actual - Quarter 4 2022/23 YTD	Actual - Quarter 1 2023/24 YTD	Actual - Quarter 2 2023/24 YTD	Actual - Quarter 3 2023/24 YTD	Target - Quarter 3 2023/24 YTD	Target - Quarter 4 2023/24 YTD	
Finance BV9: Percentage of council tax collected	85.70%	94.00%	32.80%	59.00%	85.30%	86.00%	95.80%	

	Performance	Comments
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BTB Options 2024/25 - Executive engagement		31 Dec 2023 Balancing the budget report went to November Executive with savings proposals which been built into the CT report
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Car park season tickets in MSCP		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Co-operative Commercial and Insourcing Strategy 2023-2026		31 Dec 2023 Approved at October Executive 2023.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Draft General Fund Budget 2024/25 and Housing Revenue Account 2024/25		31 Dec 2023 Draft Budget reported to January Executive
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enhanced online services for customers (Cemeteries etc)		31 Dec 2023 Improvements to the Gracie chatbot and Revenues & Benefits forms have been made this quarter
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fees and Charges 2024/25 - workshop		31 Dec 2023 Fees and Charges for 2024/25 agreed at Executive in October 2023
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grantfinder		31 Dec 2023 Grants working group took place in Q3 and historic data is being collated. Launch April 2024.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Insourcing review 23/24		31 Dec 2023 Work on insourcing continues in line with the timeframes set out in the Insourcing Roadmap 2023-26.

	Performance	Comments
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Customer Services Reception in Daneshill House		<p>31 Dec 2023</p> <p>There have been significant changes in Customer Services this quarter. The most visible change is the move from the Customer Service Centre (CSC) to a new single location in the main reception of Daneshill House. This has simplified staffing as we only have one location to serve, and as most of the people walking in to reception in the past were looking for the CSC it is also more straightforward for customers. The move has also reduced costs and supports the Council's climate ambitions as the old location was expensive to heat and light. The new location works well for the appointment service we now offer customers and makes good use of the reception space which was underutilised in recent years. This change for customers is supported. by co-location of key customer facing services close to reception (including Repairs specialists and duty officers for a range of specialist service. There is also a significant change in how we service customers on the phone and to encourage online self service. A pilot for telephony automation to help direct customers through to online self-service where people had transactional enquiries, but still enable customers to speak to a member of staff if they needed. It works by offering to text people a link to the online service they need. The aim is for this. to help customers initially, but to also encourage customers how to go online in future too. This is a key change from how services have been run previously and it's part of the ongoing change to encourage people to use self-service where possible as we increasingly prioritise our phone services to the customers that really need that help. The pilot is showing success in moving 42% of Revenues and Benefits phone enquires online (over 500 enquires in two months) and the change is even larger 72% of customers enquiring about Waste and Environmental Services (early indication - two weeks after launch of service).</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Proposals for creation of activity based teams for Housing and localities		<p>31 Dec 2023</p> <p>Proposals for creation of a new 'Housing & Neighbourhoods' Business Unit that brings together all housing, neighbourhood, locality and community services was agreed by Officers.</p> <p>A new Assistant Director has been appointed, this brings together two Assistant Director posts (both vacant). The service design of the new business unit has started, covering all the people, processes, technology, policy and culture aspects relating to how we provide these services to customers.</p> <p>The role of Community Advice & Support manager (one of the three service groupings in the new Housing & Neighbourhoods Business Unit) has also been appointed to, this brings together two management posts and provides the right management for a range of personalised advice and support services – the team are now undertaking service design work to improve these services.</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SDS Commercial services		<p>31 Dec 2023</p> <p>The focus on the commercial growth of SDS services continues. The launch of the new third party tipping service is due in Q4 and a business case on the commercialisation of grounds maintenance services and play equipment inspections was bought to the December meeting of the Commercial and Investment Working Group. As a first step this will involve the commercial team supporting the work in the Transformation team to look at the new system/s for grounds maintenance and play inspections to ensure that the systems are optimised for commercial activity.</p>

	Performance	Comments
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Trade Waste Function/Offer		31 Dec 2023 The commercial team's focus on the growth of the trade waste function is continuing. KPIs are being tracked and a full sales and marketing plan is underway with the aim of growing market share. This has resulted in the service providing different offers (commercial assessed collections, collection of waste sacks) to grow the income.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Void Clearance - Feasibility		31 Dec 2023 A update paper on void clearances was presented at the December meeting of the Commercial and Investment Working Group (CIWG) and it was agreed by Members that there is insufficient evidence to expand the voids clearance team at this time.

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APPENDIX B: COMMUNITY MEASURES

1. In July 2023, the Executive agreed to a focus on resident priorities as expressed through 13 'Community Measures', specifically: climate change; anti-social behaviour; provision and maintenance of homes; and delivery of good local services. These themes were informed by the analysis of the Novoville/Proptech (2022/23), Resident Survey (2021) and Tenants Survey (2021) data, which indicated what mattered to residents the most.

2. The 'Key Facts' section will be updated each quarter to provide Members and Residents with a clear oversight of performance in the areas that matter to them most. The intention is that these short statements will inform discussion and help drive improvement in these areas. Progress in these areas will then be shared more widely through engaging social media campaigns and promotion through the website and the Chronicle magazine.

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR			
Business Unit	Service Area	Measure	Key Facts
C&N	Community Safety	ASB cases overall and ASB associated with the Council's landlord function	<p>In Quarter 3, 16 ASB cases associated with the Councils landlord function have been reported since Quarter 2. This represents a 22.9% decrease in ASB cases when comparing with the same period last year.</p> <p>The above figures are reported as part of the data collection for the Housing Regulation requirements, and will be used to shape targets for 2024/25</p> <p>To help tackle ASB, there is work underway with residents and Members to build upon the success of the joint 'Clear Hold Build' police initiative with the recruitment of 2 wardens, extra CCTV and design out crime initiatives.</p>
C&N	Community Safety	Percentage of ASB cases resulting in	In Quarter 3, 77% of ASB cases resulted in successful enforcement. In Quarter 2, 26% of ASB cases resulted in

		successful resolution	<p>successful enforcement. This indicates that more cases are resulting in successful enforcement.</p> <p>The increase in successful enforcement in Qtr 3 is as an outcome of an internal review of enforcement processes and how performance in this area is recorded and reported. The team have worked with officers to clarify and set out what represents successful enforcement activity. This means that in addition to any cases which result in Acceptable Behaviour Agreement (ABA), Notice Seeking Possession Notice Warning (NSPW), Notice Seeking Possession (NSP), Community Protection Notice Warning (CPNW), Community Protection Notice (CPN), Absolute Possession Notice, Property Closure Order, Eviction, or Noise Abatement Notice, the team will now record as 'successful resolution' all cases where there is a change in behaviour by the perpetrator i.e. resolution through prevention. An example of prevention may be a conversation with a tenant prior to Notice being issued for breach of tenancy. This preventative approach is a key part of the Council's response to tackling ASB.</p> <p>As a baseline measure this figure will be used as a starting point from which to monitor progress and compare outcomes with stock holding authorities of a similar size.</p>
C&N	Community Safety	Number of fly-tipping cases reported in Stevenage	<p>24 cases of fly tipping were reported to Enforcement Officers in Quarter 3, a decrease from the same period last year (99 cases reported).</p> <p>Activities to deter fly-tipping range from installing mobile CCTV cameras at known fly-tipping hotspots, and putting up signage that warns potential offenders of the fines related to fly-tipping around town. The Council continues to work with partners to enforce against perpetrators, and in 2022/23 there were 196 cases where the perpetrator was identified and removed the waste themselves.</p>

CLIMATE CHANGE			
H&I	Investing in Homes/Climate Change	Percentage of Housing stock with an EPC measure rating above C	<p>In 2022/23, 21.4% of residents indicated that climate change investments were of priority.</p> <p>In Quarter 3, 57% of Housing Stock had an EPC rating of C or above.</p> <p>A key priority within the Council's Climate Change Strategy action plan is the planning policy for zero carbon homes, exploring opportunities for renewable technologies across council buildings, and provision of energy efficient housing (including retrofitting of current council housing stock). Delivery of the EPC rating C programme will cost on average £5,000 per property to fund and these costs have been included in the recent Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 30 year Business Plan review</p> <p>Ongoing fulfilment of climate change ambitions is reliant on grant or central government funding, and it is unclear what the impact of the Governments decision to revise its position on climate change will be on the Council's ability to finance future work. However, the Council continues to explore other options (such as its work with SAVA (Software Development Company) to help explore additional stock improvements to improve the fabric of housing assets.</p>
Stevenage Direct Services	Environmental Services	Percentage of Household Waste sent for reuse,	In Quarter 2 (this measure is via an external source and can only be provided in arrears) 42.7% of household waste was sent to for reuse and recycling. It is higher than the figure reported in

		recycling and composting	<p>the same period in 2022/23 (39%). A key area of focus to help improve how we respond to waste management is to reduce the amount of waste in the first place. During 2023 the Council's communications have included messages around reducing waste –including food, use of real nappies, plastic free period products, home composting and donating or selling unwanted household items.</p> <p>Figures in the Herts Waste Partnership Annual Report 2022/23 indicates that Stevenage households produced 7% less residual waste in 2022/23 compared to 2015/16. However, when compared with other Hertfordshire authorities Stevenage produces around 20% more than the Hertfordshire average.</p>
PROVISION AND MAINTENANCE OF HOMES			
Housing Development	Housing Development	Number of homes delivered (gross) by the Council (since 2014)	<p>The Council has continued the delivery of its ambitious new council housing development programme with 401 new homes provided since 2014. The programme is predicted to deliver a total of 2,237 new council homes over the next 30 years.</p> <p>Timely turnaround of housing applications helps the Council meet this target and fulfil housing need. The Council continues to demonstrate good performance in this area.</p> <p>66.7% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks</p> <p>100% of minor applications determined within 8 weeks</p> <p>97.4% of other applications determined within 8 weeks</p>

Housing Development	Housing Development	Number of affordable homes delivered by the Council (current quarter)	5 new homes were delivered by the Council in Quarter 3. These 5 homes were all purchased by the Council through Open Market Acquisitions, enabling the Council to increase the supply of affordable homes and ensure that suitable property can be provided.
H&I	Investment	Percentage of homes maintained as decent against national minimum DH standard	<p>In Quarter 3, 84.77% of Council homes have fulfilled the national Decent Homes standard. This figure is taken from Housing quality assessments which are built within the Keystone system. This is a slight increase on Quarter 2 (84.39%) and represents the Council's commitment to improving the quality of homes for its tenants.</p> <p>The Council also welcomes the Regulator of Social Housing forthcoming review of the Decent Homes standard, which is due to be shared for consultation in the coming months.</p> <p>Please refer to section 3.9 of the Quarter 3 Exec report for more information.</p>
GOOD LOCAL SERVICES			
Communities & Neighbourhoods	Culture, Wellbeing & Leisure Services	Everyone Active - Number of children (under 16) participating in facilities and outreach programmes once per week	<p>Under its new leisure arrangement with Everyone Active, the Council are keen to see young people participating in outreach programmes. In Quarter 3 the footfall for under 16's using Everyone Active facilities and programmes was 15,141.</p> <p>Footfall included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4,127 swimming lessons - 3,338 casual swim sessions - 900 martial art sessions - 900 dance fitness classes

Communities & Neighbourhoods	Culture, Wellbeing & Leisure Services	Everyone Active - Number of BAME adults (aged 16+) participating in facilities and outreach programmes once per week	In an effort to improve insight into unique visitor numbers and footfall, the Council are in talks with Everyone Active to ensure that an accurate picture of data can be presented. A review of available data will help provide a meaningful insight into participation in outreach and leisure activities and this will inform the Council's approach to performance monitoring in 2024/25.
D&T	CSC	Percentage of council service customer complaints responded to within deadline	<p>Complaints response is a good indicator of how well the Council is able to listen and respond to residents. In Quarter 3, 91.9% of complaints were responded to within deadline.</p> <p>Further work is ongoing within the Council to review its approach to corporate complaint handling, with a number of workshops currently taking place to ensure that forthcoming proposals by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman regarding a joint Handling Code are considered and implemented.</p>
D&T	CSC	Customer satisfaction with CSC customer service	<p>In Quarter 3, 91.6% of respondents indicated they were satisfied with CSC via a GovMetric Survey. This is the highest satisfaction level since Q3 2021/22</p> <p>Long wait times are the most common theme from customers rating their experience as poor or average. The Council's push to introduce self-service through online web-based solutions is a key area of work and the recent introduction of automated telephony (see Executive Report para 4.2.1) is a key tool to improve the service and make it more efficient for residents. This is supported by the timely update of the Customer Services Knowledge Base, and which means that CSC staff can quickly find a solution to issues without escalating to manager's dealing with complex cases.</p>

SDS	Environmental Services	Percentage of residential bins collected	<p>In 2022/23, 21.4% of residents indicated that access to Services (e.g., council house maintenance, customer services, waste collection etc) was of importance.</p> <p>The Council continue to deliver an effective waste collection service, and in Quarter 3, 99.67% of bins were collected, this is an improvement on Quarter 1 where 99.65% of bins were collected.</p>
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Part I



Meeting: EXECUTIVE

Portfolio Area: Resources



Date: 13 March 2024

3RD QUARTER REVENUE AND CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT – GENERAL FUND AND HRA

KEY DECISION

Author – Veronika Mendy/Keith Reynoldson Ext. 2943
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Lead Officers – Brian Moldon Ext. 2933
Contact Officer – Brian Moldon Ext.2933

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update Members on the projected General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 2023/24 net expenditure and seek approval to amend the General Fund and HRA budgets as part of the quarterly revenue monitoring review.
- 1.2 To update Members on the reserves and balances available to support revenue expenditure and seek approval for revisions to the allocated reserves.
- 1.3 To provide Members with an update on the Council's 2023/24 and 2024/25 capital programme.
- 1.4 To seek approval for the revisions to the General Fund (GF) and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programme.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

General Fund

- 2.1 That the 2023/24 3rd quarter projected net increase in General Fund expenditure of £171,980 be approved.

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- 2.2 That Members note the cumulative changes made to the General Fund net budget remains within the £400,000 increase variation limit delegated to the Executive.
- 2.3 That Members note the proposed movement on reserves as detailed in paragraph 4.2.1

Housing Revenue Account

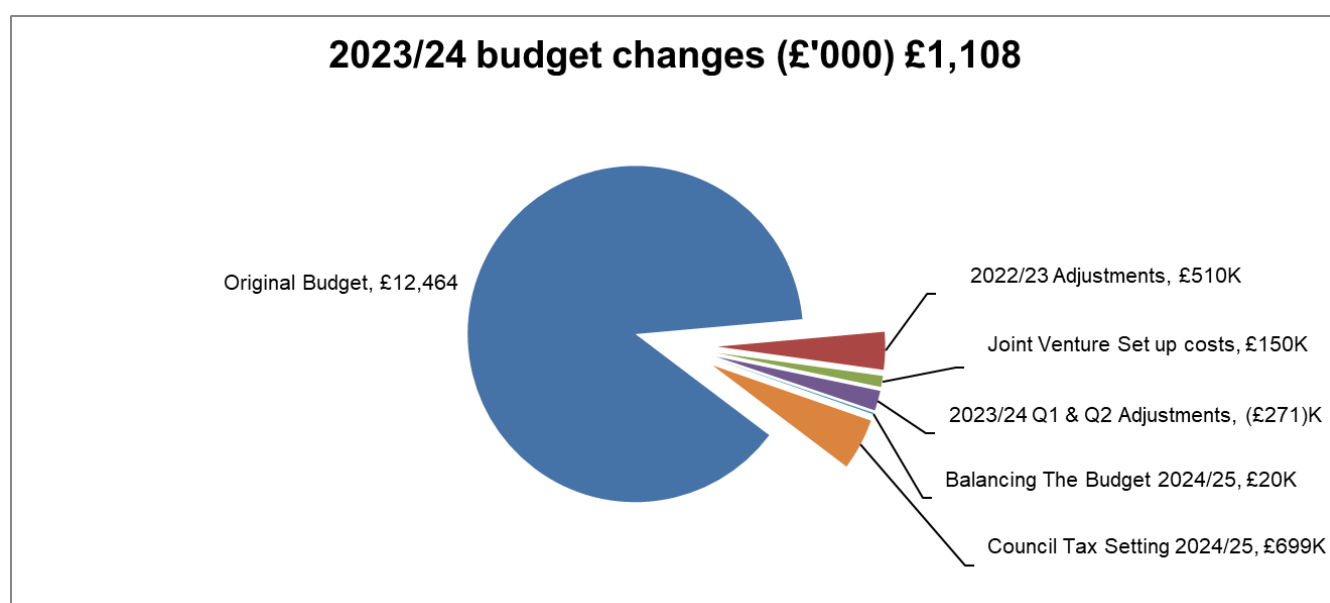
- 2.4 That the 2023/24 3rd quarter net increase in HRA expenditure of £1.002Million be approved.
- 2.5 That Members note the cumulative increases made to the HRA net budget remain within the £400,000 variation limit, delegated to the Executive.

Capital Programme

- 2.6. That the General Fund capital budget re-phasing of £10.6Million from 2023/24 to future years be approved.
- 2.7. That the Housing Revenue Account capital budget re-phasing of £2.3Million from 2023/24 to future years be approved.

3. BACKGROUND - GENERAL FUND

- 3.1. Since the General Fund net budget of £12,463,780 was approved at Council, Members have approved net budget changes of £1,107,690 as detailed in the chart below:



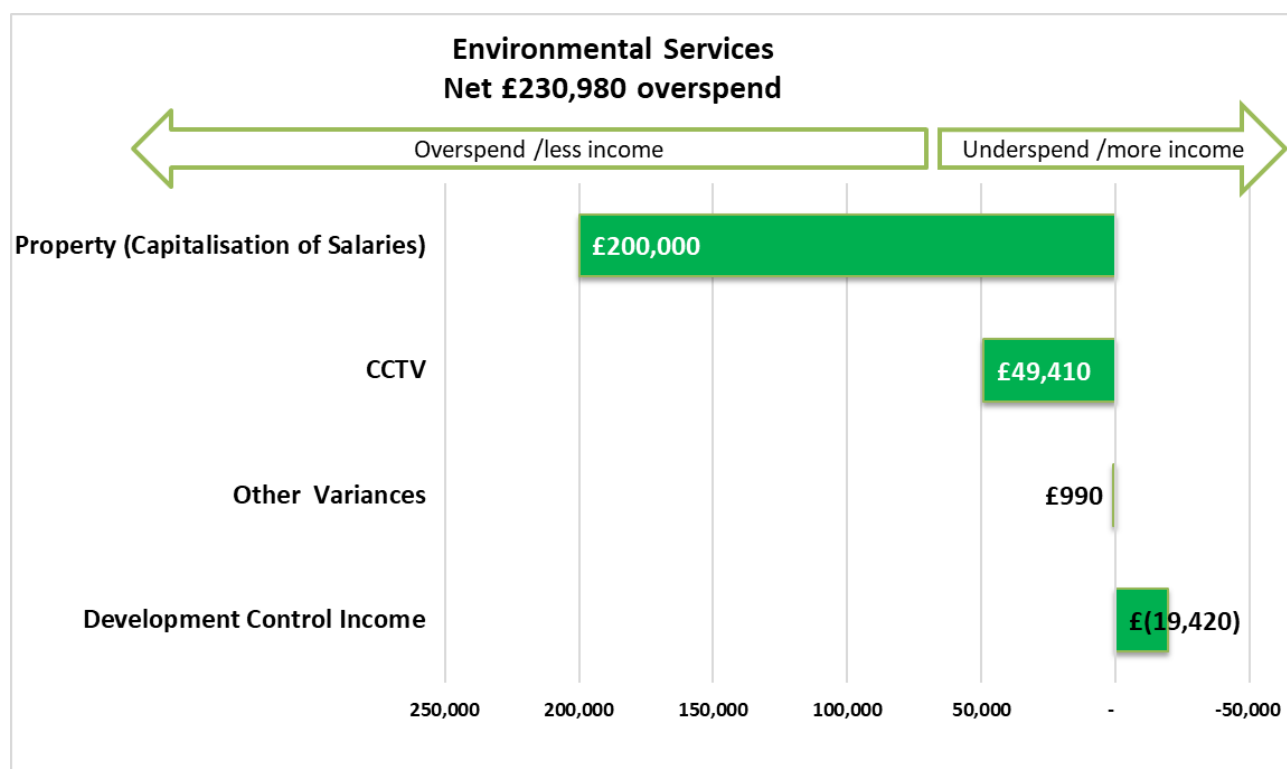
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4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

4.1 General Fund – Budget Review

4.1.1 Following the 3rd quarter review of the General Fund budgets officers have identified a projected increase in the forecast budget for the year of £171,980. A detailed analysis is set out below by service area.

4.1.2 **Environmental Services** is forecasting an increase in expenditure or less income for 2023/24 of £230,980 analysis is reported below:



4.1.3 This is made up of the following forecast increase expenditure and / or reduction in income for the year:

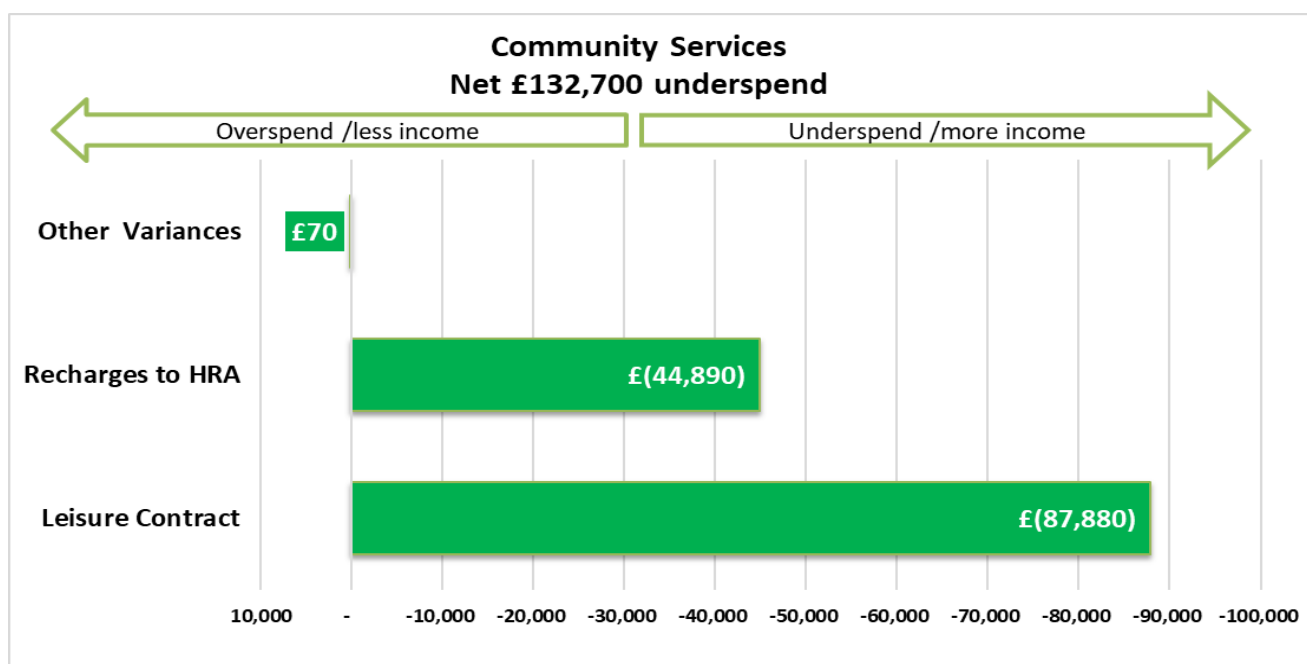
- **Property (Capitalisation of Salaries)** - There is a pressure of £200K from a reduction in salaries being charged to capital due to the switch to more revenue projects such as the garages and commercial stock. Going forward this pressure was included in the 2024/25 General Fund budget approved by Members on 21 February 2024.
- **CCTV** – The one-off pressure, mainly relates to a delay in billing for backdated electricity bills following a change in utility supplier, the budget was reduced in year due to the lower spend but is required to cover the missing months. Following a review there is now an in-year pressure of £36K (£26K of this relate to prior years). The remaining pressure of £13K relates to the recent review of the percentage allocation of costs to partners, SBC's share of the partnership

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expenditure has increased as costs are allocated based on the percentage share of camera units.

- **Other variances** - a combination of small variances across the service.
- **Development Control Income** – overachievement of income being received due to a Major Housing development application.

4.1.4 **Community Services** is forecasting a reduction in expenditure or increase in income for 2023/24 of £132,700 analysis is reported below:



- **Other variances** - a combination of small variances across the service.
- **Recharges to HRA** – Following a review of management cost an additional share to the HRA is projected as a result of the Assistant Director at the time covering management of the HRA service and Community & Neighbourhoods.
- **Leisure Contract** – finalised dilapidation negotiations with the outgoing previous leisure provider means a provision for works made by the Council to fund some of cost is not required (£67K). There was also a credit of £12K received from Everyone Active for the disposal of old gym equipment. Both are one off surpluses for the year.

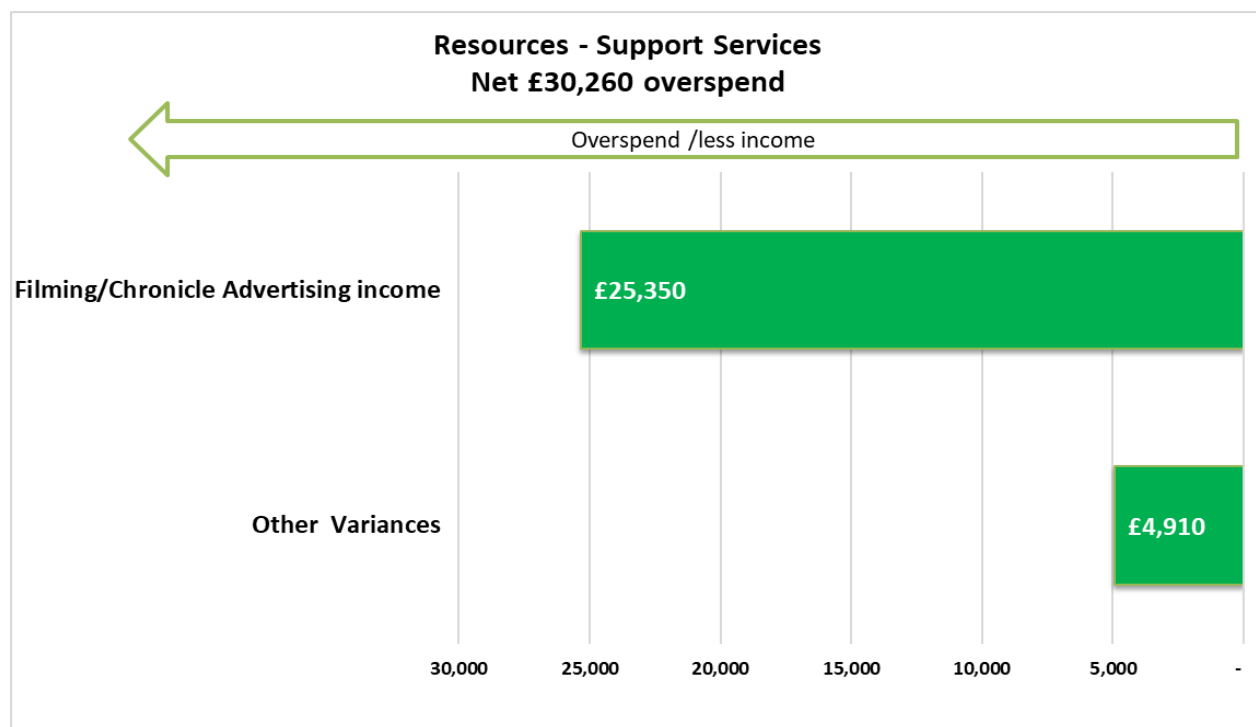
4.1.5 **Stevenage Direct Trading Account** is forecasting less income for 2023/24 of £38,000 analysis is reported below:

- **Trade Waste Income** – the pressure of losing two big customers has been partly offset by seven small businesses coming on board in December. The

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service is also picking up additional income for extra collections, green sacks, and commercial assessed collections and third-party tipping in the Transfer station starting at the end of January 2024 has also reduced income losses.

4.1.6 **Resources – Support Services** is forecasting an overspend for 2023/24 of £30,260 the analysis is reported below:



4.1.7 The areas relating to the Quarter three variance are made up of the following:

- **Filming/Chronicle Advertising Income** – There have been only two small productions in 2023/24 due to the impact of the writer strikes and the Council's assumptions for filming income are £9K lower than the budget. However, the Industry is starting to pick up in 2024 with some large-scale enquiries which hopefully will convert into additional income. There is also £16K pressure on income received for advertising in Chronicle. Members will be aware that a 2023/24 savings option was to reduce the cost of the publication, however demand for advertising space within Chronicles has been lower than anticipated.
- **Other variances** - a combination of small variances across the service.

4.1.8 **Resources Services** is forecasting an overspend for 2023/24 of £5,440 a combination of small variances across service areas.

4.1.9 The cumulative changes made to the General Fund net budget as agreed at Council (February 2023) remains within the £400,000 increase variation limit delegated to the Executive.

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Executive Delegation - General Fund	£'000
Original Net General Fund Budget	12,464
Changes agreed at Council February 2024	1,108
Revised GF Budget agreed	13,571
Quarterly monitoring Q3	172
Updated GF Budget	13,743
Within Executive Delegated Limit	228

4.1.10 **Other Pressures – Transitional Vacancy.** Council includes an amount for staff turnover in most salary budgets at 4.5%, however in 2023/24 Some service areas may face challenges in achieving their transitional vacancy. Finance will be working closely with service leads to identify mitigations. Based on the findings Members will be updated in the 4th quarter report.

4.1.11 Councils contract costs - As referenced in the General Fund and Council Tax Setting 2024/25 report, the Council is now finalising the utility prices for the Leisure contracts for the financial year 2024/25, where prices have fallen by 36% against 2023/24 figures. This will be partly offset by a projected increase in the Shared Revenues & Benefits service, notified after the budget was set in February 2024. Members will be updated in the outturn report in July on the financial position once a full review been undertaken.

4.2 Review of General Fund Balances

4.2.1 **Allocated Reserves** - these balances are 'ring fenced' and have been set aside for specific purposes. The estimated total value of (revenue) allocated reserves as at 31 March 2024 is **£6,845,889** (31 March 2023, £5,556,446). During Quarter three, the following movement between reserves have been recommended.

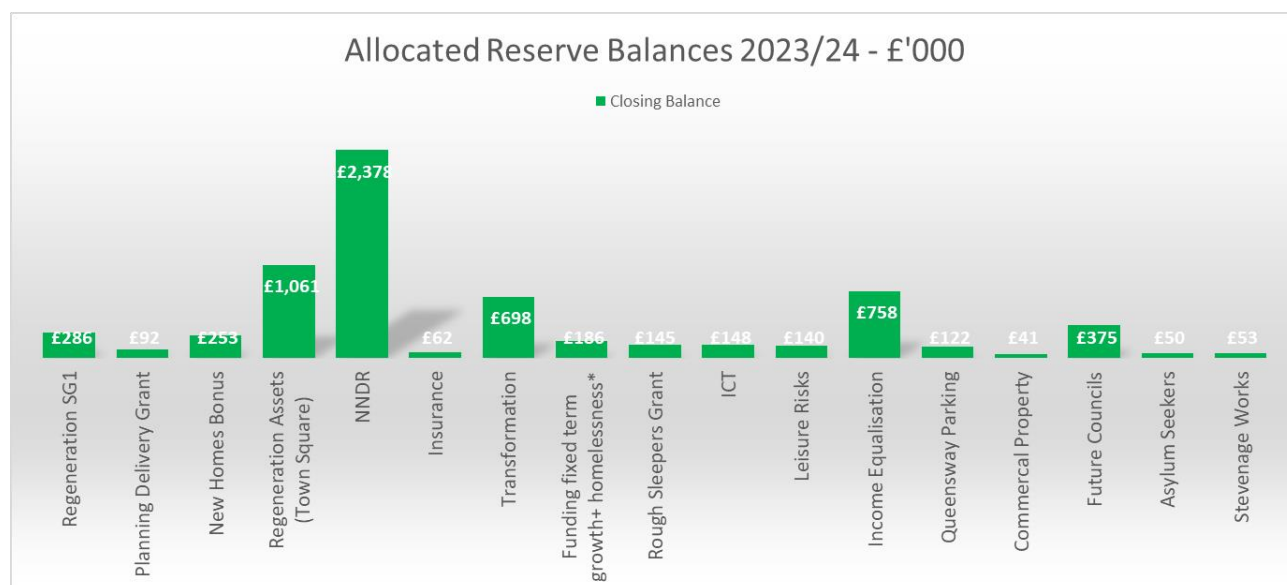
Reserves	Q3 To Be Approved
Regeneration SG1	13,780
Planning Delivery Grant	(17,140)
Transformation	(96,727)
ICT reserve	(62,810)
Total	(162,897)

*) represents movement to reserves

- **Regeneration SG1** – transfer from reserve is the latest phasing of expenditure for the year, based on Regeneration teams current work activity.
- **Housing & Planning Delivery Grant** – transfer to reserves based on the latest projections for the year.
- **Transformation** – forecast transfer to reserve for the year based on the latest transformation activity profile for 2023/24.
- **ICT reserve** transfer to reserves based on the latest projections for the year.

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4.2.2 Below shows the current forecast closing balances on the allocated reserves after taking into account the above movement.



4.2.3 General Fund Balance – Following the 3rd quarter review the General Fund balance as at the 31 March 2024 is now forecast to be £4,545,232.

General Fund Balances	£'000
Total Net Expenditure post Q3 review	13,743
Less core resources at Budget Setting Report	(12,335)
Transfer (to)/from General Fund balances	1,408
General Fund balance 31/3/23	(5,954)
Transfer (to)/from General Fund balances	1,408
Projected General Fund balance 31/3/24	(4,545)
Allocated Revenue Reserves (Paragraph 4.2.1)	(6,846)
Total General Fund Revenue balances (estimated 31/3/24)	(11,391)

4.3 **Review of Savings** – As part of the 2023/24 budget setting, the Council agreed savings of £1.342Million. The table below represents the RAG rated delivery those schemes.

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Target	RAG	% of Target
1,278,954	Delivered	95%
47,027	Delay in saving delivery	4%
16,036	Not achieving	1%
1,342,017		

4.3.1 **Amber scheme:** The projected underachievement for the year is £47K and has been included within the quarter three forecast. This is due to:

- Bandley Hill and Pin Green play centres were modelled to start generating rental income from October 2023, however this is now projected for February 2024.

4.3.2 **Red Scheme:** The £16K pressure for income received from advertising in Chronicle.

4.4 Housing Revenue Account

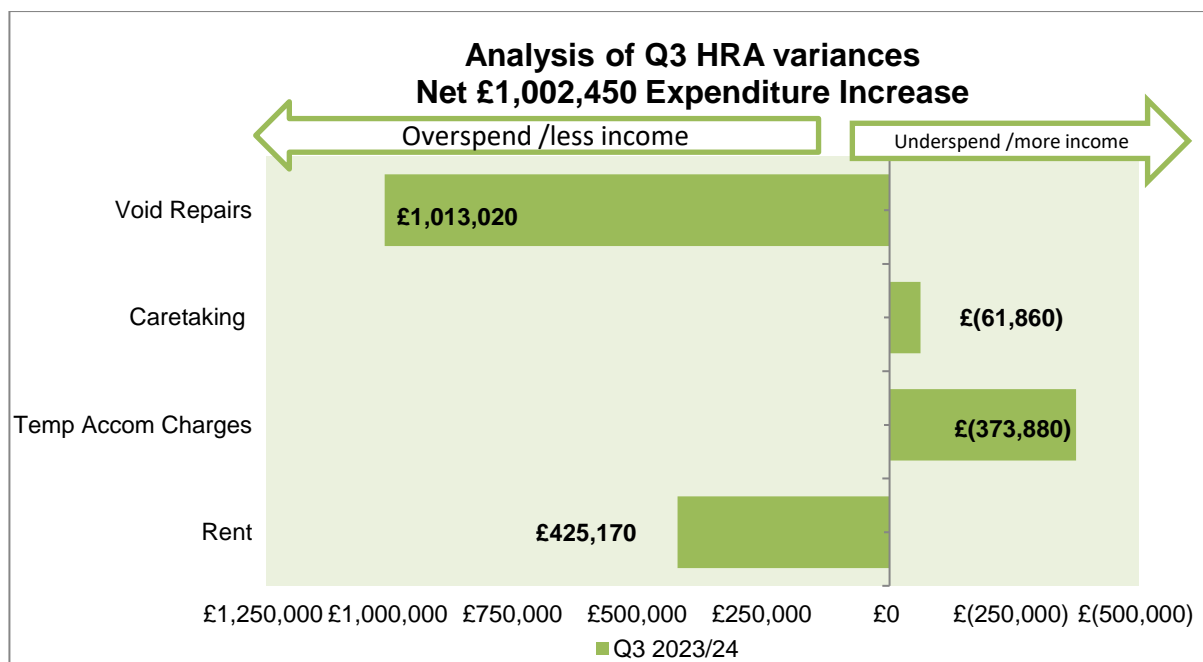
4.4.1 Since the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) net budget surplus of £1.792Million was approved at Council in January 2023, Members have further approved net changes of £273K as detailed in the following table.

HRA Working Budget	£'000
Original Budget 2023/24	(1,792)
22/23 Q4 Carry Forwards	922
22/23 Q4 Net Projected Saving	(6)
23/24 Q1 Net Projected Overspend	155
23/24 Q2 Net Projected Saving	(1,230)
23/24 Nov Executive extension of fixed term contracts	175
23/24 Jan Council – Pay Award	257
Total Working Budget	(1,519)

4.5 Housing Revenue Account - Budget Review

4.5.1 Following the 3rd quarter review of revenue budgets officers have identified and projected the following budget movements.

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4.5.2 Void Repairs £1,013,020. In previous reports it has been identified that there have been challenges in dealing with the number, complexity and the condition of void properties in the stock. This had led to a net increase in the working budget of £413K. In order to deal with the backlog and bring the properties back into use as quickly as possible a main contractor was engaged during quarter four of 2022/23 to complete the majority of the works. Unfortunately, this has not cleared the jobs as quickly as planned given the volume, age and condition of voids experienced during 2023/24 alongside the backlog brought forward from the previous financial year and the level of works required on the properties. The unit price per job has been higher than estimated (estimated at £3,300, the current average projection is £5,000 per property), but the work now has now been split between more contractors to increase completions, but current projections show a further increase in costs of £1Million for this year. Actions being taken include:

- The current main contractor arrangements are being demobilised, with the expected end date to align with completion of the remaining backlog, which as of 31 January was 45 voids that were forecast to be completed by the end of February.
- All new voids are being allocated to the four new interim contractors, which have been successfully piloted in recent weeks. A proposal to procure new contractors to support the Repairs and Voids Service was included on the Forward Plan and expected to be signed off as a key Officer decision by end of February. The contract award has been included in the Forward Plan for Executive in June 2024.
- The internal management of the voids process has been reviewed to ensure that there is full accountability and ownership by the team/individuals, this has also included some additional staffing resource.

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The service has been independently reviewed and a comprehensive action plan developed which will be implemented over the next 12-18 months. A report on the future delivery model for voids will be brought forward to a future Executive meeting which will also set out budget requirements for future years.

- 4.5.3 **Caretaking (£61,860).** A total saving of £62K has been identified in the caretaking service at quarter three. This relates to increased income on rechargeable jobs of £35K and total savings on expenditure heads of £27K.
- 4.5.4 **Temporary Accommodation Charges (£373,880).** In order to meet housing demand and fulfil its legal homelessness obligations, the Council has substantially increased its temporary accommodation housing stock, including the recent addition of a former hotel. Temporary accommodation attracts higher service charges as it is a managed service including the provision of utilities and furnishings in some of the homes. The combination of higher unit numbers and high utility costs has led to much higher income for service charges for 2023/24, than originally budgeted. While this has increased income for the current year, this is likely to reduce in the future if utility costs continue to fall over the coming months.
- 4.5.5 **Rent £425,170.** The latest estimates for rental income show a deficit of £425K against the quarter two position. The majority of this rent loss relates to the issues identified in 4.5.2 regarding the re-let times for voids. The quarter two forecast had assumed that the backlog of work would be cleared more quickly and that rent would be generated in this financial year. However, this has not been the case and void rent levels have remained higher than anticipated. There have also been some timing differences on the commissioning of new housing stock, with some new homes being let later than was estimated in the quarter two figures. However, this in year loss represents less than 1% of total rental income for the Council, which is £45Million a year.

4.6 Housing Revenue Account Balances

- 4.6.1 Following the 3rd quarter review the HRA balance is now forecast to be £10.6Million. The HRA Business Plan report proposes carrying a higher level of minimum balances in the HRA, to help mitigate future financial risks and give the account greater resilience.

Housing Revenue Account Outturn Position	£'000
Working Budget – Executive 13th December 2023	(1,519)
3rd Quarter Net Projected Overspend	1,002
Projected net Surplus post 3rd Quarter review	(517)
HRA balance brought forward 1/4/23	(10,519)
Surplus in year	(517)
Projected HRA balance 31/3/2024	(11,036)
Remaining Executive Delegated Limit	41

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4.7. Capital Monitoring

4.7.1. The current 2023/24 capital programme was last approved at Council on 21 February 2024. The 2023/24 approved budget for each fund was:

- General Fund £24 Million
- Housing Revenue Account £43 Million

4.7.2. The table below summarises known changes to the programme since the Council meeting in February, revisions that were not known at the time of writing the Capital Strategy report to the February Executive.

	Actual Spend to 31.12.23 £'000	Capital Strategy 23/24 £'000	Rephased 23/24 Q3 £'000	Revised 23/24 Strategy £'000	Rephased 24/25 Q3 £'000	Revised 24/25 Strategy £'000	Rephased 25/26 Q3 £'000	Revised 25/26 Strategy £'000
Total GF Schemes	5,495	23,895	(10,595)	13,300	5,035	38,593	2,825	16,628
Total HRA Schemes	25,179	43,017	(2,271)	40,746	2,271	57,102	0	56,459
Total Capital Programme	30,674	66,912	(12,866)	54,046	7,306	995,695	2,825	70,337
Re-phase detail:								
Stevenage Direct Services			(1,642)		1,567		75	
Regeneration**			(8,953)		3,468		2,750	
Total GF Re-phasing			(10,595)		5,035		2,825	
Capital Programme Excluding New Build (Housing Investment)			(2,271)		2,271		0	
Total HRA Re-phasing			(12,866)		7,306		2,825	

** £2.7Million Re-phased to 2026/27

Re-phasing

4.7.3. Re-phasing (re-profiling) of budgets are changes regarding the forecast timing of expenditure from the approved programme, between financial years, with no reported increase or decrease in budget requirement. There is more certainty now about the phasing of some capital projects than was the case when the Final Capital Strategy went to Council in February and as a result expenditure budgets have been re-phased to reflect this increased certainty.

4.7.4. At quarter three, £10.5Million is to be reprofiled from 2023/24 to future years-

- £8.2Million of General Fund, including:
 - £6.55Million of towns fund projects and;
 - £2.4Million SG1 joint venture and;
 - £1.65Million relating to garages refurbishments, the contract for the works runs until August 2024 and budgets have now been re-phased to reflect this.

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- £2.271Million of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budgets relating to housing investment. Delays in access and in the supply chain issues have delayed £800k spend relating to internal works. Health and safety works budget £1.6Million has been re-phased to 2024/25 as the project will be delivered alongside the high-rise refurbishments which will be delivered in 2024/25.

4.7.5. The Towns Fund programme continues to progress projects, in particular, Sports and Leisure Hub, Cycling and Pedestrian Connectivity with a number of feasibility and consultation activities completed. There are some re-phasing into quarter one of 2024/25 across some of the projects and further information can be found in the Regeneration Programme Delivery Update report that on this agenda. The Regeneration team are working closely with partners and contractors to mitigate this as well as exploring options to bring other spend forward ahead of schedule, such as the Station Gateway enabling works.

4.7.6. The actual spend as at 31 January 2024 was £32.1Million (Dec 23 £30Million). This represents 51% of the revised budget for 2023/24. The forecast spend for 2023/24 does include some large one-off items of expenditure that may slip into 2024/25. At the current time service managers are expecting these to be spent in 2023/24.

4.7.7. The total Capital Programme, detailing all programmes with the relevant approval to spend, is detailed in Appendix A and B. It shows the revised budget position.

4.8. Capital Financing

4.8.1. The table below sets out the change in the Capital Financing position since the Capital Strategy (Council 21 February 2024), as a result of changes to the expenditure phasing discussed above.

	Capital Strategy 23/24	Rephased 23/24 Q3	Revised 23/24 Strategy	Rephased 24/25 Q3	Revised 24/25 Strategy	Rephased 25/26 Q3	Revised 25/26 Strategy
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Total GF Financing	23,895	(10,595)	13,300	5,035	38,593	2,825	16,628
Total HRA Financing	43,017	(2,271)	40,746	2,271	57,102	0	56,459
Total Capital Financing	66,912	(12,866)	54,046	7,306	995,695	2,825	70,337
Changes detail:							
Capital Receipts		(1,614)		1,893		267	
Ringfenced regeneration receipts		(1,000)		1,000		0	
Towns Fund		(5,559)		75		2,750	
Revenue Reserves		(28)		28		0	
Short term borrowing		(2,394)		2,039		(192)	
Total GF Financing changes		(10,595)		5,035		2,825	
MRR (Self Financing Depreciation)		(2,271)		2,271		0	
Total HRA Financing changes		(12,866)		7,306		2,825	0

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4.9. Capital Receipts Forecast

4.9.1. There are no significant changes to capital financing forecasts at Q3.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

5.1.1 This report is financial in nature and consequently financial implications are included above. The impact of these changes for future years will be incorporated into the budget setting process.

5.2 Legal Implications

5.2.1 The objective of this report is to outline the projected General Fund net expenditure, HRA and Capital Strategy for 2023/24 and the impact on the General Fund and HRA balances. While there are no legal consequences at this stage Members are reminded of their duty to set a balanced budget.

5.3 Equalities and Diversity Implications

5.3.1 This report summarises external and internal factors that impact on approved budgets and recommends changes to those budgets in year. Budget changes identified for future years that could adversely impact on groups covered by statutory equality duties will be incorporated into the budget setting process which includes Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA). None of the budget changes reported will change any existing equalities and diversity policies.

5.3.2 The service department has been asked to look at the equalities and diversity implications in the increase in void re-let times and any potential impact on protected groups.

5.4 Risk Implications

5.4.1 A risk based assessment of balances is undertaken and reported to Council as part of the General Fund Budget setting process. Both the General Fund and HRA balances are projected to be above minimum levels.

5.4.2 Inflationary pressures continue to be a financial risk to both the HRA and General Fund, in the form of higher borrowing, wages and material costs, these risks will be continued to be reviewed as part of the budget monitoring and setting process.

5.5 Policy Implications

5.5.1 The budget framework represents a development of a policy led budgeting approach across Council services and the overall Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Part I

5.6 Climate Change Implications

5.6.1 The Budget and Policy setting process prioritised growth for climate change. The process should have due regard for climate change implications based on the Council's Climate Change Strategy. There are no direct climate change implications from the budget changes in this report.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

BD1 – 2023/24 Council Tax Setting and General Fund Budget (Council 23 February 2023)

BD2 – Final Housing Revenue Account Budget Setting and Rent Report 2023/24 (Council 25 January 2023)

BD3 – 4th Quarter Monitoring Report General Fund and Housing Revenue Account 2022/23 (Executive 18 July 2023)

BD4 – 1st Quarter Revenue Monitoring Report - General Fund and Housing Revenue Account 2023/24 (Executive 20 September 2023)

BD5 – 2nd Quarter Revenue Monitoring Report – General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (Executive 17 January 2024)

BD6 – Housing Revenue Account Rent Setting Report (Council 24 January 2024)

BD7 – Council Tax Setting Report 2024/25 and Final Capital Strategy 2023/24-2028/29 (Council 21 February 2024)

Appendices

A - General Fund Capital Strategy

B - HRA Capital Strategy

APPENDIX A - GENERAL FUND CAPITAL STRATEGY

Cost Centre	Scheme	2023/24						2024/25			2025/2026			2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029
		Actuals 23/24 Pd1 - Pd9	Commitments	Q2 Working Budget	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Working Budget	Variance Capital Strategy v Q3	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Working Budget	Variance Capital Strategy v Q3	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Working Budget	Variance Capital Strategy v Q3	Final Capital Strategy	Final Capital Strategy	Final Capital Strategy
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
	General Fund - Schemes															
	Stevenage Direct Services	2,002,757	134,123	6,539,060	4,763,431	3,121,271	(1,642,159)	3,862,440	5,429,599	1,567,159	94,000	169,000	75,000	0	0	0
	Housing Development	0	0	2,590,220	1,648,040	1,648,040		5,223,250	5,223,250		5,753,900	5,753,900		424,498	0	0
	Finance and Estates	295,357	(135,377)	1,725,000	1,693,103	1,693,103		1,261,978	1,261,978		0	0		0	0	0
	Digital & Transformation	28,722	54,035	602,330	367,510	367,510		173,944	173,944		0	0		0	0	0
	Regeneration	1,498,923	(3,172,831)	12,531,560	12,531,560	3,578,840	(8,952,720)	21,586,450	25,054,500	3,468,050	7,945,500	10,695,500	2,750,000	2,734,670	0	0
	Communities and Neighbourhoods	1,487,848	954	2,171,220	1,928,021	1,928,021		650,500	650,500		10,000	10,000		0	0	0
	Planning and Regulatory	181,218	256,260	701,520	701,520	701,520		568,810	568,810		0	0		0	0	0
	Deferred Works Reserve	0	0	1,279,440	262,178	262,178		230,332	230,332		0	0		0	0	0
	Total Schemes	5,494,824	(2,862,836)	28,140,350	23,895,362	13,300,483	(10,594,879)	33,557,704	38,592,913	5,035,209	13,803,400	16,628,400	2,825,000	3,159,168	0	0
	General Fund -Resources															
BG902	Capital Receipts			7,337,841	4,659,060	3,044,786	(1,614,273)	3,386,904	4,926,177	1,539,273	0	75,000	75,000	424,498	0	0
BG905	Ringfenced regeneration receipts			1,836,260	1,836,260	836,260	(1,000,000)	500,000	1,500,000	1,000,000				0	0	0
	SG1 Receipts			3,262,170	177,940	177,940		135,000	135,000		545,500	545,500		0	0	0
BG911	Locality Review receipts			1,239,600	0	0		1,028,550	1,384,016	355,466	0	192,000	192,000	0	0	0
BG461	Towns Fund			7,458,490	7,838,240	2,279,750	(5,558,490)	15,076,180	15,150,000	73,820	7,400,000	10,150,000	2,750,000	2,734,670	0	0
BG461	Other Grants and other contributions			1,446,088	255,340	255,340		986,910	986,910					0	0	0
BG862	S106's			46,090	46,090	46,090		0	0					0	0	0
BG936	Priorities – Strategic CIL													0	0	0
BG937	Local – Neighbourhood CIL			97,500	97,500	97,500		187,500	187,500					0	0	0
BG904	LEP			0	0	0		500,000	500,000					0	0	0
	RCCO			180,879	180,879	180,879		0	0					0	0	0
	Revenue Reserves			253,200	253,200	243,200	(10,000)	340,000	350,000	10,000				0	0	0
BG903	Capital Reserve (Housing Receipts)			727,361	695,464	677,578	(17,886)	394,931	412,817	17,886	104,000	104,000		0	0	0
BG916	Capital Reserve (Revenue Savings)			20,000	20,000	20,000		16,000	16,000					0	0	0
BG920	New Homes Bonus CNM			242,541	0	0		242,541	242,541					0	0	0
	Prudential Borrowing Approved			3,690,320	3,690,320	3,690,320		2,450,250	2,450,250		0	0		0	0	0
	Short Term borrowing and funded from private sale			302,010	4,145,070	1,750,840	(2,394,230)	8,312,937	10,351,701	2,038,764	5,753,900	5,561,900	(192,000)	0	0	0
	Funding Gap			0	0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
	Total Resources (General Fund)			28,140,350	23,895,362	13,300,483	(10,594,879)	33,557,704	38,592,913	5,035,209	13,803,400	16,628,400	2,825,000	3,159,168	0	0
				0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

APPENDIX A - GENERAL FUND CAPITAL STRATEGY

Cost Centre	Scheme	2023/24						2024/25			2025/2026			2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029
		Actuals 23/24 Pd1 - Pd9	Commitments	Q2 Working Budget	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Working Budget	Variance Capital Strategy v Q3	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Working Budget	Variance Capital Strategy v Q3	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Working Budget	Variance Capital Strategy v Q3	Final Capital Strategy	Final Capital Strategy	Final Capital Strategy
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
	Stevenage Direct Services															
	Parks & Open Spaces															
KC218	Hertford Road Play Area (S106 Funded)			25,000	0	0		25,000	25,000		0	0		0	0	0
KE911	Play Area Improvement Programme			555,330	0	0		555,330	480,330	(75,000)	0	75,000	75,000	0	0	0
KE097	Litter bins			0	0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE329	Play Areas Fixed Play			9,470	9,470	9,470		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE494	Green Space Access Infrastructure	100,198	47,042	202,140	202,140	202,140		50,000	50,000		50,000	50,000		0	0	0
KE916	Peartree skate park			40,000	0	0		40,000	40,000		0	0		0	0	0
	Other															
KG002	Garages	1,618,745	48,621	3,492,570	3,492,570	2,073,141	(1,419,429)	0	1,419,429	1,419,429	0	0		0	0	0
KS263	Waste and Recycling System	5,614	(3,800)	24,160	24,160	24,160		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE520	Welfare improvements at out based hubs			10,000	10,000		(10,000)	0	10,000	10,000	0	0		0	0	0
KE542	Flat block waste management infrastructure	10,310	(10,771)	29,040	29,040	10,310	(18,730)	0	18,730	18,730	0	0		0	0	0
KE543	Shrub bed programme			132,480	70,000	70,000		44,000	44,000		44,000	44,000		0	0	0
KE544	Review of Biodiversity Action Plan	4,905		12,000	7,000	7,000		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE545	Cemeteries System			12,120	12,120	12,120		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE946	BNG Chells Park/Canterbury Way PF (19/00485/FPM)	1,497		46,090	46,090	46,090		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
	Vehicles, Plant, Equipment															
KE497	Trade Waste Containers			20,000	20,000		(20,000)		20,000	20,000	0	0		0	0	0
Various	Vehicle/Plant replacement Programme - see Appendix 'A1 Vehicles'	185,596	9,541	1,108,910	698,750	534,750	(164,000)	1,030,610	1,194,610		0	0		0	0	0
KE920	Memorial Tree for Weston Road Cemetery	17,452	179	23,200	23,200	23,200		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE921	Improvement works to Hampson Park depot	1,413	30,082	40,000	40,000	40,000		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE922	Additional Headstone Plinths - Weston Road Cemetery	12,989		10,300	12,990	12,990		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE923	Pothole repairs Weston Road Cemetery	5,355		3,800	5,950	5,950		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE924	Improvements to Welfare facilities Weston Road Cemetery	12,976	11,528	10,000	10,000	10,000		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE925	Repair closed church wall St Nicholas church			30,000	0	0		30,000	30,000		0	0		0	0	0
KE926	roof residual waste bay Cavendish Transfer Station	299		150,000	0	0		150,000	150,000		0	0		0	0	0
KE927	Thermal Image Cameras	647		80,000	0	0		80,000	80,000		0	0		0	0	0
KE928	Ph2 fire protection works Cavendish	6,812		350,000	0	0		350,000	350,000		0	0		0	0	0
KE929	Digital system fleet and workshop operation			20,000	20,000	20,000		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE930	Digital system streets and grounds services			56,000	0	0		56,000	56,000		0	0		0	0	0
KE931	Digital system play area inspections/managment			16,500	0	0		16,500	16,500		0	0		0	0	0
KE932	Digital book of remembrance		1,700	2,000	2,000	2,000		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE933	Asset Management system			10,000	10,000		(10,000)	0	10,000	10,000	0	0		0	0	0
KE491	Weighbridge Improvement works	17,949		17,950	17,950	17,950		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
New Growth	Food collection vehicles (x5)							850,000	850,000		0	0		0	0	0
New Growth	Replace four refuse vehicles - VU66 NPY, VU66 NPZ, VU66							305,000	305,000		0	0		0	0	0
New Growth	Replace Sweeper - LK20 EJO							65,000	65,000		0	0		0	0	0
New Growth	Shovel Loader to replace - FN69 XSU							200,000	200,000		0	0		0	0	0
New Growth	Stand on Mowers to replace AN100520 & AN100559							15,000	15,000		0	0		0	0	0
	Total Stevenage Direct Services	2,002,757	134,123	6,539,060	4,763,431	3,121,271	(1,642,159)	3,862,440	5,429,599	1,567,159	94,000	169,000	75,000	0	0	0

APPENDIX A - GENERAL FUND CAPITAL STRATEGY

Cost Centre	Scheme	2023/24						2024/25			2025/2026			2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029
		Actuals 23/24 Pd1 - Pd9	Commitments	Q2 Working Budget	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Working Budget	Variance Capital Strategy v Q3	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Working Budget	Variance Capital Strategy v Q3	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Working Budget	Variance Capital Strategy v Q3	Final Capital Strategy	Final Capital Strategy	Final Capital Strategy
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
	Housing Development Scheme (Joint GF/HRA)															
KG032	Building Conversion New Homes															
KG034	Kenilworth - Retail															
KG035	Kenilworth - Community Centre			648,680	0	0		648,680	648,680		574,900	574,900		0	0	0
KG036	Kenilworth - private sale (Malvern Close & Blocks A3&A6)			1,037,040	1,037,040	1,037,040		2,124,320	2,124,320		5,179,000	5,179,000		424,498	0	0
KG037	North Road			293,500	0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
Various	Housing Development Schemes (Joint GF/HRA)			1,979,220	1,037,040	1,037,040	0	2,773,000	2,773,000	0	5,753,900	5,753,900	0	424,498	0	0
KG038	Marshgate Wholly Owned Housing Development Company (WOC)			611,000	611,000	611,000		2,450,250	2,450,250		0	0		0	0	0
	Total Housing Development (including grants to Register)	0	0	2,590,220	1,648,040	1,648,040	0	5,223,250	5,223,250	0	5,753,900	5,753,900	0	424,498	0	0
	Finance & Estates			1,761,103	(12,288,962)	(8,859,527)		(7,974,663)	(4,062,332)		(8,478,957)	(4,239,479)		(6,768,113)	(9,238,880)	(10,384,971)
	Finance															
KS279	Upgrade Integra	74,171		66,000	66,000	66,000		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
	Estates															
KS278	New Management Software	12,937	(8,925)	66,080	66,080	66,080		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KR916	Commercial Properties Refurbishment (MRC Programme)	19		29,470	29,470	29,470		330,220	330,220		0	0		0	0	0
KR150	Works to improve vacant premises prior to re-letting	24,300	17,851	41,140	41,140	41,140		15,000	15,000		0	0		0	0	0
KR155	EPC Surveys	930	5,817	2,000	2,000	2,000		87,620	87,620		0	0		0	0	0
KR156	EPC remedials	9,530	(2,225)	20,000	20,000	20,000		199,240	199,240		0	0		0	0	0
KR157	Building condition and Insurance valuation Survey	72,326	(52,410)	127,590	95,693	95,693		31,898	31,898		0	0		0	0	0
	Play Centres															
KC904	Play Centres General															
	Community Centres															
KE529	Community Centres Urgent and H&S Works	22,522	(550)	29,700	29,700	29,700		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KR159	St Nicholas POD removal			0	0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE553	Bedwell CC - Replace extract fans and electric heaters	43		40	40	40		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KR163	Chells manor - lightning upgrade			10,000	10,000	10,000		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KR164	Timebridge Community Centre flooring			20,000	20,000	20,000		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
	Neighbourhood Centres															
KE554	Bedwell Neighbourhood centre canopy repairs	229	6,262	12,040	12,040	12,040		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE555	8-10 The glebe roof replacement	26,642	(64,890)	29,350	29,350	29,350		0	0		0	0		0	0	0

APPENDIX A - GENERAL FUND CAPITAL STRATEGY

Cost Centre	Scheme	2023/24						2024/25			2025/2026			2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029
		Actuals 23/24 Pd1 - Pd9	Commitments	Q2 Working Budget	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Working Budget	Variance Capital Strategy v Q3	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Working Budget	Variance Capital Strategy v Q3	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Working Budget	Variance Capital Strategy v Q3	Final Capital Strategy	Final Capital Strategy	Final Capital Strategy
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
	Park Pavilions															
	Estates cont.															
	Depots															
KE526	Cavendish Fire Protection works formerly know as Depots: Urgent and H&S Works	1,145			0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE540	Cavendish Road Fire protection works				0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE527	Depots: Planned Preventative Works (reroof)	18,174	(17,322)	279,280	279,280	279,280		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KR160	Cavendish depot - IT server room - gas suppression air permeability prevention works			0	0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KR161	Cavendish Depot IT/CCTV gas suppression works	56		60	60	60		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KR165	Cavendish Road reception access enhancement	10,360	872	10,360	10,360	10,360		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KR166	Cavendish Road manhole covers	9		50,000	50,000	50,000		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KR167	Cavendish Road penstock valve	114		50,000	50,000	50,000		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
	Other															
KE556	MSCP: Urgent and H&S Works															
KE558	MSCP resurface worn stairwell floor	64		79,920	79,920	79,920		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE536	Multi Storey Car Park - Installation of emergency lighting	3,760	5,640	183,730	183,730	183,730		75,000	75,000		0	0		0	0	0
KE557	MSCP lighting upgrade - LED (phased)			0				0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KR158	Town Plaza			0				0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KR162	Fairlands valley farmhouse roofing works	364	(45,300)	0	0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE559	MSCP / Indoor Market guttering			30,000	30,000	30,000		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KR168	Indoor Market roller shutter	4	4,945	9,000	9,000	9,000		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KR169	MSCP replacement fuse boards			8,000	8,000	8,000		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
	Estates cont.															
	Council Offices															
KR141	Corporate Buildings - H&S															
KR151	Daneshill: Urgent and H&S Works	16,688	14,455	92,250	92,250	92,250		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
	Operational Buildings															
KR152	BTC 2019/20 Backlog H&S Works			27,930	27,930	27,930		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KR153	BTC Urgent and H&S Works			65,780	65,780	65,780		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KR154	BTC Planned Preventative Works	970	405	190,280	190,280	190,280		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KR170	BTC Essential works - Replace / upgrade doors, Lighting			195,000	195,000	195,000		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KR138	Town Square Assets - Condition Survey			0	0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE504	Station Ramp			0	0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
New Growth	Burwell Road shops - Reroofing,			0	0	0		60,000	60,000		0	0		0	0	0
New Growth	MSCP fire door replacement			0	0	0		35,000	35,000		0	0		0	0	0
New Growth	Commercial - shop units roof works			0	0	0		125,000	125,000		0	0		0	0	0
New Growth	Commercial properties - General repairs			0	0	0		100,000	100,000		0	0		0	0	0
New Growth	cavendish - IT server room works			0	0	0		65,000	65,000		0	0		0	0	0
New Growth	King George V Pavilion - Works to existing Fascia boards			0	0	0		20,000	20,000		0	0		0	0	0
New Growth	Replace 1 FM Team vehicle			0	0	0		28,000	28,000		0	0		0	0	0
New Growth	Cavendish - generator			0	0	0		90,000	90,000		0	0		0	0	0
	Total Estates	221,186	(135,377)	1,659,000	1,627,103	1,627,103	0	1,261,978	1,261,978	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Finance & Estates	295,357	(135,377)	1,725,000	1,693,103	1,693,103	0	1,261,978	1,261,978	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

APPENDIX A - GENERAL FUND CAPITAL STRATEGY

Cost Centre	Scheme	2023/24						2024/25			2025/2026			2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029
		Actuals 23/24 Pd1 - Pd9	Commitments	Q2 Working Budget	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Working Budget	Variance Capital Strategy v Q3	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Working Budget	Variance Capital Strategy v Q3	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Working Budget	Variance Capital Strategy v Q3	Final Capital Strategy	Final Capital Strategy	Final Capital Strategy
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
	Corporate Projects, Customer Services & Technology															
	IT General															
KS268	Infrastructure Investment	28,674	54,035	462,000	337,190	337,190		99,000	99,000		0	0		0	0	0
KS318	Core ICT Equipment for Additional Staff			90,010	0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
New Growth	Telephony Hardware Refresh							22,500	22,500		0	0		0	0	0
New Growth	VDI hosting Hardware Refresh							11,250	11,250		0	0		0	0	0
New Growth	Hardware Replacment Program							78,660	78,660		0	0		0	0	0
New Growth	Hardware Replacment Program (HRA Element)							(37,466)	(37,466)		0	0		0	0	0
KS319	2012 Migration Servers			20,000	0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
	Total IT General		54,035	572,010	337,190	337,190		173,944	173,944		0	0		0	0	0
	Connected to Our Customer (CTOC)															
KS271	Corporate Website - Redesign							0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KS274	New CRM Technology	47		30,320	30,320	30,320		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
	Total CTOC	47	0	30,320	30,320	30,320	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Corporate Projects, Customer Services & Technology	28,722	54,035	602,330	367,510	367,510	0	173,944	173,944	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Regeneration															
KE505	Demolition of Towers Garages and other sites (GD1)			92,580	92,580	92,580		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE439	Town Square Improvements (GD1)			0	0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE451	SQ1 Regeneration			0	0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE466	Bus Interchange (GD3)	(11,536)	(44,633)	0	0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE533	Multi Storey Car Park (GD3) 'Sustainable Transport'	2,963	(483)	0	0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE506	Public Sector Hub	446,457	28,983	1,836,260	1,836,260	836,260	(1,000,000)	0	1,000,000	1,000,000	0	0		0	0	0
KE541	Railway Station Multi-Storey Car Park	(396,395)	(2,962,650)	0	0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
	Repay LEP Loan			0	0	0		1,000,000	1,000,000		0	0		0	0	0
	SG1 Joint Venture			3,144,230	3,144,230	750,000	(2,394,230)	5,510,270	7,904,500	2,394,230	545,500	545,500		0	0	0
	Towns Fund:															
KE538	Towns Fund	85,042		0	0	0		0	0		0	0		(88,390)	0	0
KE560	Stevenage Enterprise Centre			0	0	0		4,000,000	4,000,000		0	0		0	0	0
KE561	Gunnels Wood Road Infrastructure			985,430	985,430	1,000,000	14,570	0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE562	Station Gateway	10,286		0	0	0		456,930	500,000	43,070	0	0		0	0	0
KE563	Marshgate Biotech	1,128,157	(34,551)	1,399,000	1,399,000	0	(1,399,000)	0	0		0	0		1,399,000	0	0
KE564	Stevenage Innovation & Technology Centre (SITEC)			0	0	0		3,969,250	4,000,000	30,750	1,000,000	1,000,000		0	0	0
KE565	New Towns Heritage Centre	49,834		979,820	979,820	0	(979,820)	1,000,000	1,000,000		0	500,000	500,000	479,820	0	0
KE566	Stevenage Sports & Leisure Club	112,481	23,947	2,426,930	2,426,930	150,000		2,000,000	2,000,000		5,500,000	7,450,000		326,930	0	0
							(2,276,930)						1,950,000			
KE567	Cycling & Pedestrian Connectivity	45,552	(177,205)	1,113,320	1,113,320	700,000	(413,320)	1,200,000	1,200,000		900,000	1,200,000	300,000	113,320	0	0
KE568	Diversification of Retail & Garden Square	26,081	(6,240)	553,990	553,990	50,000	(503,990)	2,450,000	2,450,000		0	0		503,990	0	0
Various	Towns Fund	1,457,434	(3,172,831)	7,458,490	7,458,490	1,900,000	(5,558,490)	15,076,180	15,150,000	73,820	7,400,000	10,150,000	2,750,000	2,734,670	0	0
	Total Regeneration	1,498,923	(3,172,831)	12,531,560	12,531,560	3,578,840	(8,952,720)	21,586,450	25,054,500	3,468,050	7,945,500	10,695,500	2,750,000	2,734,670	0	0

APPENDIX A - GENERAL FUND CAPITAL STRATEGY

Cost Centre	Scheme	2023/24						2024/25			2025/2026			2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029
		Actuals 23/24 Pd1 - Pd9	Commitments	Q2 Working Budget	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Working Budget	Variance Capital Strategy v Q3	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Working Budget	Variance Capital Strategy v Q3	Final Capital Strategy	Q3 Working Budget	Variance Capital Strategy v Q3	Final Capital Strategy	Final Capital Strategy	Final Capital Strategy
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
	Community & Neighbourhoods															
KC202	Fairlands Valley Park - Aqua			5,820	4,000	4,000		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KC235	Boat house as essential H&S works for dry rot	135		140	140	140		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE224	CCTV - Replacement Cameras (Community mobile cameras)			0	0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE507	Cycleways Installations (subject to £100k Arts Council			10,000	0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KC232	SALC and the Swim Centre Urgent and H&S Works	47,693	(9,330)	132,530	132,530	132,530		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KC231	SALC, Swim Centre, and Fairlands Valley Sailing Centre 2019/20 Backlog H&S Works	1,644		19,860	19,860	19,860								0	0	0
KC233	Stevenage Arts & Leisure Water leak - Reroofing	59		18,920	59	59		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
	C&N cont.				0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KC242	SLL Leisure management - end of contract capital	21,204	40,715	150,000	150,000	150,000								0	0	0
KC237	Fire stopping works at SALC	20,981	(7,413)	99,900	80,000	80,000		19,900	19,900		0	0		0	0	0
KC238	Lift replacement at SALC	3,401	(1,850)	30,000	45,000	45,000								0	0	0
KC239	Replacement bridge at Golf Centre & other bridge works	74,214	(21,814)	80,000	71,382	71,382		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KC240	Replacement Camera programme	31,357		33,920	33,920	33,920		40,000	40,000		10,000	10,000		0	0	0
KC241	ASB team mobile camera			0	0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KC052	Shephalbury Park	14,532		14,530	14,530	14,530		5,600	5,600		0	0		0	0	0
KC236	Ridlins Athletics	80,452	645	85,000	78,000	78,000		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE917	Ridlins Athletics Facility			10,000	10,000	10,000		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KC243	New Leisure Contract	1,188,596		1,188,600	1,188,600	1,188,600		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KC245	Equipment replacement at Fairlands Valley Sailing Centre	3,113		35,000	35,000	35,000		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KC246	Aqua Park - Rubber crumb surface replacement	429		35,000	0	0		35,000	35,000		0	0		0	0	0
KC247	Lighting of clock tower - permanent install			65,000	65,000	65,000		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KC248	Stock condition survey Leisure sites	37		150,000	0	0		150,000	150,000		0	0		0	0	0
KC249	CCTV Mobile camera replacement for Community Safety			7,000										0	0	0
New Growth	Fire stopping at SALC							220,000	220,000					0	0	0
New Growth	Lift procurement at SALC							160,000	160,000					0	0	0
New Growth	Sailing Centre							10,000	10,000					0	0	0
New Growth	Ridlins Stadium							10,000	10,000					0	0	0
	Total Community & Neighbourhoods	1,487,848	954	2,171,220	1,928,021	1,928,021	0	650,500	650,500	0	10,000	10,000	0	0	0	0
	Planning & Regulatory															
KE119	Off Street Car Parks (Multi Storey Car Parks)	7,063	137,917	199,950	199,950	199,950		175,000	175,000		0	0		0	0	0
KE470	Electric Car Charging Points	103,968	33,749	134,600	134,600	134,600		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE530	Car Park Equipment - Digitalisation		2,600	20,000	20,000	20,000		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE516	Town Centre Ramps Improvements			0	0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE201	Hard standings	3,665	26,335	45,380	45,380	45,380		25,000	25,000		0	0		0	0	0
KE100	Residential Parking			300	300	300		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE217	Parking Restrictions	24,234	1,878	16,270	16,270	16,270		15,000	15,000		0	0		0	0	0
KE444	Coreys Mill Lane - Additional Parking Capacity	166	20,600	20,550	20,550	20,550		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE486	CCTV St George's MSCP			25,360	25,360	25,360		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
KE531	Workplace Travel Plan	5,813	32,728	40,400	40,400	40,400		15,000	15,000		0	0		0	0	0
KE569	Cashless on street parking transition	36,309	453	60,000	60,000	60,000		60,000	60,000		0	0		0	0	0
KC916	Street Scene UKSPF			41,210	41,210	41,210		131,310	131,310		0	0		0	0	0
KC244	Community Climate Change Fund			97,500	97,500	97,500		97,500	97,500		0	0		0	0	0
New Growth	St Georges MSCP - conversion of store room and boiler room to office space							50,000	50,000					0	0	0
	Total Planning & Regulatory	181,218	256,260	701,520	701,520	701,520	0	568,810	568,810	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
KR911	Deferred Works Reserve		0	1,279,440	262,178	262,178		230,332	230,332		0	0		0	0	0

APPENDIX B - HOUSING CAPITAL STRATEGY

Cost Centre	Scheme	2023/24				2024/25			2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029
		Actuals 23/24	Capital Strategy Revised Budget	Q3 Working Budget	Variance Q3 v Cap Strat	Capital Strategy Revised Budget	Q3 Working Budget	Variance Q3 v Cap Strat	Capital Strategy Revised Budget	Capital Strategy Revised Budget	Capital Strategy Revised Budget	Capital Strategy Revised Budget
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
	SUMMARY											
	Capital Programme Excl New Build (Housing Investment)	13,576,496	24,565,246	22,294,386	(2,270,860)	24,329,000	26,599,860	2,270,860	25,092,000	22,939,000	24,254,000	25,868,000
	Special Projects & Equipment	77,094	77,094	77,094								
	New Build (Housing Development)	11,483,918	18,055,230	18,055,230		30,449,150	30,449,150		31,366,520	13,000,000	12,783,580	8,400,000
	Digital & Transformation	41,916	319,723	319,723		52,997	52,997					
	TOTAL HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME	25,179,424	43,017,293	40,746,433	(2,270,860)	54,831,147	57,102,007	2,270,860	56,458,520	35,939,000	37,037,580	34,268,000

APPENDIX B - HOUSING CAPITAL STRATEGY

Cost Centre	Scheme	2023/24				2024/25			2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029
		Actuals 23/24	Capital Strategy Revised Budget	Q3 Working Budget	Variance Q3 v Cap Strat	Capital Strategy Revised Budget	Q3 Working Budget	Variance Q3 v Cap Strat	Capital Strategy Revised Budget	Capital Strategy Revised Budget	Capital Strategy Revised Budget	Capital Strategy Revised Budget
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
	CAPITAL PROGRAMME EXCL. NEW BUILD											
	Planned Investment including Decent Homes											
KH157	Decent Homes - Redecs	670										
Various	Decent Homes - Internal/External Works	1,845,618	3,567,500	2,767,500	(800,000)	5,187,000	5,987,000	800,000	8,650,000	9,800,000	10,700,000	10,700,000
KH308	Decent Homes Internal/External Works Contractor 1	943,880	2,300,000	1,500,000	(800,000)	1,125,000	1,925,000	800,000				
KH309	Decent Homes Internal/External Works Contractor 2											
KH310	Decent Homes Internal/External Works Voids	454,006	717,500	717,500		450,000	450,000		450,000	450,000	450,000	450,000
KH143	Decent Homes Internal/One off Heating Works					2,000,000	2,000,000		3,500,000	3,500,000	3,500,000	3,500,000
KH141	Decent Homes Electrical	447,732	550,000	550,000		42,000	42,000		150,000	150,000	500,000	500,000
KH142	Decent Homes Kitchens								1,900,000	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
Various	Decent Homes External Works								500,000	550,000	550,000	550,000
KH284	Door Replacement											
KH285	Window Replacement					1,500,000	1,500,000		2,000,000	2,000,000	2,500,000	2,500,000
KH298	Roofing					70,000	70,000		100,000	100,000	150,000	150,000
KH299	Insulation Measures								50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Various	Decent Homes - Roofing											
Various	Decent Homes - Flat Blocks	6,290,341	10,000,000	10,000,000		9,700,000	9,700,000		5,400,000	250,000	250,000	250,000
KH311	MRC Flat Blocks - Wates	3,826,512	5,300,000	5,300,000		4,500,000	4,500,000		500,000			
KH312	MRC Flat Blocks - Mulalley	2,364,341	4,500,000	4,500,000		5,000,000	5,000,000		4,700,000			
KH313	MRC Flat Blocks - Misc	94,117	200,000	200,000		200,000	200,000		200,000	250,000	250,000	250,000
KH110	Insulation Measures											
KH109	Door Replacement											
KH231	Window Replacement											
KH281	Flat Blocks Electrics											
KH111	Roofing											
KH300	MRC	5,370										
KH205	Communal Heating	18,910	80,000	80,000					100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000
KH092	Lift Installation - Inspection & Remedial Works											
KH287	Temporary Lift Provision - Flat Blocks											
KH291	Sprinkler Systems - Flat Blocks											
KH294	High Rises - Preliminary Works		1,130	1,130								
KH321	High Rises - Improvement Works	41,325	835,000	835,000		1,750,000	1,750,000		1,750,000	1,750,000		
Future Year	New Schemes to be created								947,000	2,993,000	5,158,000	6,772,000
	Health & Safety											
KH085	Fire Safety	523,583	2,604,670	1,050,000	(1,554,670)		1,554,670	1,554,670				
KH317	Additional fire stopping works											
KH112	Asbestos Management	238,874	281,190	340,000	58,810	300,000	241,190	(58,810)	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000
KH114	Subsidence	56,526	100,000	100,000		120,000	120,000		120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
KH144	Contingent Major Repairs	246,719	350,000	350,000		500,000	500,000		500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000
KH327	Building safety					1,000,000	1,000,000		1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
	Estate & Communal Area											

APPENDIX B - HOUSING CAPITAL STRATEGY

Cost Centre	Scheme	2023/24				2024/25			2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029
		Actuals 23/24	Capital Strategy Revised Budget	Q3 Working Budget	Variance Q3 v Cap Strat	Capital Strategy Revised Budget	Q3 Working Budget	Variance Q3 v Cap Strat	Capital Strategy Revised Budget	Capital Strategy Revised Budget	Capital Strategy Revised Budget	Capital Strategy Revised Budget
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
KH223	Asset Review - Challenging Assets	410,802	790,970	790,970		600,000	600,000		600,000	600,000	600,000	600,000
KH224	Asset Review - Sheltered (non RED)	116,597										
	Other HRA Schemes											
KH318	Stock condition Surveys	113,451	125,000	150,000	25,000	120,000	95,000	(25,000)	125,000	125,000	125,000	125,000
KH174	Energy Efficiency Pilot Projects	2,028,741				200,000	200,000		200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
KH319	Decarbonisation	1,141,473	4,888,190	4,888,190		3,800,000	3,800,000		3,800,000	3,800,000	3,800,000	3,800,000
KH320	Decarbonisation											
KH329	Decarbonisation - Grant											
KH094	Disabled Adaptations	502,868	872,690	872,690		1,084,000	1,084,000		1,100,000	1,100,000	1,100,000	1,100,000
KH328	Increased Aids & Adaptations budget											
KH330	CCTV		145,000	145,000								
KH331	Digitalisation											
	New Business Plan expenditure		(76,094)	(76,094)		(32,000)	(32,000)		500,000	301,000	301,000	301,000
	TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME EXCL. NEW BUILD	13,576,496	24,565,246	22,294,386	(2,270,860)	24,329,000	26,599,860	2,270,860	25,092,000	22,939,000	24,254,000	25,868,000
							(2,270,860)					
	SPECIAL PROJECTS & EQUIPMENT											
	HRA Equipment											
KH015	Capital Equipment (including Supported Housing Equip)	54,194	54,194	54,194								
KH278	Vans for RVS	22,900	22,900	22,900								
	Sub Total Special Projects & Equipment	77,094	77,094	77,094								
	CAPITAL PROGRAMME NEW BUILD											
	New Build Programme - eligible for 1-4-1	7,970,288	4,134,190	4,134,190		8,515,790	8,515,790		21,666,520	13,000,000	12,783,580	8,400,000
	New Build Programme - ineligible	3,513,630	13,921,040	13,921,040		21,933,360	21,933,360		9,700,000			
KH233	Open Market Acquisitions (Social Rent)										891,790	
KH233	Open Market Acquisitions (Afford. Rent)										891,790	
KH233	Open Market Acquisitions (Ineligible 141)	3,483,119	4,150,000	4,150,000								
KH241	Ditchmore Lane 6 units (Ineligible 141)											
KH244	Twin Foxes	390										
KH245	March Hare in Burwell Road (15 Units)	122,617	400,000	400,000		1,963,480	1,963,480		500,000			
KH247	Kenilworth Close (105 units) (Ineligible 141)		7,436,040	7,436,040		433,360	433,360					
KH247	Kenilworth Close 1 for 1 Expenditure (61.8%)	5,925,392	469,190	469,190								
KH280	Symonds Green	81,380	200,000	200,000								
KH279	Shephall Way	(430)										
KH282	North Road (Ineligible 141)	18,655										
	Dunn Close (27 units, 21 in main block, supported accommodation)	462,782	1,750,000	1,750,000		752,310	752,310					
NEED CODE	Brent Court Social Rent		2,335,000	2,335,000		21,500,000	21,500,000		9,700,000			
	Schemes Under Development		1,315,000	1,315,000		5,800,000	5,800,000		21,166,520	13,000,000	11,000,000	8,400,000
KH307	The Oval (70 Units)	1,144,563	1,000,000	1,000,000		5,000,000	5,000,000		12,000,000	6,000,000		

APPENDIX B - HOUSING CAPITAL STRATEGY

Cost Centre	Scheme	2023/24				2024/25			2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029
		Actuals 23/24	Capital Strategy Revised Budget	Q3 Working Budget	Variance Q3 v Cap Strat	Capital Strategy Revised Budget	Q3 Working Budget	Variance Q3 v Cap Strat	Capital Strategy Revised Budget	Capital Strategy Revised Budget	Capital Strategy Revised Budget	Capital Strategy Revised Budget
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
KH301	Redcar Drive aka Cartref (Social Rent)		150,000	150,000		225,000	225,000		3,721,820			
KH302	Drakes Drive											
KH301	Redcar Drive aka Cartref (Affordable Rent)	90,762				375,000	375,000		3,721,820			
KH314	Ellis Avenue (Social Rent)	15,154				100,000	100,000		861,440			
KH314	Ellis Avenue (Affordable Rent)					100,000	100,000		861,440			
NEED CODE	Neighbourhood Centre Social Rent									3,500,000	5,500,000	
NEED CODE	Neighbourhood Centre Afford.Rent									3,500,000	5,500,000	
KH304	Shephall Social	127,679	165,000	165,000								
KH305	Mary Mead Social											
KH306	Ely Dell Social											
KH072	L.S.S.O. Buy Back	11,856										
	TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME NEW BUILD	11,483,918	18,055,230	18,055,230		30,449,150	30,449,150		31,366,520	13,000,000	12,783,580	8,400,000
	INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY											
	IT General (IT)											
KH268	Infrastructure Investment	12,468	111,273	111,273		32,997	32,997					
KH315	Core ICT Equipment for Additional Staff											
KH316	2012 Migration Servers											
Growth	2024/25					20,000	20,000					
	Total General IT	12,468	111,273	111,273		52,997	52,997					
	Connected To Our Customers (CTOC)											
KH288	New CRM Technology (Digital Platform)	22,047	82,380	82,380								
	Total CTOC	22,047	82,380	82,380								
	Housing All Under One Roof programme (HAUOR)											
KH283	Housing Improvements - Northgate online	7,400	126,070	126,070								
	Total HAUOR	7,400	126,070	126,070								
	Other HRA											
KH218	ICT Programme (Business Plan)											
	Total Other HRA											
	TOTAL ICT INCLUDING DIGITAL AGENDA	41,916	319,723	319,723		52,997	52,997					

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

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