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COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE

Date: Wednesday, 3 April 2024 Time: 6.00pm, Location: Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage Contact: Alex.marsh@stevenage.gov.uk committees@stevenage.gov.uk

Members:

Councillors: S Mead (Chair), A Farquharson (Vice-Chair), J Ashley-Wren, F Chowdhury, J Duncan, M Humberstone, W Kerby, C McGrath, E Plater and C Veres

AGENDA

<u> PART 1</u>

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Community Select Committee held on 29 February 2024.

Pages 3 – 8

3. EXECUTIVE MEMBER RESPONSE TO THE CSC REPAIRS SCRUTINY REVIEW

To receive the Executive Member response to the CSC Housing Repairs Scrutiny Review report and recommendations.

Pages 9 – 14

4. CRIME & DISORDER DISCUSSION ITEM

The Committee are invited to sit as the Council's statutory Crime & Disorder Committee and will receive a presentation from the Police, Chief Inspector Graeme Walsingham, and contributions from Head of Community Advise and Support, Sarah Pateman, Executive Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Cllr Jackie Hollywell and Chair of the SoSafe Partnership, CE Matt Partridge.

Pages 15 – 20

5. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS

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

6. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

To consider the following motions:

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

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

7. SURVIVORS AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (SADA) PRESENTATION

Members are invited to receive a presentation from Survivors Against Domestic Violence (SADA) providing an update on the work of SADA. Members will be considering this item as a Part II confidential item due to the sensitive nature of the service.

8. URGENT PART II **BUSINESS**

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

Agenda Published 22 March 2024

Agenda Item 2

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Thursday, 29 February 2024 Time: 6.00pm Place: Council Chamber, Daneshill House, Danestrete, Stevenage

Present: Julie Ashley-Wren, Forhad Chowdhury, John Duncan, Wendy Kerby, Conor McGrath, Ellie Plater and Carolina Veres.

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

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Election of Chair for the meeting

In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair the Scrutiny Officer invited the Committee to nominate a Chair for the meeting. Cllr Conor McGrath proposed and Cllr Forhad Chowdhury duly seconded and it was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Ellie Plater be elected Chair for the meeting.

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Sarah Mead (Chair), Alex Farquharson (Vice Chair) and Mason Humberstone.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES - MONDAY 8 JANUARY 2024

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Community Select Committee held on 8 January 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2024-25

The Chair invited the Scrutiny Officer, Stephen Weaver, to provide some detail on the issues that Members had raised as potential scrutiny review items for the 2024-25 Municipal Year:

The Scrutiny Officer explained that the 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 prescrutiny policy development items ahead of their consideration at the Executive. The Scrutiny Officer drew Members attention to a document that had been tabled at the meeting which detailed the Chair's comments regarding suggested work programme items and a few more suggestions that had been received since the original agenda papers had been circulated, which were detailed in the report at paragraph 5.

The Committee reviewed the suggestions that Members had provided as follows:

(1) Housing Engagement

The Strategic Director, Richard Protheroe, informed Members that TPAS, an independent Tenant Engagement expert, were working with the Council on a new engagement strategy. There would be an opportunity for the Committee to provide some policy development pre-scrutiny for this area of work.

(2) Housing Investment

The Strategic Director advised Members that regarding the revised Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan & revised asset management strategy, that Officer would be happy to provide Members with an update on what are the key deliverables for these programmes. An update could be provided from the Summer onwards.

Members welcomed receiving an update on the various elements to Housing Investment including the decent homes programme, the major repairs contract and on one-off repairs.

(3) Independent Living (Sheltered Housing)

The Scrutiny Officer explained the background to the suggested scrutiny work programme item and briefly referred to the Chair's response to the suggestion.

The Strategic Director advised that this is now referred to as Independent Living and clarified that extra care provision is commissioned and funded by Hertfordshire County Council.

The Strategic Director agreed to provide a briefing note to Members outlining the various care elements provided, who supplies the service and what is available to residents.

(4) Review the impact of the new Housing Allocations Policy

The Strategic Director informed Members that the revised Housing Allocations Policy had not yet been implemented and is due to be launched in July 2024. The full impact of the new scheme would not be known until a 12-month cycle is completed.

A member suggested that the public don't fully understand the current allocations scheme and would need help to see how the new scheme would operate. The Strategic Director agreed that Officers could advise the Committee on the steps being taken to communicate the new scheme.

(5) Equalities & Diversity

The Strategic Director updated Members on equalities and diversity activity. The Council had supported the Equalities Commission in recent times and was planning legacy actions.

The Equalities Commission identified the need for great support to the voluntary sector and people at a grass roots level to encourage greater community cohesion, including events. However, there was currently a Member task and finish group working specifically on events and how these are linked to Equalities & Diversity, so it would be best not to have a specific topic on the diversity of events to avoid the possibility of duplication.

Regarding how the Council can strengthen community cohesion, Members were informed that there was a Legacy Group following on from the Equalities Commission. It was suggested that it would be sensible to discuss this issue with the Legacy Group to find out what their aims and objectives were and to see how the Committee could work with them and the Social Inclusion Partnership to see what areas Members could develop and assist on.

A Member suggested that communications with some minorities in the town had recently slipped. The example given was with the local Bangladeshi Community who appeared to have stopped receiving invitations to various civic events. It was stated that it was good to keep encouraging representatives from ethnic minority groups to attend events as this helped maintain good community cohesion.

Members requested that the Council's Equalities Officer be invited to a future CSC meeting to provide a PowerPoint presentation to CSC Members regarding who does what in relation to promoting Equalities and Diversity and good community cohesion.

The Chair of the Committee, Cllr Sarah Mead had stated in her briefing note to Members that she was keen to consider this as a main review item.

(6) Neighbourhood Wardens

The Scrutiny Officer reminded Members of the presentation that the Committee received regarding the work of the Neighbourhood Wardens during the Covid Pandemic. It was suggested and agreed that Officers should bring a further one-off update on the work of the Neighbourhood Wardens to the Committee.

(7) Community Centres

The Strategic Director reminded Members that the current policy was to operate a 'fix on fail' strategy, this made sense financially within the resources available to the Council. However, this was not sustainable in the long run. The Strategic Director stated that the Council was devising a medium to long term plan for the Council's estate.

A Bedwell Ward Member suggested that Community Associations were perhaps reluctant to do things with the buildings they occupy due to uncertainty. The Strategic Director recommended that the Chair of the Committee meet up with the Strategic Director and Statutory Section 151 Officer with responsibility for the Council's Finances regarding how the Committee might engage on this issue. There could be a possibility of some Policy Development Pre-Scrutiny but it would have to be conducted within a part II confidential meeting given the financial and commercially sensitive nature of the subject.

(8) Update on new Leisure Contract

The Strategic Director suggested that the new Leisure Provider, Everyone Active could certainly provide Members with a presentation. It was suggested that Everyone Active & the Council's Health and Wellbeing Officer be invited to attend a meeting and provide an update presentation to Members.

Statutory Crime & Disorder Committee and Standing item on Public Health

The Scrutiny Officer drew Member's attention to two extra items that were not included in the Members work programme suggestions. These included a Statutory item when the Committee sits as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee and a standing item on Public Health. The Scrutiny Officer reminded Members of the benefits the Council has seen since meeting regularly with the County Council's Director of Public Health, leading to financial support for the Council's Healthy Hub initiative which has been replicated around the County.

Members were keen to keep the good relations with the new Director of Public Health, Sarah Perman. The Strategic Director suggested that a focus could be on the Integrated Care Network. There had been a lot of work done across the County from Public Health regarding links with Herts and West Essex Integrated Care Board, along with the North & East Hertfordshire NHS Trust.

The Strategic Director advised that a new Healthy Stevenage Strategy is to be developed in conjunction with the local Primary Care Networks and the Committee could help inform future priorities. It is still at a very early process, so officers would need to see when it would be a good time to timetable policy development work with the Committee.

The Strategic Director suggested to Members that they could take a more in-depth look at Community Safety matters as a main review item. The Committee has a statutory role to sit at least once a year to consider Crime and Disorder, and the Committee could focus in on areas of concern if it felt there was a need.

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:

- <u>Housing Engagement</u> provide some pre-scrutiny policy development prior to a report to the Executive in 2024-25
- <u>Housing Investment</u> Members to receive an update on the various elements to Housing Investment including the decent homes programme, the major repairs contract and on one-off repairs.
- <u>Independent Living</u> (Sheltered Accommodation) The Strategic Director agreed to provide a briefing note to Members outlining the various care elements provided, who supplies the service and what is available to residents.
- <u>Review the impact of the new Housing Allocations Policy</u> The Strategic Director agreed to instruct Officers to provide a report on the overview of the communications plans with the public on the new Housing Allocations Policy before it is delivered in July 2024.
- Equalities & Diversity The Council's Equalities Officer be invited to a future CSC meeting to provide a PowerPoint presentation to CSC Members regarding who does what in relation to promoting Equalities and Diversity and good community cohesion. Following the presentation and liaison with the Equalities Commission Legacy Group a scope for a review could be brought back to the Committee for consideration.
- <u>Neighbourhood Warden</u> Officers should bring a one-off update on the work of the Neighbourhood Wardens to the Committee.
- <u>Community Centres</u> The Chair of the Committee to meet up with the Strategic Director and Statutory Section 151 Officer with responsibility for the Council's Finances regarding how the Committee might engage on this issue.
- <u>Update on the new Leisure Contract performance</u> Everyone Active & the Council's Health and Wellbeing Officer be invited to attend a meeting and provide an update presentation to Members.
- <u>Statutory Crime & Disorder Committee and Standing item on Public</u> <u>Health</u> – That these items be scheduled into the Committee's work programme for the year, with a view to work with HCC Public Health lead and partners in various NHS governance groups to develop a joint health strategy document for an Integrated Care Network for the area as a piece of pre-scrutiny policy development.

(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 1 BUSINESS

None.

5 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was **RESOLVED**:

- 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.

6 PART II MINUTES – 8 JANUARY 2024

It was **RESOLVED**:

That the Part II Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Monday 8 January 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

7 URGENT PART II BUSINESS

None.

<u>CHAIR</u>

	Executive Member Response	e to Review of Housing Repairs
	Date Recommendations agreed	by Community Select Committee:
	Considered at Community Select Committee, Monday 8 January 2024 (circulated Thursday 11 January 2024, following agreement by the Committee at its meeting on Monday 8 January 2024, of the draft report and recommendations, with no changes made at the Committee meeting to the report and recommendations)	
в абел	Date responses should be made by: Executive responses on behalf of the Executive Portfolio Holders for: Deputy Leader, Housing and Housing Development should be received by Friday 8 March 2024	
	Recommendations:	Executive Response:
	RECOMMENDATION 1 - Development of a suite of Policies and Procedures for Housing Property Services:That the Assistant Director Building Safety and Housing Property Services be recommended to develop a suite of policies, procedures and processes so that issues like quantifying the level	Response supported by Assistant Director Building Safety and Housing Property Services and Executive Portfolio Holders with responsibility for Housing & Housing Development, Cllr Jeannette Thomas. Agreed – the improvement plans for the Repairs service includes the
	of a repair into an agreed standard can be established which should help the authority manage repairs in a more planned way.	development of relevant policies, procedures and processes and service standards to which customers can hold SBC accountable as

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Action: Assistant Director Building Safety and Housing	their landlord.
Property Services RECOMMENDATION 2 - Improved Communication both internal and external: That (i) the Assistant Director Building Safety and Housing Property Services be recommended to improve communication both internal and external, ensuring that all team members communicate effectively with tenants and with colleagues to get	 Response supported by Assistant Director Building Safety and Housing Property Services and Executive Portfolio Holders with responsibility for Housing & Housing Development, Cllr Jeannette Thomas. (i) Agreed – communications is another key theme within the Repairs improvement plans (internal and with customers).
repairs resolved quickly and efficiently; and (ii) the repairs service improve communications with tenants via direct engagement, social media and newsletters so that tenants are aware of the implications of missing appointments. When there are repeated failures to keep appointments there should be a charge made against the tenants rent account.	We will engage with customers more effectively when dealing with repair requests, keeping them updated on progress and provide opportunities to help shape services including consultation on relevant policies and standards. We will improve communications and collaboration between teams to ensure that customers receive a seamless repairs service.
Action: Assistant Director Building Safety and Housing Property Services	(ii) As part of the review of the Responsive Repairs policy we can look at implementation of charges for missed appointments by customers where appropriate and raise awareness using a range of communication methods.
RECOMMENDATION 3 - Make better use of technology: That officers make a better use of technology to enhance the service this could include (i) encouraging tenants to send in digital photos and videos of the repair; (ii) using data on in year repairs against previous years to see trends and to profile the	Response supported by Assistant Director Building Safety and Housing Property Services and Executive Portfolio Holders with responsibility for Housing & Housing Development, Cllr Jeannette Thomas.
type of work that would be expected in different age/style housing stock; (iii) consider as a future development using remote	 We will enable more customers to use digital technology to report repairs, including submission of photos and/or video

diagnostic tools that are available in the housing sector or the development of an in-house housing App that tenants could use to report on repairs and general stock condition.	evidence to help improve the % of repairs which can be diagnosed accurately at first point of contact which in turn should improve first time fix rates and maximise productivity.
Action:	 (ii) Improving data quality and making better use of data to understand trends, inform service improvements and investment needs of the stock is a key workstream within the Repairs improvement plans.
Page	(iii) We currently make use of remote diagnostic tools such as Aico devices in a targeted way in a small number of properties, for example to monitor environmental conditions and exposure to risk of condensation and mould. We will explore the expansion of their use in more of our housing stock subject to a business case being agreed and being affordable within the HRA Business Plan.
	(iv) We are planning to reintroduce an on-line 'repairs finder' tool to help customers when reporting their repairs and the CSC will also be able to use this when speaking with customers reporting repairs by telephone to help accurately diagnose repairs at first point of contact. We will also work closely with the CSC to update the Knowledge Base which will help maximise the number of calls about repairs that can be dealt with at first point of contact. We can also explore what other tools may be available on the market which could help improve the customer experience when reporting and keeping track of their repairs. We will also look to enhance on-line housing accounts to enable updates to be provided on the status of reported repairs to enable customers to self- serve at a time that suits them.

гаде	RECOMMENDATION 4 – Work with the Customer Service Centre regarding training: That the Assistant Director Building Safety and Housing Property Services (i) be invited to work with the Customer Services Centre (CSC) to improve training to help them clearly identify if the work is a repair or planned investment and (ii) develop a checklist of questions for use with CSC Officers to ask the tenants to ascertain as much information to accompany the original request. Action: Assistant Director Building Safety and Housing Property Services & Head of Customer Services	Response supported by Assistant Director Building Safety and Housing Property Services, the Head of Customer Services and the Executive Portfolio Holders with responsibility for Housing & Housing Development, Cllr Jeannette Thomas. Agreed – as set out above we will be reintroducing 'Repairs Finder' and also working with the CSC to ensure that the Knowledge Base is up to date and sufficiently comprehensive to enable: (i) customer enquiries about repairs (and/or investment) to be dealt with appropriately at first point of contact and, (ii) accurate repairs diagnosis enabling the right Operative or contractor to be assigned to carry out the work improving first time fix rates and customer satisfaction.
Je 1z	 <u>RECOMMENDATION 5 - Review of the booking system:</u> That the scheduling system (DRS) be reviewed by the repairs team after the original booking and prior to sending out repairs operatives to ensure everything is in place to avoid the need for a future visit. Action: Assistant Director Building Safety and Housing Property Services 	Response supported by Assistant Director Building Safety and Housing Property Services Executive Portfolio Holders with responsibility for Housing & Housing Development, Cllr Jeannette Thomas. We will review the workflow process to include a checking mechanism to ensure the right resource is allocated to a job based on the information available. However, we are reliant on information provided by customers and even with the utilisation of tools such as Repairs Finder this risk cannot be fully eliminated as given the high volume of repairs reported each year these cannot all be checked prior to attending site.
	RECOMMENDATION 6 – Streamline working betweenInvestment and Repairs:Notwithstanding that the Investment and Repairs teams are now within the same business unit, there is still a need for the	Response supported by Assistant Director Building Safety and Housing Property Services and Executive Portfolio Holders with responsibility for Housing & Housing Development, Cllr Jeannette Thomas.

	investment and repairs teams to have closer collaboration between them with a standardised process whereby the repair's team are not relied upon to attend a job only to discover it is an investment team consideration not a repair. When this is the case, communication to be provided to the tenant to avoid the case appearing to fall into a 'black hole'. If a case is passed from repairs to investment - repairs closes the case which when reported causes confusion and frustration. Action: Assistant Director Building Safety and Housing Property Services	Agreed – the Repairs improvement plan provides for actions around improving communication and ways of working together across teams to ensure a seamless service for customers and promoting a customer care culture. This will be supported by development of policies, processes and procedures to ensure clarity on and consistent ways of working.
Page 13		Response supported by Assistant Director Building Safety and Housing Property Services and Executive Portfolio Holders with responsibility for Housing & Housing Development, Cllr Jeannette Thomas. Agreed that we need to have a single source of information/timeline on repairs reported by customers which forms a history which can be accessed by staff across Housing Property Services and the wider Housing service to enable queries raised by customers to be dealt with by any relevant member of staff. This requires making better use of existing systems to enable the data to be held by and/or accessible within NEC, for example via the integrated scheduling software (DRS).
	RECOMMENDATION 8 - Development of Customer Self-serveApp:That the booking hub that is currently under development be brought back to Community Select Committee Members to view to establish the efficacy of the booking system. While there are	Response supported by Assistant Director Building Safety and Housing Property Services and Executive Portfolio Holders with responsibility for Housing & Housing Development, Cllr Jeannette Thomas. Agreed – the launch date for Booking Hub has yet to be confirmed as it

improvements in use of technology, it will remain the case that there will be residents who cannot access it and officers will need to resume a client facing approach.	needs to be further tested before it can go live but it is anticipated that this will be in Q1 of 2024/25. Based on that timeline we would suggest reporting back to the CSC in Q3 on the efficacy of the booking system. Whilst promoting reporting repairs on-line we will continue to offer other
Action: Assistant Director Building Safety and Housing	methods to ensure the service is accessible to all customers.
Property Services	
RECOMMENDATION 9 - Collecting feedback from all	Response supported by Assistant Director Building Safety and
stakeholders	Housing Property Services and Executive Portfolio Holders with responsibility for Housing & Housing Development, Cllr Jeannette
To collect feedback on performance from all stakeholders.	Thomas.
Action: Assistant Director Building Safety and Housing Property Services	Agreed – we will collect and respond to feedback from all relevant stakeholders including customers, staff and elected members on how the service is performing. This will be reflected in service specific and corporate KPI's and reported to the Executive Housing Working Group.

Crime and Disorder Panel

March 2024 – Ch. Ins. Walsingham, Hertfordshire Police





Theft from Person

Stevenage - 1st April 2023 to 17th February 2024

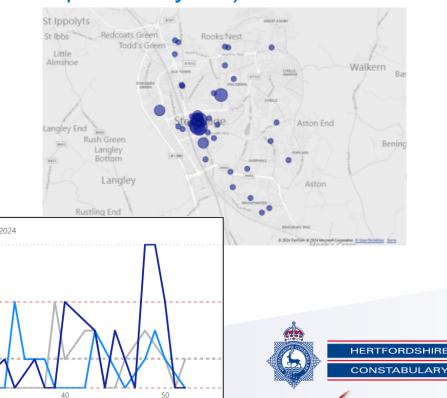
Week

 28% reduction in Theft from Person incidents across Stevenage. (70 incidents compared to 97 previous year.)

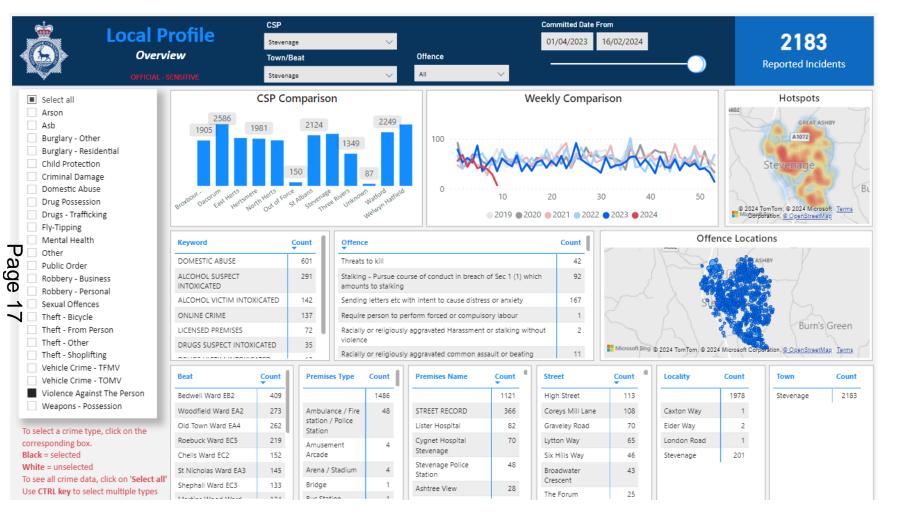
- ✓ Town Centre still a Hotspot
- Page ✓ Plain Clothes Operations in December
 - Regular Crime Prevention

events in town

Number Of Offence



Prevention First



Young Offenders

CCE P&D Officer: Pc Jackie Hickman.

Youth Justice Team Officer: Ps Lou Pope.

 CE Hub – Three vulnerable youths currently under the spotlight locally. Led by CSP DI.

- Page 18
 - HKC`s Two youths currently under Op Habitual managed between CCE P&D Team and NPT manager.

 CCE P&D and Youth Justice Team`s are currently undertaking Intervention briefings across commands to increase referral rates.



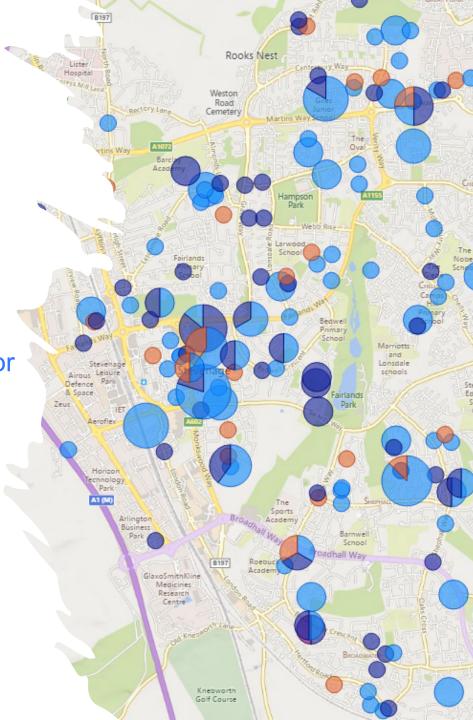
ention First

- ✓ 50% reduction in incidents initially classified as drugs related ASB (241 incidents compared to 478 previous year.
- Hotspot mapping shows very few incidents in Stevenage Parks with exception of Town Centre
 Gardens/King George Park
 Dedicated Problem-Solving Plan for
- $\frac{1}{20}$ reports of Drug activity

Operation Scorpion Patrols

Drugs and ASB

Stevenage - 1st April 2023 to 17th February 2024



Fly Tipping

Stevenage - 1st April 2023 to 17th February 2024

 ✓ 1 Report of fly tipping since April 2023. Investigation was No Further Actioned due to no suspect being identified





Agenda Item 7

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